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SYSTEMATIC
VIEW OF DIVINITY ;

OR,

THE RUIN AND RECOVERY OF MAN.

BY MOSES MATHER, D. D.

LATE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN STAMFORD,
(MIDDLESEX SOCIETY) CON.

*Hear now, O house of Israel, Is not my way equal ?
Are not your ways unequal ?*

EZEKIEL, XVIII. 25.

STAMFORD, CON.
PUBLISHED BY NATHAN WEED.
1813.

A. Spooner, Printer, Brooklyn.

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Robert D. Wells has
presented by
his friend
Charles Sumner.

[Faint, illegible handwritten text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

G. A. Gillett
1864,

A note on page 225 states that this work was written when the author was between fifty and sixty years of age. He had had the matter "under close and serious examination for about 15 years," in the most mature part of his life.

He was born at Lyme, Ct. in 1719, and graduated at Yale College in 1739, settled at Danvers near Stafford 1742, where he continued till his death in 1806.

This book must have been written between 1769 and 1779.



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1854

STATE OF NEW YORK

IN SENATE

January 11, 1854

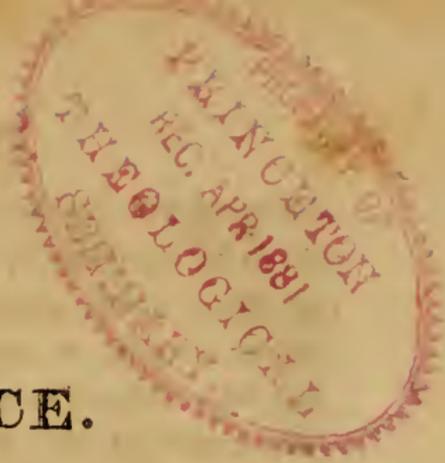
REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

IN ANSWER TO A RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE SENATE, APRIL 15, 1853.

ALBANY: PUBLISHED BY VAN NESTES, PEARSON & COMPANY, PRINTERS, 1854.



PREFACE.

A PROBATIONER for eternity, who must be accountable for his belief, as well as for his practice, can surely never need to apologize for his making a free inquiry into the principles of our holy religion. It is easier much, to take things upon trust, and to profess and practice according as things have been handed down by our predecessors, than to take the pains of examining for ourselves, that our faith may stand upon the clear evidence of the truth, rather than an implicit affiance in the sufficiency and certainty of those searches after truth, which have been made by such as have gone before us. But although a free inquiry is not only justifiable, but even laudable; yet a respect and veneration for our worthy predecessors ought so far to prevail, as to make us cautious how we depart from their sentiments; lest the love of novelty, (a passion incident to the human mind) should betray us into errors and dangerous mistakes: yet where the light of truth, upon a close and deliberate search after it, shines in upon

the mind with its clear and convincing energy, it is not to be controled by any human authority, though the most worthy among men. How far the author will be accused of departing from the *beaten track* in the following discourse, especially with respect to his manner of explaining some important points of the christian system; or what censure may be passed upon him on account of it, cannot easily be determined before-hand. The reader will find some points of divinity brought up to view, in a *dress*, in some respects, different from that in which they have commonly appeared; especially the doctrine of original sin; which doctrine, as it has been commonly stated and defended by Calvinistic divines, is confessedly encumbered with some pressing difficulties, which their Arminian antagonists have eagerly laid hold of, and strenuously improved to the great disadvantage of that doctrine. But that doctrine, in the manner in which it is stated and explained in the following discourse, will be found to have no connection with such things, nor to admit of such consequences, on which the Arminian triumphs are chiefly grounded; and yet, every thing retained that a strict Calvinist looks upon useful. The reader will also find some other doctrines, which the author, in consequence of his diligent inquiry after truth, has been led to view and exhibit, in a manner something singular; but whether it is, upon the whole, of any real advantage to religion, must be submitted to the reader's own judgment.

It is obvious, that the brief system held up to view in this discourse, proceeds upon the supposition of the pre-existent state of the created nature of the Son of God ; a sentiment, though not generally received yet has been held by many learned and pious divines, in the christian church. it is not necessary for me to essay the establishment of this point. Such as have already undertaken the proof of it, have brought such evidence from divine revelation for its support, as is not easily answered. For although this pre-existent state may not be expressly asserted in any one text ; yet it is so strongly implied in various descriptions of the glorious character of our exalted Redeemer, as is sufficient to persuade a rational mind into the belief of it ; especially since the objections brought against it are of so little weight, and none of the truths and doctrines of divine revelation, in any measure, weakened by it ; and as the admission of it will set many difficult texts in a plain and easy light ; and will give us a more noble view of the necessary, important, and exalted character of the Redeemer, than the contrary supposition will easily admit of : which consideration is in itself, no contemptible argument in proof of it.

Union to, and communion with God is essential to the well-being and blessednes of created and rational nature. This is a truth too evident to need proof. And it is not much less evident, that such a mediator of access to God as the Lord Jesus Christ is described to be, is necessary as a foundation of, and a meth-

od to bring about and accomplish this union with God, among all rational creatures. And if created nature stands in need of such a mediator of access, it will follow that this is the case of the highest, as well as of the lowest rank of rational creatures : all which is strongly implied in that connexion and relation between the Son of God, and all things visible and invisible, so often mentioned in the sacred scriptures. And if the creator of the universe is uniform in all his works, it will lead us to suppose, that as God, before he formed man to be lord of this lower world, first prepared an habitation for him, in creating this earth, and filling it with vegetable and animal life ; so he also provided for the well-being and blessedness of all his rational creatures, before he brought any of them into existence, by this mysterious union of the created and uncreated nature of the Son of God : which will lead us to understand that text in its most plain and literal meaning, where Christ styles himself “ The beginning of the creation of God.”

To suppose the union of the created and uncreated nature of the Son of God, did not commence till his incarnation, when he was made flesh and dwelt among us, casts great obscurity upon all such texts as point out his connection with, and relation to all orders of rational creatures, even the angels of light, as well as the children of men, who are gathered together into one in him ; and brings down the mediatorial character so low, as to confine his influence in that capacity, merely to the fallen race of Adam ; which is a

low, and diminutive character, compared to that which our Redeemer appears clothed with, when we consider him as a mediator of access to God for all rational creatures throughout the whole system; which with strong evidence appears to be the doctrine of divine revelation. Indeed, we should not have needed a Redeemer to save us from the curse, if we had not violated the divine law. But does it hence follow, that the original natural distance between God and man, was not so great, but that man was capable of enjoying all necessary union and communion with God, for securing his safety, and completing his blessedness, without assistance from such a mediator as Christ is described to be, in the gospel? Such a conceit must surely arise from too low conceptions of the Deity, and exalted notions of the creature. There are but few truths which appear to the rational mind in a stronger light, than that of our necessary dependence on God. And if in connexion with our necessary dependence on him, we consider the infinite distance between God and the creature, modesty would teach us at least, to acknowledge the propriety, if not to see the necessity of a mediator of access to him, as the way in which our interest in him might be secured, and the enjoyment of him obtained. Some have expressed themselves in bold and strong terms, concerning Adam's right which he had in his innocent state, to expect favor and protection, and even perfect blessedness, at the hands of his creator; considered merely as an inno-

cent creature. But in harangues of this sort, we are apt to forget that God had as much power over him, as the potter has over the clay, who of the same lump, makes one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor; which, if true, might teach us that an innocent creature, considered merely as such, can, properly speaking, have no right or title to any good thing, nor make any challenge or demand upon his creator. All right or title that any creature can have to any good thing at the hand of God, must be the result of some condescension on God's part, in making a covenant of grace with his creature, and treating him as a probationer. There is no other conceivable way in which a creature can plead any title before God. And the experience we have already had of a probation-state, under both the first and the second covenant, might be reasonably supposed sufficient to convince us of the usefulness and propriety of a mediator, even in our best estate. And for the same reason we ought to acknowledge the propriety and usefulness of a mediator to every rank of rational beings, how many, or how noble soever we may suppose them to be.

How greatly does it enlarge our conceptions of the glorious and exalted character of our divine Redeemer, when we consider him as the beginning of the creation of God, the first-born of every creature, and the universal mediator by whom every order of rational creatures throughout the whole system, enjoy access to God, and communion with him; above

what our views of him will be, if we confine his mediatorial influence to the single race of fallen Adam? Especially when we turn our thoughts upon the countless number of the several and different ranks of creatures which are to be found among the works of the great Jehovah. How countless and innumerable are the number of worlds which God has made! If we may give credit to modern astronomy, which, as it is founded upon the mathematics, that of all sciences, is the least liable to deceive, clearly discovers the number of worlds that God hath made, to exceed our most lively imagination. Our Solar System contains six primary Planets, one of which especially, is more than an hundred times as large as this earth; and there are ten secondary planets like the moon, which accomplish their several revolutions round the primary ones, as they do round the sun. So that there are no less than sixteen worlds included in our solar system, all receiving their light and heat from the sun.* Add to this, the late transit of Venus across the sun, has discovered a small satellite or moon attending that planet also, which, by reason of its situation between us and the sun, escaped the observation of the ancients. Such also as have been accounted as spots in the sun, are more rationally supposed to be less planets revolving round the sun in less circles. And even the sun itself, the source of light and heat to the whole system; although vul-

* This work was written previous to the late discoveries in Astronomy.

garly accounted a great mass of fire, is much more reasonably esteemed an electrical machine, which is very consistent with the supposition of its being well replenished with rational inhabitants, capable of knowing, glorifying and enjoying the great God of the universe. Instead therefore of sixteen, there may be sixty worlds included in this Solar System.

Some will say, who knows of inhabitants in any of these planetary worlds? I also will ask, who has any reason to doubt of it? Was not God as able to create a race of rational beings in them, as he was to form man on the earth? The only reason why any can doubt of there being inhabitants in the planets, is because they cannot conceive how God should be sufficiently great, good and powerful as to make so many worlds, fill them with inhabitants, and exercise a constant kind providence over them. The only objections we can bring against it, arise from our too low and mean conceptions of the incomprehensible Jehovah! 'Tis true, we read, these lights were set in the firmament for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. *That is*, these, are the purposes for which they were to serve this earth. But does it therefore follow that these are the only purposes for which their maker designed them? Why should they not be replenished with animal and rational life, as well as this earth, when many of them are much greater, and as well formed for such a purpose? Nor is conjecture all that may be pleaded in this case. For the apostle expressly tells us that all things visible and invisible were

made by Christ, and for him. But in what sense can the planets, which are certainly included in things visible, be said to be made for Christ, especially considered in his mediatorial character, which is the point the apostle is there discoursing upon, unless there are dwelling in them, some rational inhabitants, between whom and God, Christ performs the office of a mediator? Many other texts also might be alleged to the same purpose, which carry in them a strong implication, that the planetary worlds are stored with rational inhabitants, all gathered together into one, in Christ, and united to God through him. Contemplations on these things tend greatly to enlarge our conceptions, and exalt our thoughts of the great God, and of his son Jesus Christ, the universal mediator.

It will serve the same valuable end to turn our attention to the stars, whose number is a countless multitude. Such as are visible to the naked eye, are indeed a great multitude; and yet, these are comparatively few to the number which become visible by the assistance of glasses. Now these stars being considered as so many suns in the centre of as many systems of planetary worlds, each of them as numerous as our solar system; it will cause the number of worlds that God hath made, to increase beyond the stretches of the most lively imagination. How amazingly extensive are the dominions of God, the inexhaustible fountain of existence, who counteth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names! This

should teach us to veil our faces before him, and adore the infinitely incomprehensible author of nature, and fountain of life.

It is truly surprising to see the boldness of some conceited mortals in their arraignment of God, in his works, in his laws, and in the discoveries which he hath made of himself to us, in his word ; particularly, in denying, and even bantering the mysteries of the *Trinity*, and the *incarnation*. Must these things be denied because we cannot comprehend them ? The smallest parts of God's works contain mysteries that we cannot understand. Where is the philosopher that can explain so small a matter as muscular motion, a power daily exerted by the most contemptible insect ? How then shall we be able to comprehend the nature and manner of the existence of him who has displayed but part of his perfections in the formation, preservation, and government of such a countless multitude of worlds ?

When we turn our thoughts upon the incomprehensibility of the Almighty Creator, it should teach us to think and speak with modesty, concerning his moral government, in suffering sin to take place among his creatures. The introduction of moral evil is confessedly attended with some difficulty. But let it be considered that a state of probation must necessarily be such in the nature of it, as to admit of a possibility of sinning. For unless the state of trial be such that it is possible for sin to take place, there can be really no trial of the obedience of the creature.

If then, a possibility of sinning is essential to a state of trial, where is the ground of admiration, when we find sin has in fact, took place among God's creatures? If the state of trial in which the creature is placed, is such, that humanly speaking, there is a greater probability of sinning, than of standing, it will confessedly bear hard upon the wisdom and goodness of God. But when the prospect of standing is equal to that of falling, it cannot be denied to be a fair trial. And if the prospect of standing, is much greater than that of falling, as was the case with our first parents in their trial under the first covenant, we have reason to acknowledge divine wisdom and goodness appearing in the constitution, altho' the event was that man fell.

In opposition to this, some may alledge an argument from facts. Angels did fall, and the human race have fallen; which are all the creatures we know of; therefore we have reason to conclude from these facts, that the state of trial under which both were placed was such as to render their falling the most probable event.

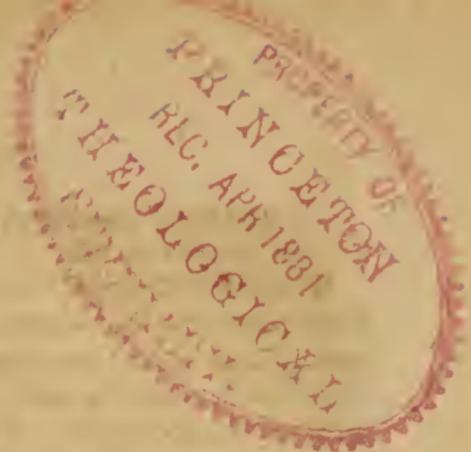
To this I answer, we are not at present, under a capacity to form a judgment from facts. 'Tis true, the first human pair did fall, and some angels have fallen: But when we lift up our eyes to the starry heavens, thousands of millions of worlds present themselves to our contemplation, doubtless well replenished with rational inhabitants, in none of which, for what yet appears, has sin taken place. Among all

these, our world, as far as we at present know, is the only one in which sin has entered. And if a possibility of sinning is essential to a state of trial, why should it be thought strange that one world among so many millions, should be tainted with it ?

Another objection that some may have against the following discourse, is, that it tends to weaken the evidence of the divinity of our Savior, as it leads us to apply many of those texts to his mediation, which Trinitarian writers have improved for the evidence of his divinity ; and thus tends to undermine that gospel mystery. And I readily grant, the following treatise will naturally lead us to explain many texts, as speaking of the mediatorial character and influence of the Lord Jesus Christ, which have been by some, understood as a proof of his God-head. But instead of weakening, this discourse tends to confirm the truth of these revealed mysteries of the Trinity, and the incarnation ; for they evidently lie at the foundation of the brief system here advanced, and are the chief corner stone on which it rests. Gospel truths have many times suffered by the injudicious conduct of their friends, in their improving many texts in proof of them, which altho' the expressions detached from their connexion seem to favor them, yet when duly examined, will appear to have another meaning. And when it is found, that many of those texts which are brought in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, upon a fair examination contain a different meaning ; they will be ready to conclude that all other texts brought

in support of that truth, do likewise really mean something else, provided we could hit upon their true interpretation. But if no texts were brought in proof of the doctrine, but such as plainly speak to the point and can fairly admit of no other interpretation, many of the triumphs of the adversaries would have been prevented. The doctrine of the Trinity, and of the divinity of our Savior, are points plentifully attested by texts which can have no other construction put upon them. I will mention one, John i. 3, "All things were made by him." If any should say, that God created the *Logos* with such noble powers, that he was able to make the world, which is the common Socinian evasion; I will affirm such men use words without ideas. It is by the works of creation we know there is a God. As says the apostle, Rom. i. 20, "For the invisible things of him from the foundation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head." If these words are true, the truth of which is established both by the light of reason and divine revelation; and if the *Logos* did create the world, as is expressly said; then we have, in the works of creation, the convincing evidence of his eternal power and God-head; which is the highest evidence we can have that there is a God. If therefore God created the *Logos* with such noble powers that he was capable to make the world; it is but saying in other words, *that one God can make another*. Therefore,

besides the absurdity of a *created God*, the Deist, the Arian, or Socinian, will be obliged to give up his creed, by his own argument ; and to embrace that of Polytheism, or Atheism, between which there is not much to choose.



A

VIEW OF DIVINITY, &c.

I. CORINTH. xv. 21, 22.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

ALTHOUGH the apostle here treats of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead with a special reference to the saints, yet it is manifest he does not mean to confine it to such ; for all both good and bad, shall be raised from the dead, in the last day. “ All that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” The apostle speaks of the resurrection of the dead in the text, in such general terms as to include all mankind. “ As in Adam, ALL die ; so in Christ shall ALL be made alive.” And it is evident that the resurrection of the wicked is the fruit of Christ’s purchase, as well as that of the righteous ; for all those that died in Adam, are made alive in Christ. “ For since by man came death by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” The ruin of mankind by Adam, and their recovery by Jesus Christ, are very interesting subjects here set before us ; each of which I purpose to consider.

The ruin of mankind by the fall of Adam, first demands our attention.

The ruin brought upon us by the apostacy of our first parents, is a matter which should be carefully looked into, that we may entertain just thoughts of that divine constitution under which we have fallen into an estate of sin and misery, and may truly know what our fallen state is. We are prone to entertain very dishonorable thoughts of God, on account of those covenant transactions with our first parents whereby we are involved in a state of sin and misery through their apostacy. But if we carefully look into that matter, and view it in the light in which it is set before us in the word of God; we shall see reason to acknowledge that the dispensation under which God at first placed man, was not only just, but very wise and gracious; although Adam by his misconduct under it, brought ruin upon himself and his posterity. And for a distinct view of these things, I shall consider,

I. The state in which man was at first created.

II. The covenant transactions of God with man in his first estate.

III. The fall of Adam, and the state into which he thereby brought himself and his posterity.

I. I shall inquire into the state in which man was at first created.

In the beginning, God created man in his own image, and after his likeness. Man was made a little lower than the angels: yet he was made perfect in his kind. His natural faculties were wisely suited to the state which his Maker designed him for, and every way fit for the performance of the duty which God required of him. And full provision was made for his being completely blessed in the favor of God, and in the enjoyment of him

The perfection of man in his first state, consisted in his being made in the *image* and after the *likeness* of God. And it will greatly help us in the knowledge

of the true character of man, to get a clear and distinct view of this divine image, or wherein it consisted; because *that* is a leading point, and will greatly assist us in our after inquiry, as will appear in the sequel. But our present subject makes it necessary to consider this divine image, more especially as it is of a moral kind; of which I would give this general description.

The moral image of God in which man was at first created, is the impression of such a likeness to God, that man might be said to be conformable to him in all moral respects.

This image and likeness of God on the soul, has a respect both to the communicable, and to the incommunicable perfections of God. We cannot form just conceptions of this divine image, unless we take into our idea of it a correspondency, or agreement of soul with such incommunicable perfections of the divine nature, of which there can be found no proper likeness, or real resemblance in the creature. What I here mean, is an answerableness of the frame of our heart towards God, as a being of infinite perfections, the original, independent, and all-sufficient fountain of being and blessedness.

I shall be here liable to be charged with an impropriety, for speaking of a *likeness*, where there is not nor can be any real *resemblance*. But it must be remembered that *image* or *likeness* is often spoken of in such an extensive sense, as to include any thing whereby the properties of a being are represented, expressed, or shadowed forth. And if the properties of an infinite being are expressed or represented by a finite, limited creature, it is evident that it must be by way of correspondency or agreement. The moral image of God therefore on the soul of man, cannot be called complete, unless we take into our idea of it, a correspondency, or agreement of the frame of our heart with those infinite perfections of the divine nature, of which there can be no proper likeness, or direct resemblance; as well as a con-

formity to him in his moral attributes, or imitable and communicable perfections. And this answerableness of soul to these incommunicable perfections of the divine nature, is an essential part or property of the image of God, in which man was at first created. I will illustrate my meaning in a few particulars.

1. Our likeness to God in this respect, includes *an entire dependence on him*, answering to his being the fountain of life and blessedness. All the several parts of the creation are dependent upon the same power to preserve and uphold them in being, which first gave them their existence. But the dependence which I here mean, is not a natural and necessary dependence; but it is a dependence of a moral kind, in which the soul is active and voluntary. It is a dependent frame of heart, in which the soul feels and acknowledges its dependence on God for being and for blessedness, in the way of hope and trust. This temper of mind was lost by the fall. A sinner under a consciousness of guilt, feels afraid to trust himself in the hand of God. He would choose to have the power of securing his own well-being in his own hands; but is fearful of trusting God in this case. He has such jealousy of God upon his mind, that he fears God will not do so well for him, as he could do for himself. But when the divine image is again restored to the soul by redeeming grace, this dependence on God is not only seen, but chosen and delighted in. Under a believing view of the divine perfections, the soul yields itself up into the hand of God, with full trust and confidence in him as an all-sufficient God. The soul chooseth to rely on God, and him alone. In this dependent frame of spirit, there is a corresponding agreement and answerableness of soul to the independent all-sufficiency of God; and it is one essential property of that original conformity to him, in which the divine image on man did consist.

2. This original conformity to God includes full complacency, delight and vesting of soul in him, as an all-satisfying portion corresponding with his infinite glory and amiableness. The infinite perfections of God render him a being worthy of supreme love and delight. And this delight, complacency and resting of soul in God, is that felicity which was originally intended for the human mind, which would render it completely blessed. Thus to delight in God, is, in its own nature, an appropriating act; therein the soul interests itself in God, as *its God*; a God in whom it is interested, and to whom it has access. This is what is principally meant by the enjoyment of God. Where there is no interest, there can be no delight. Psalm xxxvii. 4, "Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Indeed, in some of those exercises of soul which are included in the general notion of love, there is no special interest implied. Thus, we may think honorably of, and highly esteem a person, as being truly excellent, in whom we can have no interest. The devil may fitly think of God as a being in himself truly glorious and infinitely excellent, although he is forever shut out from all interest in him. But such exercises of love as are styled complacency and delight, in their own nature, imply an interest in him, and access to him. This delight in God is a temper of mind corresponding with the infinite glory and amiableness of the divine perfections; and is a very material or principal property of that image of or conformity to God, in which man was at first created.

3. Intire subjection to the will of God, answering to his absolute authority, is also necessary, that we may bear his image, or be conformable to him. God's right to govern his creatures is very plain and indisputable. And that there may be a corresponding agreement with this divine prerogative, it is necessary there should be in us, a complete and unreserved submission of soul to his will; a read-

iness of mind to give ourselves up to his will in all things.

These particulars may suffice to illustrate my meaning, or shew what that conformity to God is, with respect to his incommunicable perfections, which is necessary to constitute the divine likeness on the human soul. This dependence on God, this complacency in him, and this subjection to him are essential properties of it. For although there cannot be in a creature, any direct and proper likeness to those infinite excellencies and perfections of God, to which these exercises of soul refer; yet the impression of the image of God on the soul, necessarily implies such a moral agreement with and conformity to him, in these respects.

And as the image of God in which man was created, did include such conformity to him with respect to his incommunicable perfections; so it also included a likeness of God with respect to his moral attributes, or imitable perfections. The moral attributes of God are his holiness, justice, goodness, &c. And with respect to these, our nature is capable of bearing his proper image, or more direct likeness. And when God made man in his own image, and after his likeness, there was the resemblance of his Maker in all moral respects to be seen in him. Man was made capable of the service of God; not only with respect to his natural faculties; but this his nature was made with an aptness, promptitude or readiness for all holy and upright exercises, in perfect correspondency with God; with no jarring tendencies, contrary inclinations, or even reluctance with respect to his acting in complete conformity to the divine perfections. Herein consists the moral image of God in which man was created.

These observations may suffice to give us a brief and general view of that moral image of God in which man was at first formed. And by attending to this likeness of God, we may learn the general nature of that service or duty which God required of

him. For the image of God on the soul is the same as the law written on the heart. It is the same thing set forth by different expressions ; or the same object viewed in different points of light. And therefore by attending to the image and likeness of God in which man was at first created, we may clearly gather this general description of the moral law, or the bonds of duty which man was under to his Maker by the law of his creation : viz.

The duty required of man consisted in maintaining, exercising and expressing this divine image or likeness of God, in the several actions, and on the various occasions of life.

In this view of the case we most readily obtain clear and distinct ideas of those natural obligations to our Creator, which, with propriety have been commonly styled the MORAL LAW. And by attending to this view of it, we may see the natural consequences of sin. Man by sin forfeited his whole interest in God. The natural penalty of this law excludes sinning man from all access to God, and restrains and shuts him out from all dependence, hope, trust and enjoyment of God ; and shuts him up under wrath. Hence ariseth moral depravity and total inability, as I shall shew in the sequel.

The duty of man in his primitive state consisted in exercising this dependence on God, this complacency in him, and subjection to him, with purity and uprightness, truth and faithfulness. Herein he would exercise, preserve and express that likeness of his Maker which was his original excellency and perfection. By this God would have received that honor and glory from man which was required ; and man's interest in the love and favor of God would have been preserved.

There was then no separate interest between God and man. God's interest is the display of the glory of his great name ; and it was the interest of man to exhibit a display of the glory of his Creator. This was his interest, his happiness, and his duty. Herein he

did both glorify and enjoy God. In this state therefore, man could not act inconsistent with the glory of God, without acting at the same time inconsistent with his own happiness. There was a perfect union with God, in the motives and springs of action which belonged to his nature. His love of God, and regard for the divine honor and glory, and his love and regard for his own well-being, all influenced the same way, and tended to the same thing. In this union with God consisted the life of his soul, or what we call *spiritual life*. As the natural life of man consists in the firm and healthful union of soul and body, so spiritual life consists in this full and perfect moral union with God. and as natural death consists in breaking up the union between soul and body; so spiritual death consists in breaking up this spiritual union between God and the soul. And that moral depravity, and corruption of nature which is in fallen man, consequent upon his breach of union with God, may, not improperly, though figuratively, be styled *The putrefaction of the soul*. The soul of man in his first state was in perfect health and vigor, no ways diseased, tainted, or vitiated; but was every way fit and in readiness for perfect obedience to the divine will; for full communion with God, and complete blessedness in the enjoyment of him. But yet, this life of the soul was not so essential to the nature of man but that it might be lost; and yet, his natural faculties still remain; as is evident from sad and daily experience. The commission of sin in any one instance would be destructive to the soul; because guilt would break up this union with God; it would divide the soul from God, and cast it out of his favor, and bring it under his wrath. For all those considerations which show it to be the duty of man to yield obedience to the will of God, do equally show, that sin forfeits God's favor, and deserves to be punished with the executions of his wrath. This spiritual life therefore was what man enjoyed in his primitive state, in dependence on God; he was dependent on

him for the preservation and continuance of it: it was to be preserved by maintaining communion with God, in ways of obedience to his will. It was by maintaining communion with God, and enjoying the bright and near manifestations of the divine glory to the soul, that this spiritual life was to be preserved in its vigor and activity. We find by common experience, that the activity and vigor of our heart towards any object whatever, very much depends upon the presence of the object with the mind. When an object is present to immediately affect our senses, its influence on the heart will be greater than when it is present only by remembrance and reflection. And in this respect, human nature was very much the same in its original state, as it is now. And this shows, how necessary it was for man in his state of perfection, to maintain nearness to God, that he might preserve his love, delight and complacency in God, and the vigor and activity of soul in his service. If we now have a strong regard in our heart, and close union of affections to any particular object; yet by long absence from it, and unthoughtfulness about it, our attachment to it will languish and decay. And in like manner, the vigor of soul, and union of heart with God, which were in man in his original state of perfection, were to be preserved by constant communion with God; otherwise they must have languished and decayed, as is evident from the limited, dependent frame of our nature.

Attention to these things makes it manifest, that although man held his original state of perfection in dependence on God; yet there was something for him to do for the preservation of it. It was necessary for him to improve his interest in God, to keep near to him, and maintain communion with him; that by abiding in the sun-shine of the divine glory, the rectitude, life and vigor of his soul might be preserved. For as man was made capable of *voluntary action*, it is evident that he might so behave as to withdraw from God, turn off his attention from the divine glo-

ry, fix his view upon some creature ; and in that way, fall under the influence of the creature instead of God. Or in other words, *he was capable of sinning.*

And as the human nature is thus capable of defection, so it was equally capable of receiving such a confirmed state of rectitude, as never to be liable to, or in danger of falling from it. For so long as man continued under the full sun-shine of the divine glory, it is not supposable that his heart should fall under the influence of any creature's vanity, or sinful enjoyment. Therefore by being put into such a state, in which he should be constantly incircled with the bright and full display of the divine glory, it would be an effectual security of his preservation, and an unfailing source of his blessedness. Hence that confirmed state in glory which is now hoped for by the believer, is represented by our Lord, under such figurative expressions as intimate this special preserving and enlivening influence of the divine presence with them. Rev. iii. 12, "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." And to the same purpose, the glory of the New-Jerusalem is thus described, Rev. xxi. 23, "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." It is by living in the full streams of the divine glory, from which "They shall go no more out," that will secure them in the future state, from being ever liable to fall from it. The confirmed state in eternal life and blessedness, which is the promised portion of believers, consists not in any thing that is inherent in their nature, or that is put into them by divine grace : but they will hold their everlasting blessedness, in constant dependence on God. God himself undertakes for them. He is their security ; and has promised "To be with them, and to be their God." It will be the full enjoyment of God in that world of glory, which will be the constant preservation and support of their life, and unfailing source of their blessed-

ness. And as such is the nature of that confirmation in glory which the believer shall receive in the future state; so this confirmation is what the human nature was at first made capable of. But this is a privilege which is not necessarily connected with that state of perfection in which man was at first created. God made man capable of preserving his blessed state, by acting uprightly: but to undertake for him, to secure him from a liability to depart from God, by the effectual manifestations and communications of himself to man, is what God was not obliged to do. Such protection is to be looked upon as a special favor, flowing from free and sovereign grace, in whatever manner, or upon what conditions soever it is granted to a creature.

Man being made such a noble creature, in the image and after the likeness of God, with sufficient abilities and advantages to preserve this perfection of his nature by an upright and faithful conduct; and capable either of a defection from it by the commission of sin; or of being confirmed in it by the grant of special favor from God; therefore he was a creature capable of, and suitable to be put into a state of trial, that he might act as a probationer for life or death: to be cast out of the favor of God if he sinned, and receive the punishment due to his offence: or to be confirmed in a state of peace and favor with God, as the reward of his obedience, if he proved faithful under a proper trial. But then it is manifest, this whole matter respecting man's trial, is what wholly depended upon the sovereign pleasure of God; what his state of trial should be—how long it should continue—and what should be the reward.

God might have retained man as a probationer for his favor, in the state in which he was created. In which case, all that the law of nature, that is, the *moral law*, would have given him reason to expect at the hand of God, was no more than a continuance in well-being so long as he remained faithful. He could have had no claim to any reward for his obedience;

but would have been liable to sin, whereby he would have deserved death. He could never have deserved a confirmed state in life and blessedness by obedience to the moral law ; for perfect obedience was no more than God's due from him ; by yielding of which, he could never make God his debtor. For if he had preserved his integrity for thousands of years, he must still have confessed, that he had done no more than was his duty to do. And after all, he would still remain liable to fall into sin ; and thus lose his happy state.

Or if God had been pleased, in the sovereign riches of his grace, to set a limited time for the trial of man's obedience ; and had given him a promise, that if he continued faithful till the time appointed, he should be confirmed in his state of rectitude and blessedness, as a reward of his fidelity ; yet still it must depend upon sovereign grace, as to the length of time the trial should last—how extensive the trial should be, as to the various branches of duty—and how great should be the reward of his obedience :—Whether it should be merely a confirmation in his present happy state ; or receive any additional privileges and blessings. In this case it is manifest, that God, by assigning such a limited time for the trial of man's obedience, and subjoining the motives of promises and threatenings, would have so far changed the tenor and form of his government over man, as that his law would put on the form, and partake of the nature of a covenant. And if God had put man into such a state of trial, under such a covenant-dispensation ; he might have justly extended the limits of the trial of his obedience to the whole compass and matter of his duty, and insisted upon having the perfection of his obedience to the whole law, brought to a trial in every branch of duty, as the condition of the promised reward. And he might have confirmed and enforced this covenant with this strict threatening : “ Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

Such a state of trial as this, would have justly been esteemed a great favor, granted by God to his creature man. For hereby no obedience would have been laid upon him, more than was his duty before ; he would be no more liable to fall into sin, than he would have been, if no such covenant had been made with him : But hereby advantages would have been put into his hands of obtaining a confirmation in his happy state, which is a privilege he could not have been entitled to without such a covenant.

But God's treating with man in a covenant form, as a probationer for rewards and punishments, is a matter which wholly depends upon his sovereign pleasure ; therefore we must be determined in our sentiments about it, by the light of his word.

II. I proceed to consider the covenant-dispensation of God to our first parents, in the state in which they were created.

Moses has told us, that the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, into which he put the man whom he had made, to dress it, and to keep it. In this garden, "The Lord God caused to grow out of the ground, every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food : the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying. Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat : but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This is a very short and concise account of this first covenant-dispensation : and yet, it is the fullest and most particular of any that God hath given us in his word. Doubtless, these things were more fully expressed to our first parents, than Moses has here recorded them. And although this short account is not full enough to satisfy our curiosity in several inquiries that may arise in our minds ; yet, it is sufficiently full, to give us all that knowledge of these things which our present circumstances require.

We may here observe, that two trees are particularly mentioned, by way of distinction from all the rest ; *the tree of life*, and *the tree of knowledge of good and evil* ; with a special command, more especially respecting one of them. As to the tree of life, we know but little more about it, than what is intimated to us by the name by which it is called. But as it is here mentioned in connexion with the tree of knowledge of good and evil, it is sufficiently plain, that as by their eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, they were to become subject to death : so, by a proper use of the tree of life, they were to secure their title to life and blessedness ; although the particular manner in which our first parents were to make use of that tree is not expressly told us. This seems plainly implied in the reason assigned for driving them out of the garden, “ Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.” These two trees seem to have been appointed as sacramental tests, in this covenant : the tree of life, as a sign or pledge of the favor of God ; and the tree of knowledge prohibited upon pain of death. As to the tree of life, it is not necessary for us to know more about it ; since the event was, that our first parents did fall ; and that way of life is now forever done with : But with respect to the tree of knowledge of good and evil, by eating of which, our first parents broke covenant with God ; and involved themselves, and their posterity, in a state of sin and misery ; it concerns us carefully to attend to it. Several things relating to it should be carefully observed.

1. *Death was expressly threatened only for the sin of eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.* There was no express declaration, that they should be liable to death for any other sin, or in any other way. Indeed, the wages of sin is death, by the moral law ; and every other sin (had they been guilty of it) would have deserved death, as well as this. But as the threatening of death is limited to

this sin in particular ; it shows the limitation of the trial of the obedience of our first parents. The whole trial of their obedience was confined to their conduct with respect to the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And this implies the special protection which God would exercise over them, while that state of trial lasted, that their innocency should not be endangered, by their falling into temptation to the commission of any other sin. This special care and watchfulness of God over them, in that state of trial, seems to be intimated by his putting them into the garden of Eden. God did not leave them to the wide world, nor suffer them to be tried in any other matter ; no other temptation could then approach them, whereby their innocency could be endangered. And herein appears the rich grace of God, in this first covenant-dispensation to his creature, man. If God had been pleased to have promised life, as the reward of his obedience, for any limited time ; yet, he might justly have appointed to him, to pass through the trial of his obedience, in the various branches of duty required in the whole law ; in many of which, he would have been as liable to have fallen into sin, as he was in this particular point expressly mentioned. Yea, the command which prohibited him from eating of the forbidden fruit, seems to have been the most easy precept that could have been devised. And consequently, man was put under all imaginable advantages for obtaining divine favor. If it was proper, the obedience of man should be tried at all, surely, such a light trial as this, was the most gracious and favorable that could be proposed. And yet, the whole trial of man's obedience, for life or death, lay in so narrow a compass, as far as we have any account about it in the word of God.

Although the event shows, that we are brought into an estate of sin and misery by the breach of the first covenant ; yet, no blame can be cast upon God, nor fault found with the covenant. For man would have been as liable to have sinned against the moral

law, which is the law of nature, if it had remained in the mere form of law ; as he was, to sin against it when it was cast into this covenant form ; yea, and much more liable ; for here was but one single precept upon which his obedience was to be tried : whereas, if God had not made this covenant with him, but had left him under the law in the state in which he was created ; the whole law, in all the branches of duty, would have lain before him, as the matter of the trial of his obedience ; against which, he would have been as liable to have sinned, as he was of sinning against this particular precept which was singled out, as the special matter of his trial ; and death would have been his due by the law, as much as it was by this covenant. The risk therefore, of falling into sin, would have been much greater, had it not been for this covenant ; and that, without any opportunity of ever obtaining a confirmed state of life, or being entitled to any reward for his obedience.

Although I have here represented man as put upon the trial of his obedience for life or death, only in the particular precepts concerning the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge ; yet we are not to suppose, this was the whole duty he was under obligation to perform. No, the moral law was not set aside ; but was taken into this covenant-dispensation, and still remained to be to man a rule of duty. It is easy to conceive, that a man may be made a probationer under a perfect rule of righteousness ; and yet, that the trial of the perfection of his obedience should be limited to a single point. Man was under obligation to maintain conformity to God, by the law of his creation, if there had been neither promises nor threatenings set before him. But in this covenant-dispensation, God subjoined a particular test of obedience, adding promises and threatenings which stood in a special connexion with this instituted test. The constitution therefore, under which man was made a probationer, was not to be considered as the

law merely ; but the tenor of the divine government was changed so as to put on the form, and partake of the nature of a covenant. And although the fidelity of man was not brought upon trial in every branch of duty ; yet, had he been faithful in those points wherein his special trial consisted, to the end of his probation ; his obedience to the whole law would have been complete ; yea, herein would have been a complete trial of man, with respect to the whole of that image and likeness of God in which he was created. For he would have exercised and expressed his dependence on God, his complacency in him, and subjection to him, with the integrity, faithfulness, truth and holiness which the law required : His whole conformity to God would have passed through a proper trial, although his obedience had not been tried in every point of duty.

2. The death threatened in this covenant, *is that death which is the proper wages of sin.* The word *death*, is what we are apt to confine to the body, as if no more was intended by it than a bodily death. But this is far short of the import of it, as that word is used in the Bible, when the punishment or wages of sin is thereby expressed. Indeed, the death of the body is doubtless included in it ; but yet, it has a reference to the soul as well as the body, and includes the future sufferings of the wrath of God. The threatening was in these words :—“ In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Or as it is translated in the margin, “ Dying thou shalt die,” which doubling of the expression makes it a more strong and emphatical way of speaking, to denote something very great and fearful ; as well as to express the greater certainty of it. And it is evident from the very nature of sin, that the soul must suffer for it, as well as the body. For the soul being formed, in its original make, for an everlasting duration, it must still exist after the death of the body : but having the guilt of sin upon it, its union with God must be broken up ; its conformity to him defaced ;

and its interest in him forfeited. All these are the natural consequences and effects of sin. And besides, it appears fitting, that God should show his hatred of sin, by inflicting some proper and positive punishment upon the soul for it, above what the natural effects of sin contain. Hence then, it is necessary that we understand this threatening of death, contained in the first covenant, to include future sufferings, as well as a bodily death.

3. It appears from the express words of the threatening, that the punishment of sin was to speedily follow the commission of it. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." It is evident that hereby, Adam had reason to expect, God would take speedy vengeance upon him; and that, if he sinned, the death threatened should be executed upon him on that same day.

Some have supposed, if God had left fallen Adam in that state of sin and misery into which he brought himself by his transgression, without bringing in the new covenant by a Redeemer; that his days would have been prolonged on the earth, till children should have been born unto him; and that, the several generations of men would have been brought into being much in the same manner as is now the case. But I can see no sufficient evidence to support such a supposition, neither in reason nor scripture. It is a mere supposition, without evidence to support it. This supposition makes it necessary to put a very forced construction upon the words of the threatening. Nor would it be easy to reconcile it to the glorious perfections of God, that he should delay his justice, and suffer a rebel, after he had deserved death, to continue in life, and become instrumental of bringing a posterity into being, who must be involved with himself, in the same common ruin and misery. For it is a divine precept, early given to mankind, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." One who so gives himself up to wickedness, as to destroy the lives of his fellow-crea-

tures, is not fit to live on the earth, God himself being judge; and has therefore ordered, that the life of such shall be taken from the earth, by the hand of civil justice. And if this divine statute is founded upon natural justice and equity, the same reason would forbid the sparing Adam's life, till he should become instrumental of bringing his posterity into being, to be involved with himself, in suffering the death contained in the curse. For to suffer eternal vengeance, is an unspeakably greater evil, than the mere loss of bodily life. And therefore, the sparing Adam till, he should leave a seed behind him, would be, to allow him to do infinitely more evil and mischief to the human race, than can be supposed to follow from letting a murderer go free, although he should repeat the same crime as often as he had opportunity for it. Divine justice therefore, did manifestly require the speedy execution of the original threatening. Indeed, God is now, long suffering to us ward; and divine vengeance is not now speedily executed upon the children of men. But this is owing to the interposition of a mediator; without which, such delays of justice are not reconcilable to the divine perfections.

Again; if we suppose the days of Adam were to be lengthened out, and children born unto him, and the several generations of men coming into the world, in the succession and order of nature; we must suppose also, such kind dispensations and interpositions of divine providence towards them as there are now, to feed and clothe them, and to bestow the good things of this life upon them; without which, mankind could not subsist on the earth. But to suppose this, would be to make the great governor of the world inconsistent with himself; and to contradict that, in the language of his providence, which he had spoken with his mouth. For such kind interpositions of providence really express divine good will to man. This is the construction which the apostle puts upon them, as their plain and manifest

import. Acts xiv. 17, "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our heart with food and gladness." It is the plain language of such a kind providence, that God has some real good will towards us, that he is willing to pardon and be reconciled to us notwithstanding all our transgressions. But how inconsistent would such providential expressions of divine favor be, if God had no good will in his heart towards us, and had declared, that nothing but wrath should be our portion at his hands !

Seeing then, it is not so agreeable to the perfections of God, nor the glory of his providential government, to suppose Adam would have lived so long after his fall, as to leave a seed behind him on the earth ; so neither is this supposition necessary to establish any article of faith contained in the gospel. It is much more rational, and more agreeable to the scripture, to take this threatening of death, contained in the first covenant, in its plain and obvious import ; and to believe, that, had it not been for the interposition of the promised Savior, death would have been executed upon Adam, in the day that he sinned.

And had this been the case, then many of those difficulties which arise in our minds about original sin, are taken out of the way. For as to Adam himself, it is easy to see, as appears from what has been observed, that it was a very gracious dispensation of God towards him, to make this covenant with him. For he was every way as well provided for, and under as good circumstances as he would have been, if God had not made this covenant with him ; but had left him in the state in which he was created. And as he was worse off in no respect : so he was better off in many. He had a short and easy point of trial assigned him ; and fair advantages put into his hands of securing a blessed immortality.

But the greatest difficulty that attends this covenant which God made with our first parents, is the in-

cluding their posterity, to stand or fall with them, and be equal sharers with the original transgressors, in the fruits and punishment of their disobedience. In this respect, some look upon that dispensation of God, as inconsistent with the rules of moral equity. That we should fall under the curse for the sin of Adam, which was not in our power to prevent, and was committed before we were born, looks incredible to some ; and it must be confessed, that it is attended with some difficulties : yet I trust, the difficulties which attend this doctrine, truly stated, are not so great, but that a satisfactory solution may be given of them ; which I shall attempt to do, under the second general head of this discourse, when we come to enquire how we are made alive in Christ. For the doctrine of original sin cannot be rightly understood, by attending only to this covenant made with Adam ; but we must also view it, in its connexion with the covenant of grace, brought in by the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I shall here offer some evidence of the truth of this doctrine ; and leave the difficulties that attend it, to be cleared up in their proper place. I therefore proceed to observe,

4. *This first covenant was made with Adam, both for himself, and his posterity.* They that hold the doctrine of the imputation* of Adam's first sin to his

* I have used the word *imputation* in this discourse, in writing both of original sin, and of justification, in conformity to the common style of Christian writers for many years ; although I have therein departed from the language of the inspired writers, who have never used that word in treating of either of these doctrines. The apostles doubtless knew how to treat of our participation of the benefits of Christ's mediation, in the most proper terms : and the phrases which they have used are, "*To be in Christ* *To be joined to the Lord* *To have fellowship with him.* *To be partakers of Christ*"; and such like. Union to Christ by faith, is the way in which our partaking of the benefits of his mediation is represented in the gospel : but to use the word *imputation* in this case, doth not so directly lead our thoughts to this

posterity, ground their belief, not upon his being their natural father : but upon his being appointed to act for them in that covenant, as their covenant-head. We suffer for the sin of Adam, not so properly because he was our natural father ; for then, there would be as much reason why we should suffer for all his other sins, as for his first sin : yea, and for all the sins of all our fore-fathers, as well as for Adam's sin : but the reason why his first sin is imputed to us, is because that is the sin by which he broke that covenant in which he was to act for us, as our covenant-head.

In that covenant, Adam was to stand a probationer for some certain limited time, (how long is not told us) before he should finish his course, had he been faithful under it : But this we know ; as soon as he sinned, he put an end to all further trial. It then became impossible for him to obtain life, according to that dispensation. His death was become a determined matter. Yea, he then so finished his probation, that, according to the express words of the covenant, he was to suffer death on that very day. And, that he acted under that covenant for his posterity, as well as for himself, is a truth of which there is abundant evidence, both from daily experience, and the plain testimony of the sacred scripture.

union, as those expressions do, which are used by the apostles. Although our justification by Christ's righteousness may be expressed, with some degree of propriety, by saying, *his righteousness is imputed to the believer* ; yet I can see no reason why we should use a word to express our receiving benefits from his obedience, which will not express our receiving the benefits of the other parts of his mediatorial work. *Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification* : yet, where would be the propriety of speaking of his resurrection, as being imputed to us ?

But the use of the word *imputation* has so generally obtained, in speaking of original sin, and of justification by faith, that barely neglecting the use of that word, would prejudice many readers against any thing that can be written.

That God hath dealt with mankind as sinners, on account of this first sin of Adam, is evident from undeniable facts.

1. 'Tis fact, that for his transgression, a curse was laid upon the earth ; and upon them that dwell on it. The sentence passed upon Adam for his transgression, was, " Cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee : and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This is the curse which was laid upon Adam for his breach of covenant. And it is evident, that this curse as fully lies upon his posterity, as it did upon him. And God, by thus extending the chastisement of his breach of covenant to his seed, makes it manifest, that by divine appointment, he acted for them in that covenant, as well as for himself.

2. 'Tis fact, that Adam's seed are no sooner born, but they share in the natural evils of this present state, pains, sorrows and distresses of one kind or another, and often times with bodily death, before they are capable of committing actual sin. But such treatment of creatures who are innocent and pure from all sin, at the hand of an holy, just and good God, must be acknowledged as unaccountable. *For death is the wages of sin.* Unless therefore the guilt of sin lies upon mankind, as they come into the world, such treatment of them at the hand of God, can never be reconciled to his perfections. For sin is the procuring cause of the divine displeasure. Therefore these expressions of God's displeasure towards mankind, as soon as they are born, before they can commit actual sin, contain convincing evidence of their sharing in the sin of Adam.

3. 'Tis fact, that upon Adam's transgression, our first parents were driven out of the garden ; they, and their posterity were forever cut off from all ac-

cess to the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Immediately upon the first transgression, that way of life was forever set aside ; and these two sacramental trees were of no further use, either to them, or to their posterity. And as the covenant made with Adam, was laid aside upon his sin, and a new one introduced ; it is thereby evident, that all trial under that first dispensation was confined to our first parents, in whom their posterity were included. Why also were not his children allowed liberty of a personal trial under that dispensation ?

4. 'Tis fact, that mankind are born into the world, in a state of moral depravity. 'Tis too evident to be denied, that there is some moral defect belonging to mankind by nature, which is the reason why " They all go astray as soon as they are born," are all alienated from God, and inclined to creature-vanities and sinful courses. If we consider what that image and likeness of God was, in which man was at first created ; it will appear evident that we do not come into the world in such a state, at this day. Instead of the divine likeness, our nature is corrupted, and stored with the seeds of all manner of sin and wickedness ; which is the fruit of the original apostacy, and a clear evidence of our being included in our first parents, in that covenant. How the imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity, should have such a depraving effect upon their nature, I shall shew hereafter ; but that this is the case, cannot be denied, and is therefore a full proof of the doctrine of original sin.

Observation and experience thus afford us convincing evidence of our participation in the apostacy of our first parents : to which we may add, the plain testimony of God in his word. The very terms of the covenant as it was set forth to Adam, clearly show, that his seed were included with him in that dispensation. For when Adam was made, his Creator pronounced that blessing on him, " Multiply and replenish the earth." Here, a seed was evidently given him. But when God entered into covenant

with him, the threatening set before him was, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." As therefore, he was put upon trial for life or death, and was to suffer death on the day that he sinned, it is evident that, had the punishment been executed upon him according to the express terms of the threatening, both he, and his seed together, would have been cut off at one stroke. The then future existence of his seed would have been prevented by his sin. Inasmuch then, as a seed was granted to him, and yet, the very existence of his seed depended upon his conduct in that state of trial, it necessarily follows, that he then acted for them, as well as himself.

The tenor also of the covenant of grace plainly shows, that we are by nature, in a fallen state. The errand upon which God sent his Son into the world, was to save sinners. None but sinners need a Savior; and such only he came to save. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" If then, mankind come into the world in such a state, that they can obtain life only by Christ; it is evident that they come into the world in a state of sin. "The whole need not a physician; but they that are sick." Unless we are sinners we stand in no need of a Savior: but if we need a Savior, it is because the guilt of sin lies upon us. If an infant, dying in infancy, enters into life; it must be either by its own sinless perfection; or by virtue of Christ's mediation. But to say, it enters into life by its own innocence; is to say, that there is some other way, some other name given among men, whereby we may be saved; in express contradiction to the scriptures. But if we say, they enter into life through the merits of Christ; we must acknowledge that the guilt of sin lies upon them. And if we come into the world with the guilt of sin upon us; it must be, by our fellowship with Adam, in his breach of covenant. And this is the constant repre-

sentation in the sacred scripture. On this account, a comparison is so often made between Adam and Christ. An instance of this we have in Rom. v. 12, and following verses, where we find such expressions as these: "Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world.—Through the offence of one, many be dead.—The judgment was by one to condemnation.—As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to the justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." And to the same purpose, are the words of our text: "For since by man came death; by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die: so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Thus, we have sufficient evidence, that Adam acted in that covenant made with him, both for himself, and his seed. He being appointed by God, as their covenant-head; they are legally guilty by his transgression; and on that account, God treats them as sinners. What those evils are, which his posterity suffer on account of his sin, shall be hereafter considered. All that I here aim at, is to prove the point; or to show that we are become guilty in the sight of God, by his transgression.

III. I proceed to consider the fall of Adam, and the state into which he brought himself, and his posterity.

Notwithstanding the rich grace which God had manifested to man, in treating with him in a covenant form, wherein such great and valuable privileges were proposed, and such easy terms of trial prescribed; yet we find, man proved unfaithful to God, broke covenant with him, and forfeited all the privileges of it. He put forth his hand, and took of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and did eat of it; although God had commanded him,

saying, "Thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Here then, let us consider this breach of covenant, and the destructive consequences of it.

1. Hereby Adam put an end to his trial, and finished his probation-state. By this sin Adam determined his own state, that death should be his portion. There remained no possibility for him, under that dispensation, to obtain life. His case was decided. His probation was finished. His after-conduct was of no avail. That covenant no longer answered any purpose to him, but his condemnation. If Adam had faithfully kept covenant with God to the end of his probation-state, he would have had a covenant-title to the reward of life, according to the promise. But this covenant, and the promises of it, were of no further advantage to him ; he could reap no benefit from them. The threatened punishment now become his due, without further trial.

2. By this sin, Adam cut himself off from all interest in God, and fell under his wrath. By contracting guilt, he became vile in the sight of God ; and armed the righteousness, truth and faithfulness of God against him for the execution of threatened vengeance. He proved himself a rebel against his Creator ; and thereby the God that made him was turned to be his enemy. The glory of his great name made it necessary not to suffer this sin to go unpunished.

3. Hereby Adam divested himself of that image of God in which he was created. The image of God in which man was at first created, did include, as has been observed, dependence upon, and subjection to him, with full delight and complacency in him, as an all-satisfying portion to the soul ; together with an holy rectitude of mind, and conformity of heart to the moral perfections of the divine nature. But if we attend to this matter, and consider the several properties of this divine likeness on the soul ; we shall see how Adam, by committing this sin, di-

vested himself of it. For, as to dependence on God, this was wholly rooted out of his heart. He could have no dependence on God, for any good thing; nothing but deserved wrath was he to expect from him, in his guilty state. This is evident from the threatning of the covenant under which he sinned.

As to subjection to divine authority, this was renounced in the very act of sinning.

And as to complacency of soul in God, wherein the soul takes up its rest in the enjoyment of him, as an all-satisfying good and portion; this was counteracted, and the soul, in the very act of sinning, was turned away from God to the creature; and that interest in God, on which this delight in him depended, was forfeited.

And as to any likeness to God with respect to his moral perfections, consisting in rectitude, purity, holiness, &c. what idea is it possible for us to have of it in that heart, from which all dependence on God, complacency in him, and subjection to him are lost and gone? A little attention to these things will give us clearly to see, how by the first act of sin, Adam lost and defaced that image and likeness of God from his nature, in which he was created; and rendered himself unlike God, and contrary to him, throughout his moral frame.

4. By this first sin Adam turned himself out of the service of God. It was not becoming the glory of God, under that constitution, to retain a rebel in his service: but it became necessary to punish him as a sinner.

The general nature of that service which was due to God from man, by the moral law, which still remained to be his rule of duty in this covenant-form, was for man so to behave as to exercise and exhibit a proper manifestation of that image and likeness of his Creator in which he was made; as has been already shown. But man, by blotting out this image, disabled himself for this service. This divine image being lost, there could no longer be any

ability in man for an exhibition of it. Yea, there was not only this loss of ability; but man was hereby really turned out of the service of God.

As this is a point in which I have been heretofore greatly misunderstood, I will take the more pains now to give a more full illustration of it.

Doubtless it will be readily granted, that Adam, by his sin, cut himself off from God, and forfeited all interest in him. Let it then be remembered, that the general nature of that service which was required of man, by the moral law, consisted in preserving, exercising and expressing the several properties of that divine image in which he was created, in the several actions, and on the various occasions of life; as I have shewn in the first part of this discourse. Some of the leading and principal exercises in which this divine image is expressed, are such exercises as these, viz. *delight, complacency, hope, trust, and dependence*. Now, all these exercises imply and pre-suppose, that the soul enjoys access to God, and is interested in him. While Adam's interest in God remained, it was his duty to maintain these exercises of soul towards him: but when his interest in God, on which these exercises depended, was forfeited; the penalty of the broken law must be allowed to take place. The penalty or sanction of the broken law, cut him off from God, and from all hope, trust and dependence upon him; and it no longer allowed him to enjoy God as his portion in the exercises of complacency and delight, which exercises depend upon, and pre-suppose and imply some interest that the soul has in him. In these respects then, it is evident, that Adam, by becoming guilty, did turn himself out of the service of God. For when all such exercises of soul as imply *interest in God*, are excepted; there will but very little remain, that can properly be called duty.

Objection. Was it not still Adam's duty to love God with all his heart? Did the first sin forever after exempt him from all duty to God, and all obligation

to his Creator? Was he not still under obligation to obey the whole law? Or might he act as he pleased; and yet, none of his actions be accounted criminal?

Answer. Is it proper to require a man, who hath cut off both his legs, to rise up and walk? Is a dead man under obligations to perform the services of the living? Indeed, I grant, the inability which Adam brought upon himself by his own misconduct, considered merely as inability, did not excuse him. A man that cuts off both his legs, thereby fixeth a lasting blame upon himself. The simple act of cutting off his legs, is but a transient act; but the crime, or criminal quality of the action, is permanent, fixed, and as lasting as his life: but I cannot see, how a man can be blamed for not using his legs, when he has none to use. But the inability of Adam's fallen state, was not *mere inability*; but he was disfranchised, or incapacitated by the constitution under which he sinned. For consider: Did the penalty of the broken law cut him off from all hope, trust, dependence, and expectation of favor from God? Or can the law require these exercises of hope, trust and dependence, of a man, in such a state in which the penalty of the law cuts him off from them? And yet, these exercises are included in loving God with all the heart. Can we view Adam, in his fallen state, and without a mediator, as performing his duty, if he had exercised the same hope, trust, dependence upon, and confidence towards God, as would have been his duty, if he had never forfeited his interest in God? It is common for preachers to tell sinners, "It is presumption to trust to the goodness of God to save them, whilst they neglect and disregard the Savior." And for the same reason, that confidence in God, which was Adam's duty before the fall, was presumption in him, after he sinned.

Required obedience is not merely duty, but it is a privilege. This hope, trust, dependence upon, and vesting of soul in God, in which obedience primarily

and radically consists, may as properly be ranked under the head of privileges, as of duties ; but they are privileges which were forfeited by sin. In these things the life, the glory, and the blessedness of the human nature consisted. I trust, such as do not esteem obedience to God, as a most valuable privilege, have a very mistaken notion of it. Is it not a privilege that we may have access to God ; that we may come before him with holy boldness and humble confidence as children to a father, able and ready to help us ? Is it not a privilege to devote ourselves to him, put confidence in him, and trust ourselves with him in life and death ? And are not these exercises that in which all true obedience primarily and radically consists ? Or what is there, that the law requires, that does not flow from, but is wholly destitute of all such exercises of heart as are necessarily predicated upon an interest in God ? or I would query whether the law can require Adam in his guilty state, to maintain these exercises of soul towards God, and at the same time cut him off from that interest in him, which is the foundation, life and spirit of these exercises ? It was fallen Adam's punishment to be cut off from, and turned out of the service of God. Herein he was disfranchised by the constitution under which he sinned. He was not excused from duty because of inability ; nor was he to be considered as having received a release from any obligation that had been laid upon him ; but as cast off by God, and turned out of his service, no more to have any access to him, dependence upon him, or expectation of any good thing from him. Thus was he a totally ruined creature.

It must be here remembered that I am speaking of the state Adam was in, after the fall, before the covenant of grace was revealed. The disfranchisement is now taken off by the mediator, as I shall more fully show hereafter ; and it has thereby become our indispensable duty to love God with all the heart ; although Adam was cut off from it, for his sin, till the new covenant was brought in. And the seeming absurdity of

saying, that Adam in his fallen state, was not required to love God with all his heart, is partly owing to our not attending to the nature of those exercises of hope, trust, dependence, &c. which are included in loving God with all the heart, and the connection there is between them and an interest in God, and partly to our accustoming ourselves to form our apprehension of the state of fallen man, according to what it now is, since the new covenant is brought in.

I readily grant, that our inability in our present fallen state, is no excuse for us; because the introduction of the covenant of grace by the mediation of Christ, has made our present state greatly different from that into which Adam brought himself by the fall: the disfranchisement is thereby taken off. I know that it sounds strange to some, to say that Adam, *after his fall, was not required to love God with all his heart.* But the address of it is, in a great measure, owing to our accustoming ourselves, to a loose, general way of speaking, without exact and fixed ideas. For when all such exercises are excepted, which imply and pre-suppose interest in God, and access to him; viz. complacency, delight, hope, trust, dependence, and confidence towards God; there will be but a very small part of the heart left, wherewith we may love God. Nor are these distinctions to be styled *metaphysical, nice, or curious speculations*, which tend to puzzle and confound men's minds; but it is an important and very useful point. It is this that convinceth the sinner of the misery of a sinful state, as he is cut off from God, and in perishing need of a Savior. It is a conviction of this truth, that effectually humbles the proud, self-justifying heart to the foot of a sovereign God. And it is a sense of this truth, that more especially prepares and disposeth the humbled soul, to receive eternal life, as a free gift of sovereign grace.

Although Adam was disfranchised for his sin, and turned out of the service of God, especially in all such exercises as imply access to him, or interest in

him, by the sanction of the law that he had broken ; yet, it will not follow, that his obligations of every kind were cancelled, so that his after-conduct could be no ways criminal. He still continued a rational creature, and ought to act a rational part. He ought still to maintain honorable thoughts of God, as a Being in himself, infinitely glorious ; although he was not to look upon him any longer as his God, or a *good* for him to enjoy. He ought still to ascribe righteousness to his Maker ; and to take blame to himself, in a silent submission to the sufferings of deserved punishment. In such instances as these, Adam might be said to be under obligations of duty, if the word *duty* may be applied to the actions of a rebel, in such a totally ruined state. And although Adam's eating the forbidden fruit was a transient action ; yet it was of such a criminal nature as to fix everlasting blame upon him ; he would have been to blame, in every moment of his miserable existence, for not having faithfully retained his original perfection and blessedness. No limited period could ever have worn off from him the fault of his apostacy.

5. Adam, by this sin, broke up that union between God and him, in which he was at first created. Whilst he remained innocent, there was a close and intimate union between God and him ; and one common, undivided interest. God's interest was the glory of his great name ; and the interest of man lay in glorifying and enjoying God : both having one common, undivided interest. He effectually secured his own interest, whilst he continued to glorify God. His regard for the divine glory, and for his own happiness, were inseparable in that state. Herein consisted his spiritual life. But when he became guilty, this union was broken up ; spiritual death, which primarily consists in this breach of union with God, seized upon his soul. He was divided from God, and came to have a separate interest. God's glory required that man should receive the punishment

due to his offence : but man's desire of his own happiness must make him desirous of escaping this punishment. Here then, God's glory, or man's happiness, must fail. From hence therefore, enmity and contrariety between God and man naturally takes place. For man's well-being was no longer consistent with the glory of God. This contrariety between God and man was a natural consequence of the first sin.

6. This breach of Union between God and man, made way for the supreme love of the creature to grow and increase in the heart of man. Being divided from God, and having no more interest in him, or access to him, man was left to seek his own happiness where he could find it. He was not a self-sufficient creature : but he became happy by the enjoyment of some suitable object. The happiness of man, for which his nature was first formed, and which was originally intended for him, consisted in the enjoyment of God. But when he had cut himself off from God, his desire of happiness led him to seek it in such objects to which he could have access. Hence it came to pass, that his heart naturally went out after the creature, instead of God : which attachment to creature-enjoyments becomes more fixed and streng, by daily exercise, and long continuance.

Thus we see by what has been now said, how ruinous and destructive the first sin was to the human nature ; and what evil fruits and consequences naturally and necessarily follow from it. The things which have been mentioned, are no other than the natural consequences of guilt. Hereby the human nature was thus totally ruined. But besides these natural evil consequences, there is the wrath of God, and the execution of threatened punishment still due to man for sin ; which includes the death of the body, and the suffering divine vengeance in the eternal state.

Hitherto we have considered the effects of sin upon Adam himself. But let us continue our view, and consider how his posterity are affected with it. And if the sin of Adam is imputed to his seed, as has been shown ; it will have a like depraving effect upon them, as it had upon him. It has been thought by some, a matter of special difficulty to account for the propagation of native depravity from Adam to his posterity. But if the imputation of his sin to them be allowed, depravity of nature will follow as a necessary consequence. For where the guilt of sin takes place, it divides the soul from God, and shuts it out from all access to him, and communion with him. Hereby Adam's posterity, considered merely in their connexion with him, are disabled, and cut off from that dependent, complacential resting of soul in God, which was such an essential part of the divine image ; and are left only to the enjoyment of such degrees of pleasure as creatures are able to afford them, in like-manner as Adam was. Some delight and complacency in creatures, is doubtless consistent with a state of perfection. It is not to be questioned but that Adam, in his innocent state, tasted a sweetness in, and was pleased with such things as divine goodness had provided for him to eat and drink ; although he was at the same time perfect in his love of God. And so in our fallen state, our nature is capable of partaking of that pleasure which sensible objects are able to afford us. But as man in his innocent state, was interested in the favor of God, and enjoyed communion with him ; therefore if he had duly improved this privilege, his acquaintance with God would have given him such views and tastes of the divine glory, as would have filled the heart with the love of God, and prevented the soul from going abroad after happiness. And if our first parents had maintained their innocent state till children had been born unto them ; these children would have come into the world in a state of covenant love, peace and favor with God. They would have been interested

in, and favored with that communion with God, and those early manifestations of the divine glory, by which their hearts would have been possessed of the love of God, before any creature-enjoyment had become rooted in their affections. But when our first parents had cut themselves off from the love of God, and the precious privilege of communion with him; "Adam begat a son in his own likeness." And as his children were born under the guilt of his sin, by which they were disabled for that dependent, complacential resting of soul in God, which belonged to the divine image; and were cut off from communion with him, and denied those early manifestations of the divine glory, whereby their souls would have been enlivened with the love of God; they being thus divided from God, grew up in an acquaintance with the things of this world. As soon as their bodily faculties were capable of receiving impressions from sensible objects, and tasting some degrees of pleasure in them; their hearts would naturally go out after them, as the things in the enjoyment of which, all the happiness they knew of, did consist. Whence it comes to pass, that the things of this world get deeply rooted in their hearts, even before they obtain any knowledge of God. The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, being allowed; it will be easy to account for all that moral depravity which is thus become universal to mankind. For if we come into the world under the guilt of his sin, are thereby cut off from communion with God, and denied those manifestations of the divine glory which would awaken the love of God in the heart; it will naturally and necessarily follow, that we shall be united in our affections to the enjoyment of this life: which temper of mind is fitly styled enmity against God; and is such a source of sin as is sufficient to account for all that wickedness which has overspread the whole human race. There is no need to suppose any vicious taint, or corrupt principle infused in our nature, either by the righteous judgment of God, or by the force

of natural generation ; for all the sin and wickedness of mankind will follow merely from the imputation of Adam's first sin to his posterity. What we receive in the course of natural generation, is a natural existence ; or the powers and faculties which belong to our nature, by which we become beings capable to put forth natural, rational and moral exercises. And if what we receive in a course of natural generation, are only those natural faculties which render us capable of moral agency ; then we shall be denominated holy, or sinful, according to the nature of such moral exercises as we put forth. If from the beginning, we were favored with communion with God, and proper manifestations of his glory to our souls, those natural faculties which render us capable of moral agency, would naturally put forth such moral exercises as would be agreeable to the perfections of God : but being shut out from communion with him by the guilt of sin, our natural faculties, of course, fall under the influence of sensible objects ; and will therefore put forth such exercises as are unholy and sinful. And as we thus come into the world under the imputation of Adam's first sin, as a consequence of which, we are destitute of the divine image, and under the prevailing influence of the things of this world ; therefore we have reason to confess with David, " I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me." And as our natural desire of happiness, which is a very strong and active passion, has nothing to feed upon but the creature, it will cause us, " To drink in iniquity like water." Our natural thirst after happiness would not be sinful; provided we suitably sought after the gratification of it in the glorification and enjoyment of God : but when the soul is turned away from him, and this thirst runs out after the enjoyment of creatures, it becomes sinful ; it is the source of all that sin and wickedness which appears in our lives ; and is that temper of mind which the apostle justly styles " enmity against God."

Some will say, If the imputation of sin will have such a depraving influence on the nature of him to whom it is imputed ; why then had it not this effect upon the Son of God, *when the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all ?* I answer. The case with Adam's seed was widely different from that of the Son of God. The sin of Adam was laid upon his natural seed by the first covenant ; which afforded them no room for exercising any dependence on God, in their guilty state ; but they were, according to the tenor of that dispensation, totally, and forever cut off from God, and abandoned to despair. But it was in the second covenant, the covenant of redemption, that the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all ; wherein it was stipulated, that the Son should give, and the Father accept of an atonement for sin. The Son therefore, notwithstanding our iniquities were laid upon him, could exercise faith in and dependence upon God, through the atonement, by himself in due time to be made. Our mighty Redeemer was a *believer* ; he stood by faith ; by faith, he wrought out salvation ; and by faith he obtained the victory. The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, in the first covenant, must necessarily deprave them ; because through guilt, they were disabled for, and cut off from exercising that dependence on God, which was an essential property of the divine image in which the human nature was first formed. But when the sin of man was laid on Christ in the second covenant, by virtue of faith in God through the atonement, he was still able to preserve, maintain and exercise all the properties of the divine image on the soul, in like manner as we are now restored to an ability for these exercises, by faith in the Mediator.

By the way ; we may here see the excellence and importance of true faith. Christ stood by faith ; and by it wrought out salvation for us. And we have the same foundation to stand upon that he had ; and must obtain the victory in the same way that he did. When the Son of God took our nature on him, he

embarked upon the same bottom with fallen man ; either to perish with them, (if I may so speak) or to bring them off victorious with himself. The atonement of his own blood was the foundation on which his faith rested ; and that is as free, and as sufficient for us, as it was for him. And to strengthen our faith in God through this atonement, we have the virtue, efficacy and sufficiency of it illustrated to us, in that victory which Christ thereby obtained over death and the grave. Heb. xiii, 20. "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." I am sensible that good expositors connect that expression, "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," with the next sentence, "Make you perfect," &c. But they may be taken in connexion with the preceding sentence with as much, yea, more propriety. But to return :

Hitherto we have considered the effect of the apostacy on the human race, without any reference to the relief provided in the new covenant. And from this view of the case and state into which Adam brought himself, and his posterity, by the breach of the first covenant ; we may see wherein the *spiritual death*, the *moral depravity*, or *impotency* of mankind consists. That mankind are naturally without strength and labor under an *inability* of some kind or other, is a truth very manifest : but wherein this impotency consists, is a point in which we are not so well agreed. Some suppose they have sufficiently described it, by calling it *moral inability*, in distinction from *natural inability*. And this *moral inability*, they say, *consists in the will* ; that man is *unable* to yield due obedience, because he is *unwilling*. But this is far from being a just representation of the case. From the preceding observations on the original apostacy, it appears that several things must be taken into the account, that we may give a just representation of it. Indeed, this want of ability for the performance of

our duty, is not natural inability : that is, the natural powers and faculties which man is possessed of, are sufficient for the performance of the whole of his duty. But this impotency may, in a proper sense, be called moral inability ; though it consists not merely in the want of a will. There are some properties of it distinct from and quite independent on the present state of the will.

1. The loss of the image of God in which man was at first made, rendered him spiritually dead, or unable to yield required obedience. The general nature of that obedience to the will of God which was man's duty, I have shown to consist in those exercises of soul by which man was to exhibit his likeness to God, in the several actions of life. But it appears, that as soon as the guilt of sin took place, this conformity to God ceased. It so cut man off from God, that although he was never so willing and desirous to have God for the foundation of his hope and dependence, and the enjoyment of him as his all-satisfying portion ; yet he could not, because this interest in God was irrecoverably forfeited. He could now have no dependence on God, nor any enjoyment of him. And so in all other respects, by becoming guilty, he divested himself of the divine image. And as the general nature of that obedience which was God's due, and man's duty consisted in exercising and manifesting this conformity to God ; therefore, the divine image being lost, there remained no ability in man to make a true manifestation of it.

2. Fallen man has lost his ability, in that he hath put himself out of the reach of the proper influence of motives. Man was made to be influenced by motives. This is evident, because his Maker did propose to govern him by motives. This appears by his setting life and death before him. But as soon as man had sinned, the motives to obedience lost their influence upon him. Promises could no longer influence him ; because the promised blessings were irre-

coverably lost. Threatening could no longer take their full hold upon him, for it is too late to deter a man from sin, by threatening him with death, after he is already condemned to it ; because despair takes off their influence. And as man had thus removed himself from under the proper influence of motives, it is evident that he wanted those springs of action, for yielding obedience to the will of God which were suitable and necessary to furnish him for his duty.

3. Fallen man became unable to serve God, because he was excluded from it by the condemning sentence of the law which he had broken. By reason of his forfeiture, the penalty of the law cut him off from God. And as the service of God principally consisted in exercising hope, trust, dependence, and such like exercises which are predicated upon, and suppose interest in him, therefore the condemning sentence of the broken law, lay in man's way, as an insuperable obstruction to his performing that service, or duty which was originally required of him : This impediment lay before fallen man, independent on the present state of his will. To say therefore that fallen man was unable to perform required obedience only because he was unwilling, is far, very far from being a full representation of the case.

4. Another reason of the inability of man for the service of God, is the prepossession of his heart in favor of creature-enjoyments. As we come into the world under the guilt of the original apostacy, and are therefore excluded from communion with God ; it comes to pass that creature-enjoyments get possession of our hearts in the early part of our life. And as we grow up in acquaintance with these things, they get deeply rooted in our affections before we obtain any knowledge of God, or that there is any thing better than the creature to be enjoyed. And by reason of this habitual attachment to the things of this world, which we contract by use and custom, it is exceeding difficult to remove our heart from the love of the world, to the love of God. And no small

part of the inability of man for the service of God, lies in this prepossession and attachment of heart to creatures. This is that which is more frequently spoken of as the cause of our rebellion. It is that carnal mind which is so justly styled *enmity* against God. And it is this friendship for the world that makes us the enemies of God. To this it is the prophet refers, as the reason why we cannot do good. Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." This also is one reason why the apostle speaks of us as dead in trespasses and sins. And it is in this respect that our present inability to obey, consists very much in our will. This carnal mind is voluntary and chosen. The gaining of the will for God, would very much remove our inability in this respect, for the service of God.

5. I may further add : the reason why the inability of our fallen state abides upon us, is the unbelief of our hearts in divine revelation. The introduction of the new covenant by the mediation of Christ, has opened a way of access to God for us in our guilty state ; and a sure foundation is thereby laid for recovering our forfeited interest in God, and of consequence, for the exercise of all christian graces towards him wherein the divine image consists ; for exercising that hope, trust, dependence, complacency and delight in God, which the penalty of the broken law had cut us off from : that the image of God in all its parts, might be again restored to the soul. And a hearty belief of these gospel-truths would have a great influence in restoring the soul to a capacity for this service of God. But till faith in God through the Redeemer takes place in our hearts, this inability for the service of God, which is brought upon us by the fall, will abide in us.

I have said, the disfranchisement laid upon man for the breach of the first covenant, is taken off by the introduction of the second. That is, there is a way

opened by the Mediator for us to return to God, and recover our forfeited interest in him; and of consequence, all the right exercises of soul towards him. But then, the soul must see and believe this new and living way consecrated by Christ, before it will feel itself enlarged, or discover any possibility of confidence towards God in its guilty state. When under awakenings and convictions, natural conscience shows the sinner the sanction of the law which he hath broken, excluding him from all interest in God, and cutting him off from all confidence towards him. And the soul, while under these views only, can exercise no dependence upon God, sees all interest in him forfeited, and can place no hope, nor put any trust in him for the bestowment of any favor, till the saving fulness of the Mediator, and the riches and sovereign freedom of the grace of God through him to the guilty, come into view. So that although the disfranchisement is removed in law; yet the soul doth not actually partake of, or possess that liberty wherewith Christ makes it free, till the glory of the Mediator comes into view, and the soul is suitably affected and influenced by the new covenant. For it is plain that guilty creatures can have no real or true confidence towards God, nor any hope or trust in him, but what must be predicated upon a Mediator. And therefore that inability which was brought upon us by the fall, will abide in us till it is removed by faith in Christ; that is, by the effectual operation of the new covenant on the heart.

Still, it may be inquired wherein the inability of the sinner to believe in Christ doth consist?

To this I answer. We cannot believe the truth of any report, till we see reason for it; that is, till we see sufficient evidence to confirm the truth of it. And a divine faith must rest upon a divine testimony. When the soul discovers that God hath borne witness to his Son Jesus Christ, it will immediately give credit to the gospel. And although human reason may collect sufficient evidence to prove the truth of

the gospel ; yet an awakened conscience will not be satisfied, nor be brought to rest upon the promises without divine illumination or teaching. John vi. 44. "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me, draw him." But when the divine spirit teacheth, the soul will so learn as to come to the Son. John vi. 45. "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

Here is the impotency of our fallen state, of which we can have very clear and distinct ideas, without being perplexed with those abstruse speculations and metaphysical distinctions between natural and moral inability, which many divines make use of in treating of moral impotency. The soul finds itself utterly unable to exercise any hope in, or confidence towards God ; unable to exercise complacency, or to take up its rest in God, as his God, his satisfying good and portion, till the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shines in upon it. Herein we see total inability in the sinner with respect to all holy exercises towards God, very different in some respects from mere *unwillingness*.

- And that famous dispute about a self-determining power in the *will*, may be wholly set aside, and left to the philosophers to determine as they please, while the religion of the gospel remains unconcerned with it.

Attention to these awful effects of sin upon our nature, will lead us to see something of the evil nature of it, how hateful it is in its own nature, and how ruinous to the soul. The law of God, therefore, is good, as well as holy and just, in its forbidding all sin. It aims at our good, as well as the glory of God. In every instance in which we choose sin, we forsake our own mercies. It is what, in its own nature, brings total ruin upon the soul. Although it was a very gracious covenant that God made with man, whereby he was put into much better circumstances than he would have been, if God had left him to stand

under the law of his creation ; in much less danger of falling into sin ; and had peculiar advantages of obtaining very great and valuable privileges which could not have been obtained without such a covenant ; yet we see man soon ruined himself. And hereby we see something of the dependent nature of a creature, how excellent, or how perfect soever he is made. A creature is of a finite, limited, mutable nature ; and its effectual security is therefore not in itself, but in God. And it is a natural transition, for our minds to be hereby led to a view of the transcendent goodness of God, expressed to fallen man in providing such a glorious new covenant head, who partakes of an unchangeable nature, which afforded infallible security of success in accomplishing the probation assigned him in the new covenant, for the recovery and salvation of the children of men. An attentive view of the ruins of our fallen state discovers our perishing need of help from the rich and sovereign grace of God. Man was lost beyond all possibility of delivering himself ; could lay no claim to any help from God ; and is therefore infinitely indebted to the boundless riches of divine grace, in laying help upon one that is mighty to save, one able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him.

THE RECOVERY OF MAN BY JESUS
CHRIST.

IN the preceding part we have been entertained with a melancholy view of the ruin of our nature by the apostacy of our first parents. But we come now to take a view of the bright side of our subject, and to turn our thoughts upon the glorious discoveries of redeeming grace, manifested to us by God's sending his Son to save sinners. Known unto God are all his works. The fall of Adam was foreseen before the foundation of the world; and the plan was laid in the eternal counsels of the divine mind, for the redemption of fallen man by the mediation of the Son of God; who in due time was to take our nature on him, become man, and perform that work by which he might be the author of eternal redemption to all them that obey him. And although the real appearance of the Son of God amongst men, and his actual performance of the work of redemption, was not till many years after the fall; yet his mediation took place before his incarnation; and, in the acceptance of God, he was "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." For when God came to our first parents after the fall, and had convicted them of their breach of covenant; he thereupon revealed to them the covenant of grace, in the promise of the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head. Then it was, that the covenant of grace was introduced, the Redeemer's kingdom was set up, and the influence of his mediation took place between God and man, as the foundation of all his subsequent dealings with them. And for a distinct view of these important matters, I shall divide my subject into the following heads:

I. I shall represent the true character of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom this new dispensation is brought in.

II. Take a general view of this dispensation which is brought in by the Son of God.

III. Inquire into the state of mankind under this dispensation, and the tenor of God's various dealings with them.

I. The character of this glorious person, the Son of God, who hath brought in this new dispensation, is first to be attended to.

This wonderful person who appeared for the important purpose of sustaining the sinking world is *IMMANUEL, God manifest in the flesh*. The fall of man has perhaps been the occasion of revealing in a more clear light, the great mystery of a *Trinity* in the God-head, who are distinguished by the personal appellations of *FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST*. It is the second person in the Trinity, the *SON*, who came into the world, took our nature on him, and is truly God and man, in two distinct natures and one person; who has brought in the dispensation of redeeming grace for a lost world. Many questions both curious and important, might be moved concerning these gospel-doctrines of a Trinity in the God-head, and the incarnation of the Son; all which I purposely pass by, and take this character of the Son of God as it is clearly revealed in the gospel, which is sufficient for us to know, that we may form just thoughts of the present divine constitution under which we stand probationers for the rewards or punishments of the eternal state.

The two natures in the person of the Son render him a meet person for the work upon which he came into the world. The human nature was necessary, that he might be under the law, might fulfil all righteousness, and might suffer the death due for sin. And the divine nature was necessary to prevent his sinking under the weight of his sufferings, and to render his obedience and sufferings truly meritorious. No one that was less than divine, was able to atone for sin, to overcome death, to ascend into the

heavens, to exercise all power in heaven and on earth, to judge the world, and to distribute rewards and punishments to every one according to their works.

Many things were necessary for the Son of God to perform in his prosecuting this great work; and many and various were the blessings to flow therefrom to the children of men. And that this all-sufficiency and complete fulness of our Almighty Savior might be represented to us in a clear and plain light, he is described in the gospel as being vested with, and executing various offices for us; the right understanding of which is necessary to the saving knowledge of him.

The first character under which I shall consider our Lord Jesus Christ, is that of a covenant-head. The headship of Christ is often mentioned, and variously represented; sometimes in a more extensive, and sometimes in a more limited sense.

He is sometimes represented as the head of his spiritual body, or of real saints. Thus is he spoken of in Col. ii. 19, where the apostle speaks of men of corrupt minds, as "Not holding the head, the Lord Jesus Christ, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

This headship of Christ is also sometimes represented in a more extensive sense, or expressive of his relation to the whole visible church. Col. i. 18. "He is the head of the body, the Church."

This headship of Christ is also represented still more extensive, and expresseth his relation to the whole human race. Hence, he is styled the *second Adam*. As Adam stood in a covenant-relation to all his seed; so also is Christ, in some sense, related to and stands in the relation of a covenant-head to all mankind, as will more fully appear in the sequel.

Christ sustains the relation of a head to both angels and men. Eph. i. 10. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together

in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.

Headship is also sometimes ascribed to Christ with respect to the whole creation. This is, in part, the import of that lofty character which the apostle gives him in Col. i. 15, 16, 17. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature : for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." The title and privileges of the first-born are headship and dominion ; and in these respects Christ is the first-born of every creature.

Thus then we see, that Christ is represented as the head of various and very different bodies. And as Christ stands in the relation of a head to such different bodies ; there must be a proportionable difference in the relation itself, although expressed by the same title : and there is a proportionable difference in the privileges which these different bodies receive from their head. Thus, when Christ is spoken of as the head of his body, the church, it is a headship in a different respect from what is intended when he is represented as the head of the whole human race, and very different privileges are connected with it.

Another character under which the Lord Jesus Christ is spoken of, is that of a *Redeemer*. A Redeemer is one that pays the price by which freedom is obtained for one that is captivated or enslaved. Thus, Christ redeems us from under the curse, with the price of his own blood. And another title by which he is spoken of, nearly of the same import, is that of a *Savior*. This is the title by which he is most commonly spoken of, in the New Testament, and is the proper signification of his Hebrew name *Jesus*. Matt. i 21. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." And the salvation that Jesus Christ is the author of is very great.

and includes a great variety of blessings ; and all mankind share in them, in a greater or less degree, as I shall shew hereafter ; for which cause he is styl- ed “ The Savior of all men ; especially of them that believe.” I. Tim. iv. 10.

Another important character by which Christ is described, is that of a *Mediator*. I. Tim. ii. 5. “ There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus ” A Mediator is one that steps between two that are at variance, to heal the breach, and make peace between them. This is the most significant and important character by which our Lord Jesus Christ is described to us in the gospel. Sin has made a wide breach between God and man ; and the whole world must have sunk into ru- in, had it not been for this glorious Mediator. And that we may have a just representation of Christ in his mediatorial character, we must attend to the sev- eral offices which he executes in the performance of his mediatorial work ; which are Prophet, Priest, Surety, Intercessor, Advocate and King.

The Lord Jesus Christ in mediating between God and us, executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us by his word and spirit, the will of God for our salvation. He is the great prophet of his church, who by his spirit inspired the prophets under the Old Testament ; and under the gospel-dispensation hath given gifts unto men. All divine revelation comes from him.

Christ mediates between God and man by execu- ting the office of a priest. He is the great high- priest of our profession, who, in the execution of this office, has offered up himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, in his shedding his blood, and laying down his life upon the cross ; and in pursuit of this design, is passed into the heavens, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Christ acted as a Mediator when he became a sure- ty for us Heb. vii. 22. “ By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.” A surety sig-

nifies much the same as a bondsman. Many and great are the demands which divine justice has upon us ; for all which, Christ becomes our surety. Some suppose this office of a surety is included in his priestly office, as they do also his intercession. For the apostle is representing his priesthood when he observes, Heb. vii. 25, " That he ever liveth to make intercession for them." It is the part of an intercessor to make request for the bestowment of free favors. And in this respect an intercessor differs from an advocate, whose business it is to defend and plead the cause of another. I. John ii. 1. " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And it is in confidence of this, that the apostle makes that challenge in Rom. viii. 34. " Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died."

The last office that I shall mention which Christ is said to execute, is that of a King. Revel. xix. 16. " And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, *Lord of Lords, and King of Kings.*" It has been the general custom of christian writers, to include the kingly office of our Lord Jesus Christ in his mediatorial character. But when we consider that it is the business of a mediator to stand between two that are at variance, that he may reconcile them ; there scarcely appears room in such a character to include the idea of kingly dignity and authority. And the province in which our Lord had to act in the exercise of his kingly office, is very distinct from all the other parts of that work which he had to perform. And besides, the honor and dignity which belongs to this office, is represented as a reward bestowed upon him for his service and abasement, rather than as a part of his work. This is the light in which the apostle sets it in Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. " Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being

Abund in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name : that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

But although this kingly office with the glory and dignity of it was conferred upon our Lord, as a reward for his sufferings, yet it was an office which was necessary to complete his character ; and the design which he came into the world upon, could not be finally executed without his being vested with, and executing this high office and authority. For altho' it belongs to a mediator to persuade and intreat, yet it is also evidently fitting that Christ, in his treating with us, should command and enjoin our duty upon us. And he is hereby rendered a more proper and complete object of our faith, and a most suitable person with whom to trust our everlasting interests.—
 "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, *and made higher than the heavens.*" Heb. vii, 26.

The kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ is variously represented. It is sometimes described as a spiritual kingdom set up in the heart of his people. Luke xvii, 21. "The kingdom of God is within you." It is sometimes set forth in a different manner, as intending his visible church. Psalm ii, 6. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." And sometimes the kingly office of Christ is described as extending to all things visible and invisible. Mat. xxviii, 18. "All power in heaven and on earth is given unto me." And the last and closing exercises of this kingly authority of Christ, will be the solemn transactions of the day of judgment, when we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account, and to receive the things done in the ba-

dy ; after which Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.

To this account of the offices of our Savior, may be subjoined the name *Christ*, which is used as the proper name of our Lord, the signification of which is, *the anointed* ; which does not signify any particular office, but has a general reference to all his offices, and denotes his being invested with them by the Father.

Thus have I endeavored to give a brief representation of the character, offices and work of the Son of God, who by the execution of these offices, has introduced the glorious dispensation of redeeming grace for mankind in their fallen state ; which by common consent has obtained the name of *the covenant of grace*, among christian writers.* By this title they

* How it has come to pass that christian writers have so generally styled the dispensation of redeeming grace, which is brought in by the mediation of Jesus Christ, by this title, *The covenant of grace*, is not easily determined. 'Tis a pity it has ever obtained that name in common use ; not only because it is never so called in the sacred scripture, but also because it has been the occasion of great mistakes, and much perplexity and confusion among christian Divines, both in their systematic, casuistic, polemic, experimental, and practical writings. This distinguishing title has led mankind to expect to find nothing in this second covenant but the displays of divine grace and good will, without any declarations of wrath, or executions of vengeance. Hence have arisen those grave perplexities of distinguishing between the moral law and the covenant of grace—between the duties of natural, and of revealed religion—which texts in the bible belong to the covenant of grace, and which to the covenant of works—whether the covenant of grace contains only promises of mercy, or also commands and threatenings, &c. To style the second covenant a *covenant of grace*, doth not at all distinguish it from the first covenant made with Adam. For the one is as much a covenant of grace as the other. For every covenant that God makes with his creatures, must necessarily be a covenant of grace ; they can in the nature of things be nothing else, There is not a sentence or word in the bible, except the two first chapters of Genesis, and part of the third, but what belongs

mean to distinguish it from that covenant which God made with our first parents, which has commonly obtained the name of *the covenant of works*. This dispensation which is brought in by the Son of God, is a glorious scheme which God, in his eternal counsel, has contrived for the display of the glory of his great name, in the salvation and happiness of fallen man. Hereby the glory of God is displayed before principalities and powers: the glorious angels of light take pleasure in looking into it; much more then ought it to engage the attention of mankind, who are so greatly interested in it: To a brief view of which I shall now proceed.

II. A general view of this dispensation, which is brought in by the Son of God is next to be offered.

As this dispensation was brought in by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the execution of the several offices which he was clothed with, we must form our sentiments of it by attending to his character exhibited in the gospel, which has been pointed out under the preceding head of this discourse. And the light in which some of his offices will lead us to conceive of him, is, *as being under covenant engagements to the*

to the promulgation of the second covenant. Nor has God, since the giving of the promise of the seed of the woman, taken one step in his dealings with fallen man, nor ever will to all eternity, but what is to be considered as his procedure with them in this second covenant, which is brought in by the mediation of his son. The executions of divine vengeance upon the wicked in hell is as truly God's administration in the covenant of grace, as is the salvation and future glorification of believers.

Such as have confined the covenant of grace, in their view of it, to the uniting of the soul with Christ, upon the gospel offer, bewilder themselves with a wrong notion of it. And setting out upon this wrong view of it, as the foundation on which they form their arguments, their conclusions seem well established when there is really no truth in them; as will readily appear by a just view of the covenant, in its true light and full latitude.

Father, and fulfilling covenanted obedience to him.—

But when we view him in some of his other offices, we shall be led to conceive of him, as mediating between God and sinful men, and bringing about a covenant of reconciliation between them. This dispensation brought in by our divine Mediator, which is commonly styled the *covenant of grace*, may be properly divided into two parts, and considered as being, in some respects, two covenants, in close connexion with each other ; and has accordingly been so distinguished by christian writers. The one they have styled the *covenant of redemption*, and the other, the *covenant of reconciliation*. And as there seems to be sufficient reason in the several offices of Christ, for this distinction, I shall accordingly consider them as distinct covenants, or at least distinguishable the one from the other.

1. *The covenant of redemption is a covenant between the Father and the Son, as the two contracting parties of the covenant.* In this covenant the Father appoints his Son to take the several offices which he is represented in the gospel as being clothed with ; and to perform the work by which he might become the author of eternal salvation to perishing sinners. And God the Son accepts this designation, and freely undertakes to perform this work. To this covenant are to be referred those various promises made to our Savior, respecting divine support and acceptance in his undertaking and accomplishing this work, which we find dispersed in various parts of the bible. This covenant of redemption is the foundation of several of those titles by which he is described in the gospel — Hereby it is that he is appointed to be our Savior and Redeemer ; and on this account he is represented as our covenant-head, and is styled the *second Adam* ; and *Adam* is called a figure of him that was to come. As the first covenant was made with *Adam*, constituting him a covenant-head to his seed, so this second covenant is made with Christ, constituting him a new covenant-head. It is he with whom the covenant of

redemption is made, who is to act in it, and perform the whole work of it. The behavior of Adam under the first covenant, was that on which the life or death of mankind then depended ; and the behavior of Christ under the second covenant, is that on which the recovery and salvation of mankind, as to the meritorious cause thereof, do now depend. Rom. v, 18, 19. " Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

In these respects there was a plain and manifest similitude between Adam and Christ, as the heads of the two covenants : yet in some respects there is a great difference between them. The covenants were two distinct covenants ; and those to whom respect was had in them were in very different circumstances.

1. The covenant made with Christ, is quite distinct from that which was made with Adam. When God made the first covenant with Adam, although the moral law remained as the rule of righteousness ; yet the test of his obedience was contracted to a single point ; and was confined to the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil : but in this second covenant made with Christ, I know of no particular test of obedience prescribed to him ; but the whole law lay before him, and perfect obedience to it made the condition of life. In the first covenant, the obedience of Adam was brought to a trial only in a single point : but in this second covenant, the obedience of the man Christ Jesus was put to the trial in all points of duty. Indeed, there are some special branches of duty enjoined by the moral law, in some certain cases and circumstances, in which the obedience of our new covenant-head was not put to the trial. The various stations in life have particular duties connected with them ; which are incumbent only on such per-

sons as are in such circumstances. And as Christ never sustained such circumstances and relations, his obedience in such points was not brought to a trial. But as he was intended to be a common blessing to mankind ; so he stood a probationer in the second covenant, in such circumstances as are common to all men. And in this respect it may be said, *He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.*

The man Christ Jesus was in a state of trial under this second covenant, as really as Adam was under the first ; and his own life or death was depending, whilst that trial lasted. For when he was made man, he was made under the law, and took upon him the form of a servant ; and if it might be supposed that he had failed in his obedience ; he would have forfeited life, and fallen under condemnation ; but as he persevered in his obedience to the end of his trial ; his title to life was confirmed by the covenant which he had fulfilled. Indeed, there was a great personal difference between Adam and Christ. Adam was a mere creature, of a limited mutable nature : but the man Christ Jesus was a partaker of the divine and unchangeable nature ; which difference in their persons, made a great difference in their state of probation, with respect to the certainty of the issue. A liableness to sin, or a possibility of sinning seems to be an idea inseparably connected with a state of probation. This is certainly the case, when the probationer is a mere creature, of a limited, dependent, mutable nature. When Adam was made a probationer under the first covenant, his own strength, or that natural ability for the service of God with which he was created, was the fund by virtue of which he was to go through his trial. In his case therefore, a liableness to sin was essential to his state of probation. And when the Son of God in our nature was put into a state of trial under the second covenant, there was a liableness that he should sin, so far as one who is a partaker of divine immutability may be said to be liable to it. He was

in all points tempted like as we are. There was nothing in the state in which he stood, nor in the trials he passed through, on account of which it can be said, that he was not liable to fall. The only infallible security of his not failing, was his own personal fund of divine immutability which the manhood enjoyed by its union with the Godhead. But this notwithstanding, he was in all points tempted like as we are; yea, he seems to have had all the temptations laid in his way, that the cruelty of men, and the malice of devils could invent, *for then was their hour, and the power of darkness*; and all the difference there was between Adam and Christ, with respect to the certainty of the issue of their trials, was owing to the difference there was in their persons.

How long Adam was to have stood a probationer under the first covenant if he had been faithful, is not told us; but the term of trial appointed to our new covenant-head was the whole period of the days of his flesh. It began when he took our nature on him, and lasted till the time of his death, when with his last breath, he said, *It is finished.*

This obedience of our Savior is not to be viewed as that in which he alone was concerned; but he performed it in the character of a covenant-head; and 'tis improved by him in his executing his mediatorial offices, as a part of his mediatorial work, or as that righteousness by which he procures the justification of life for his people. As Adam's offence brought the sentence of condemnation on him, and on his natural seed: so the obedience of Christ brings justification on him, and on his spiritual seed. Rom. v. 19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

2. Those to whom respect was had in these two covenants, are under very different circumstances. The first covenant was made with Adam in a state of innocence, and his seed for whom he stood a covenant-head were supposed to come into the world in an in-

nocent state ; active obedience therefore was all that was then necessary to the obtaining a title to the promised reward. But the case of mankind since the fall, is widely different, for whom the second Adam acted in the capacity of a covenant-head. We come into the world under sin, our nature is depraved, and our lives filled up with numberless transgressions. The wages of sin are due to us ; we lie open to death, not of the body only, but of the soul too, in suffering the vengeance of Almighty God in the eternal state. These wages of sin were considered as due to us when the son of God undertook to be our Savior ; and he had this guilt of sin to do away, as well as to provide a justifying righteousness for us by his active obedience. And hence it was necessary to our redemption, that *he his own self, should bear our sins in his own body on the tree.* This is part of the work the son of God undertook to perform in the covenant of redemption.

Whether Adam would have had any thing further to have done, after he had yielded persevering obedience to the first covenant, to the period of his probation state, in order to make his seed partakers of the blessings to which he would have thereby procured for them a title, is a matter about which the holy scriptures are silent : But with respect to our Lord Jesus Christ it is very evident, the work which he undertook in the covenant of redemption, was of much greater extent, and more lasting continuance than his probation-state. That period in which we are to view our Lord Jesus Christ as acting in a state of probation, was from the time he took our nature on him, till he finished his course in death upon the cross. But it is evident, the work of redemption is of much larger extent, and our Savior still had much to do, to make his people partakers of those blessings which he had procured for them by his holy life and atoning death. For as he was delivered for our offences, so he was raised again for our justification ; and his work will never be finished till he has brought all his redem-

ed ones to the full possession of the promised inheritance of eternal life, and made them complete in glory.

What has been now offered may serve as a general view of the covenant of redemption. This is the first and leading part of the dispensation of redeeming grace, and is properly the foundation of all that follows, in all the dealings of God with mankind. 'Tis on this covenant of redemption, that the covenant of reconciliation is predicated. Wherefore

2. *The covenant of reconciliation is a covenant between God and sinners, through the mediation of Jesus Christ.*

The Lord Jesus Christ, by being vested with his several offices, and performing the work he had undertaken in the covenant of redemption, laid a foundation for, and became suitably qualified to carry on a treaty of peace and reconciliation between God and the sinful children of men ; for which cause he is called a *Mediator*. In the prosecution of this design, he is passed into the heavens, to appear in the presence of God for us, to present his own obedience and atonement on our behalf ; and to be our advocate with the Father. He has laid a foundation for the exercise of God's pardoning mercy, that he may become reconciled to sinners, and receive them to his everlasting love, consistent with his holiness and righteousness, and the honor and glory of his government. And all the favor God shows to sinners, and the blessings, of whatever kind he bestows upon them, are for the sake of Christ, and on account of what he hath done in this mediatorial capacity.

Christ, in performing the work of a mediator, not only thus applies to God for us ; but has also to deal with sinners, to bring them to be reconciled to God. In prosecution of this design, he has appeared in our nature, to bring the glad tidings of salvation, has given a complete revelation of divine truth, has set up his visible kingdom the church, has given rules for the regulation of it, and has instituted a gospel-minis-

try, worship and ordinances ; by all which, as a mediator between God and sinners, he treats with them about their reconciliation with God ; the terms of life are stated, a compliance with them is urged upon sinners, many gracious promises of bestowing the blessings of salvation on all such as comply with the terms fixed, are set before them. All these things are to be considered as being included in the mediation of Christ, by which a treaty of peace is carried on, and the covenant of reconciliation happily concluded between God and the complying soul.

The terms fixed in the gospel, by a compliance with which we become heirs of the promises, are comprised by the apostle in *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. Acts, xx, 21. Hereby it is we close covenant with God, and become entitled to the blessings promised in it.— These two christian graces, *Faith* and *Repentance*, although in some respects different exercises of the heart, yet are of the same general nature, and inseparably take place in the soul at the same time.

Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, is a *receiving him*, in all his offices, as he is offered to us in the gospel John, i. 12. “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” I am sensible the word *faith* is used in different senses in the gospel ; but the faith by which we become interested in the promises, is the faith here described.

Repentance towards God, is the returning of the soul to God, through Jesus Christ. This is a concomitant act with that of receiving Christ. But as there is some difference in these exercises of the heart ; so a corresponding distinction is to be made in this covenant of reconciliation. This covenant is represented in two different points of light, in the gospel ; or rather, as being in some sense two distinct covenants : as much distinct as faith and repentance are distinct exercises ; the one is a *coven-*

ant-union with Christ, and the other a covenant-relation to, and interest in God, through Christ.

1. This covenant of reconciliation is primarily to be considered as a covenant-relation to Christ, or union with him by faith. Hence the common appellation of the church is, *The Church of Christ*. It is styled "*Christ's own house.*" Heb. iii. 6. When the church is styled a *Kingdom*, Christ is the king of it. And when it is compared to a building, Christ is the foundation, or chief corner-stone. So, when believers in particular are mentioned, they are spoken of as *espoused to Christ*; and their relation to him is frequently compared to the marriage-covenant. These things being attended to, make it evident, that the covenant of reconciliation completed, is primarily to be considered as a covenant-closure with Christ.

2. This covenant of reconciliation is a covenant-relation to God, through Christ. As faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is a covenant-closure with him as our Savior upon the gospel offer; so repentance towards God is a covenant-closure with him, as our God, through Christ. Although faith and repentance take place in the heart at the same time; yet we see, in the order of nature, faith is necessarily before repentance. Hence the apostle speaks of "coming to God by Christ." Heb. vii. 25. And our Lord himself testifies, "No man can come unto the Father but by me." John xiv. 6.

When a sinner is brought to this repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, this treaty of peace is concluded; the penitent believer therein obtains a sure and unfailing interest in God and Christ, and a covenant-title to all *the sure mercies* of Christ, the true David. It is by the mediation of Christ, that this treaty of peace, this covenant of reconciliation is brought about, and thus happily concluded.

These few observations may suffice for a general account of the covenant of grace, and the several

parts included in it. The covenant of redemption is the first and leading part of it, on which the covenant of reconciliation is predicated, and all the subsequent dealings of God with mankind, flow from it ; by attending to which, we shall be led into a more full acquaintance with the covenant, and more clearly see the true tenor of it. Therefore,

III. I proceed to inquire into the state of mankind under this dispensation of redeeming grace, and the tenor of the various dealings of God with them.

When God came to our first parents after the fall, and had convicted them of their breach of the first covenant ; he thereupon revealed the covenant of grace, by the promise of the seed of the woman that should bruise the serpent's head and thereby the dispensation of redeeming grace was brought in, the Redeemer's kingdom was set up, and the influence of his mediation took place, before God proceeded to pass any sentence upon them for their transgression. And this dispensation of redeeming grace being thus brought in, from this time forward it became the foundation of all the subsequent dealings of God with mankind ; which I shall essay to illustrate in the following observations.

1. By the introduction of this new dispensation, the execution of the threatening of the first covenant upon our first parents was prevented ; and a new state of trial for life or death was granted them, which made room for their posterity to come into existence in the course of ordinary generation. When Adam had broken the first covenant, death became his due according to the threatening, " In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."— There remained no room for him to continue any longer a probationer under the first covenant ; but his state was effectually decided : nothing but death was before him. And as the tenor of the threatening was, that he should die on the day that he sinned ; there must have been a speedy end of him, and with

him, the end of the whole human race ; and this world which was made for his habitation, must have been destroyed, or remained an uninhabited desert, if the Mediator had not then interposed to sustain the sinking world. But as the mediation of Jesus Christ then took place, on that account God continued to uphold the world, to preserve the course of nature, to spare fallen Adam from the execution of the curse of the broken covenant, and to grant him another state of trial on the footing of the covenant of grace.

Some have taken much pains to little purpose, to show a reason why Adam did not suffer death on the day that he sinned, according to the threatening of the first covenant ; and have labored to give such an unnatural turn to the threatening, as to make it consistent with God's sparing him from present death, and allowing him to live long enough to leave a posterity of sinful mortals behind him, before the threatened death should be inflicted upon him. But such delays of justice cannot be accounted for, from the tenor of the first covenant : but it was manifestly a privilege granted to him in the covenant of grace, as a fruit of the mediation of Christ. After the breach of the first covenant, Adam lived above nine hundred years ; during which period he was a probationer for life or death, under the covenant of grace : and this day of grace therefore, must necessarily be looked upon as a privilege procured for him by the Mediator, and granted to him in the covenant of grace. And this view of the case gives us a plain, natural and easy account of God's sparing Adam from punishment according to the threatening : It was the Mediator who obtained this privilege, or reprieve from death for him.

When the first covenant was broken, and Adam had thereby laid himself open to the curse of it ; the question to be determined was, whether the curse should be executed upon him, and the whole human race be cut off at one stroke : or whether that covenant should be superceded by the introduction of the second covenant ; whereby a trial for life or death

should be granted both to him and to his seed, upon this new footing. It was the last of these which divine wisdom and goodness hath chosen. Here then we are to inquire what that state is, in which Adam and his seed are to be considered, when this change in the divine government was made, in superceding the first covenant by the introduction of the second.

As to Adam, it is plain he then stood as a fallen creature before God; and yet, it remained to be determined by his conduct under this second covenant whether life or death should be his portion. And as to his seed, the state in which they are born, is much the same with that in which he then stood. When Adam was created, his Maker formed him to be the root and father of the human race. The manner in which mankind were to come into being, was then established to be by ordinary generation. The God of nature then established such a near and close natural union among them, that they should be all partakers of the same nature, share in like privileges, and be dealt with upon the same footing; this natural union being a proper foundation of, and a leading step to that federal union between him and his seed, which was appointed in the first covenant. Union with the blessed God, the supreme head of the moral world, is, in the nature of things, necessary to the well being of the rational system. This state of union with God, was the state in which the human nature was first formed. And for securing and preserving this union of the human race with God, both the natural and the federal union which were originally ordained between Adam and his seed, were intended to be subservient. That covenant-union which God appointed between Adam and his seed, was not to be considered as a mere arbitrary appointment; (though on that supposition, the divine right and authority cannot be disputed) but it was a wise and proper method to preserve and secure that union of mankind with himself, which is essential to the happiness of his rational creatures.—

Whether there was any other, or any better method that could have been devised to secure the union of mankind with God, than that which was provided in nature, and appointed in the first covenant, is not for us to determine. But this consideration should satisfy us in the case, that of all possible methods, infinite and unerring wisdom made choice of this natural and federal union of mankind with their first father. But we see, Adam by his misconduct frustrated the good tendency and intention of his primitive state, and brought ruin upon himself; and his seed thereby became liable to be cut off from their then future, intended existence. But as by the second covenant, a new state of trial and day of grace was afforded to our first parents; it made way for their seed to come into the world according to the originally appointed method of ordinary generation. And this shows that we receive even our natural existence through the influence of the mediation of Jesus Christ.

It has been before proved, that Adam's seed, according to the constitution of the first covenant, were to be affected with, and sharers in the fruits and consequences of his conduct under that dispensation.— And what great advantages would have accrued to them from his fidelity, had he been faithful, we have not sufficient light from the word of God to determine. But since he fell, and it was the introduction of the second covenant that made room for us to come into being according to the originally appointed method of ordinary generation, it is not reasonable to suppose we shall now suffer any greater positive punishment on account of Adam's breach of covenant, than we should have done if the second covenant had not been brought in; but the first covenant had had its full operation. Indeed, sins committed under any dispensation, are aggravated in proportion to the excellency of the constitution, and the privileges contained in it. Although, therefore, sins committed under the covenant of grace, are peculiarly ag-

gravated, yet this affords no reason why Adam's seed should have a greater punishment laid upon them for his breach of the first covenant, than they were to have suffered according to the covenant under which the offence was committed. And as all the evil they would have suffered if the first covenant had had its full operation, was merely negative, in that their then future existence would have been prevented; therefore a greater evil than non-existence cannot be executed upon any of the seed of Adam, merely for his breach of covenant. And accordingly we no where find mankind ever threatened with future damnation merely for the sin of Adam.

Wherefore if the future state of the infants of heathen dying in infancy, should be objected against what has been now offered, I would reply—The mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ procured their natural life; they were born into the world probationers under the covenant of grace. If, therefore, they perish in the next world, it must be not for Adam's breach of the first covenant, but for their non-compliance with the covenant of grace. There are no greater difficulties attending the supposition of their perishing for non-compliance with the covenant of grace, than there are attending the supposition of their suffering for the sin of Adam imputed. But I know of nothing that will warrant our saying any such shall perish. For it was the mediation of Jesus Christ that procured their natural life, and they are born probationers under the covenant of grace; and although they are taken out of the world before they were capable of yielding actual compliance with the terms of life; yet neither have they positively rejected them. But it must be confessed the scriptures do not afford sufficient light to enable us to make any certain conclusions in the case.

But if any will insist upon it, that as they are naturally depraved by Adam's fall, so they must suffer for it after death; I answer—As the evil they would have suffered if the first covenant had had its full

operation, would have been *non-existence*, therefore their future punishment must be *annihilation*.

Seeing then the superceding the first covenant by the introduction of the second, has made way for the seed of Adam to be born into the world probationers for life or death, under the covenant of grace ; it will be inquired how ? Or whether we be at all interested in, or affected with this breach of covenant ?

To this inquiry I answer, in two respects.

1. We enjoy a much less happy state in this life, than might have been expected, if our first parents had not fallen. We are exposed to innumerable evils in this life, and even to suffer a bodily death ; all which are undeniably laid upon us on account of Adam's fall ; as evidently appears from that sentence passed upon him ; which manifestly extends to, and equally lies upon all his seed. Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19, " And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee saying, thou shalt not eat of it ; cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken ; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

2. We do not come into the world in that state of union and friendship with God that we should have done, if Adam had not fallen. God at first made Adam in his own image, in a state of union and friendship with his Maker ; and if children had been born unto him whilst he stood in that state, they also would have come into the world in such a state of union and friendship with God. But after he fell, he begat a son in his own likeness.

Union with Adam was the way appointed in the first covenant, for the enjoyment of friendship and communion with God : But since the first covenant

was superseded by the introduction of the second, union with Christ our new covenant-Head, is the only way for us now to enjoy friendship and communion with God. If therefore there was nothing to be charged upon us, under the present dispensation, but the want of that faith by which we should be united to Christ ; it would be sufficient matter of condemnation. For this is the tenor of the new covenant, Mark xvi. 16. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved : but he that believeth not shall be damned." We are born probationers for life or death under this new dispensation ; and shall be judged in the last day, and dealt with in the future state, not according to the first covenant made with Adam : but according to the covenant of grace, brought in by the mediation of Christ. For we nowhere find the children of men threatened with future damnation on account of Adam's breach of covenant.

As union to and communion with God under the present dispensation, is not to be enjoyed by mankind but by faith in the Mediator ; therefore the children of men in their native state, are cut off from those divine manifestations which would draw their hearts to the love of God ; and of course, they fall in love with creatures as has before been described. This is the greatest evil we suffer for the sin of Adam.

Although the first covenant is superseded by the introduction of the second, yet the originally appointed method for mankind to enter into life by ordinary generation, is not thereby broken up ; nor is the first covenant annihilated by being superseded, or made to be as if it never had been ; but it remains as an antiquated dispensation, under which mankind are to be considered as having once stood. For although there is a great distance of time between the former and latter generations of Adam's seed as to the period when they enter into life ; yet this makes no alteration as to the state in which they come into the world ; because they virtually existed in Adam, as

appears from the natural union between him and them, and the covenant-union which was predicated upon it. The course of nature is affected with this first constitution throughout all generations ; and by it, the character of a sinner is fastened upon them. If the whole human race had actually existed at the time when the first covenant was superseded by the second, it is easy to see how the first covenant would have fixed the character of a sinner upon them, by virtue of their union with Adam : but the originally appointed method of entering into life in a succession of many generations, is equally consistent with their being all equally affected with that primitive constitution ; although there is such great distance of time between them. But notwithstanding this operation of the first covenant, they are to be considered as being born under the covenant of grace, under which they stand probationers for life or death.

Objection. If the first covenant is superseded by the second, and we are born under the covenant of grace, to stand in a state of probation under it alone, why then should we be at all affected with the first covenant ? Or be tainted by Adam's breach of it ?

Answer. When Adam was made, and placed under the first covenant, he had a seed given him. When he fell, being spared from present death through the Mediator, it made room for his seed to be born. The introduction of the second covenant did not give him a seed : but it prevented the excision of his then future intended seed, by the execution of the curse of the first covenant ; his seed may be said to be redeemed from non-existence, in like manner as Adam was redeemed from present death. If therefore we have our originally intended existence, we must come into the world as the seed of Adam. Our receiving our originally intended existence, as the seed of Adam, after his fall, could not be separated from our sharing in the depravity of his fallen state. The introduction of the second coven-

ant could not possibly have prevented this, without breaking in upon the order of nature, and dissolving the originally appointed method of coming into the world in the course of ordinary generation ; which would, in reality, have been the bringing in of another race of beings, instead of the originally intended seed. And if we will object against this, it will be ultimately to object against God's gracious dealings with our first parents, in sparing them from present death, by the introduction of the second covenant. But shall our eye be evil, because he is good ?

Upon the whole then, when we survey the dealings of God with mankind from the beginning, we shall find no reason to complain of his ways as not being equal, on account of any thing we suffer because of Adam's breach of the first covenant.

2. This new covenant is the foundation of God's present plan of providential government over the world.

As it was the mediation of Christ which prevented the execution of the curse of the first covenant upon Adam, and made room for his posterity to come into being in their several generations ; so it is to be ascribed to the same cause that the earth was preserved, the course of nature continued, and mankind enjoy the present life with all the comforts of it. And this shows how pertinently those words may be applied to Christ in Ps. lxxv. 3. "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved : I bear up the pillars of it." God's dealings with mankind in the various dispensations of providence, must be acknowledged to be agreeable to the state in which he hath placed them. And as it is the covenant of grace under which mankind are placed in a state of probation, in the present life ; we must suppose the plan of his providential government is regulated according to that covenant. For as we have received this present life by the influence of the Mediator of the new covenant ; therefore all our circumstances in life must be ordered accordingly. This is the case in all di-

vine visitations in the way of either mercies, or afflictions ; they are all to be considered as dispensations dealt out to us by God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace ; and are wisely adapted to promote the great ends of his glory, and the best interest of man, for the sake of which the new covenant was brought in. Or in other words, *they are means of grace.* They fall under the general denomination of means, which God is using with mankind to subserve the purposes of his glory in the salvation of sinners.

This is the light in which we are to view the common bounties of divine providence. The apostle represents it as the tendency of divine goodness in the bestowment of common bounties, “ To lead us to repentance.” Rom. ii. 4. It is through the grace of the new covenant that God causeth the sun to rise upon the evil, and upon the good ; and sendeth rain upon the just, and upon the unjust. The heathen nations who know not Christ, nor profess him, are partakers of these benefits of his mediation.

In the same light also are we to view the afflictive dispensations of divine providence. It belongs to the covenant love and faithfulness of God, in some cases, to visit mankind with afflictions. “ For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. God doth this for our profit, that being chastened of the Lord, we should not be condemned with the wicked ” Afflictions tend many ways to promote the spiritual good of mankind, and great benefits are many times received from them. Indeed, the curse causeless shall not come ; sin is the procuring cause of them : but yet, they are not sent properly as punishments, but as corrections ; and the design of them is not our destruction, but our amendment.

Not only these lighter strokes of affliction which are laid upon us in this life ; but also that bodily death to which we are subjected in this present state, is a dispensation of God, appointed to us in the covenant of

grace. Seeing death was the punishment threatened for sin, in the first covenant ; it may be thought strange that I should represent it as an appointment in the covenant of grace. But let it be remembered that the death threatened in the first covenant, included the whole of that punishment which was to be inflicted on man for sin ; which punishment must necessarily reach and lie upon the soul as well as the body. The death threatened in the first covenant, contained much more than a bodily death. And further : When God came to our first parents after the fall, and had convicted them of their breach of the covenant ; he first revealed the covenant of grace, in the promise of the seed of the woman, before he proceeded to pass any sentence upon them for their transgression. And as the covenant of grace was then revealed, so the mediation of Christ then took place between God and man, whereby the execution of the curse of the first covenant was prevented ; and a new state of trial granted to fallen man, under the covenant of grace. And although the sin of breaking the first covenant was not properly pardoned ; yet the covenant itself was superseded by the introduction of the covenant of grace ; and it remained to be determined by their behavior under this second dispensation whether life or death should be their portion. Yet as in the introduction of the second covenant, mankind are considered as having once stood in a state of probation under the first, and having the character of a sinner fastened upon them by the breach of it ; so it has seemed good in the sight of God to fix some lasting monuments of it upon mankind, by retaining some of the evils included in the original threatening which might be consistent with his gracious purposes in the second covenant ; and in particular, to chastise the whole human race for the breach of the first covenant, by laying upon them the affliction of a bodily death ; which, although laid for that first transgression, yet is not to be considered properly as the execution of the full curse of the first covenant ; but as an holy correction laid upon them under the coven-

ant of grace. In this light Moses leads us to consider the sentence of a bodily death which was passed upon the human race after the fall. Gen. iii 17, 18, 19 "And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it : cursed is the ground for thy sake : in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee : and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground : for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art ; and unto dust shalt thou return." Here we evidently see, that a bodily death is numbered among the other sorrows and afflictions which mankind were to be exercised with in this life, and appointed to them on the same footing. These evils are far from being the full import of that threatening which was set before Adam in the first covenant. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This threatening, as I have before shown, includes much more than a bodily death, even future sufferings. And besides, these other afflictions of this life, are in other parts of the Bible constantly represented as the chastisements of a covenant-God. As therefore the other afflictions of this life, are the dealings of God in the covenant of grace ; so also is this of a bodily death. A bodily death which is now the common portion of saints and sinners, is not to be looked upon as that in which the full curse of the first covenant is executed upon mankind : but it is to be esteemed as an appointment of God in the covenant of grace, in the exercise of his wisdom, holiness, and covenant love, wisely suited to the state of mankind in this life, to serve very important purposes respecting their probation under the covenant of grace. It is the present mortality of mankind that in a special manner awakens sleepy sinners, fixes their attention upon their spiritual concerns, restrains their corruptions, and quickens them to diligence in seeking salvation. And it is many ways advantage-

ous to the true believer. It is an armor against temptations, a spur to his diligence, a period to his probation-state, a release from labor, and a passage into promised rest. Hence, the apostle numbers death amongst the privileges granted to believers in the covenant of grace. I. Cor. iii. 22, 23. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or *death*, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; for ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's."

As it has pleased God to grant to fallen man a new state of trial ; so the period of life here allowed us is the limited time of our probation-state. We must, in this life, secure our title to the blessings set before us, or our opportunity for it will be forever over. Our present state of trial being confined to this life, the length of it is determined by the sovereign pleasure of God : to some he is pleased to allow a longer, and to others a shorter space ; reserving *this* among the secrets of his own will, that man, viewing himself every moment liable to die, might be quickened to greater diligence in improving the day and means of grace.

The appointment of a day of general judgment, and of the resurrection of the dead in order to it, belong to this new dispensation. There was no mention of these things in the first covenant ; nor did the first state of man require, or even admit of them : but they are very agreeable to our state of trial under the new covenant. God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, who will come again in the clouds for that purpose ; when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. The resurrection of the body is an appointment of the new covenant, as well as the day of general judgment ; and both are parts of that scheme which divine wisdom hath laid in the covenant of grace, under which mankind are now made probationers : Therefore all, both good and bad, shall share in them as the

fruit and effect of Christ's being made their covenant-head in this dispensation. And thus the words of our text will be made good in their fullest import. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive"

3. This new covenant is the rule of God's moral government over the world. God's moral government is his government over moral agents. And here, man only falls under our present consideration. By the moral law is commonly meant that rule of righteousness between God and man, which is founded in, and arises from the reason and nature of things. Thus, man was created under such bonds of duty to his Creator; yea, and he necessarily remains so, under all the particular forms of divine government which God hath appointed to him. The tenor of the law is, "The man that doth them, shall live in them: But cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Man being at first made under the law, whilst he remained so could expect nothing more in consequence of his obedience, than to be preserved in his then present state of happiness so long as he continued obedient: but on the first offence he would fall under the curse. But the appointment of a particular test, and subjoining a promise of life as the reward of obedience, and the threatening of death as the punishment of sin, according to the behavior of man during a certain term of time, did so alter the tenor of the divine government, as to make it of the nature of a covenant; although the same rule of duty *the law*, continued under this new form. This was the case when God entered into a covenant of life and death with our first parents; the whole law still remained as their rule of duty, although their trial for life or death was contracted to a single point, as has been before observed; and their obligations to obedience to the whole law were increased by the favors grant-

ed in that covenant. So likewise, when God brought in the covenant of grace upon the fall of man; the moral law still remained his rule of duty, in this new covenant-form. The moral law is put into the hand of Christ, and is the law of the Redeemer's kingdom; and every transgression of it is a sin against the divine authority exercised over man, in this covenant. For the moral law belongs to, and is included in the covenant of grace, as the rule of duty there set before us. It is by Christ's authority this rule of duty is enjoined upon us; our conformity to it is properly obedience to him; and through the influence of his mediation, the motives to obedience, *promises* and *threatenings*, now take hold of us, and become effectual upon us. Hence, our obedience to it is styled, *The obedience of faith*; faith in the heart is the root and principle from whence all holy obedience to the law ariseth.

Some practical writers have distinguished between the law and gospel, as being two distinct rules of life to mankind: and they represent some things as duties required by the law, and others as being required by the gospel. But whatever advantages may, in some respects, arise from these distinctions; yet they ought to be made with the greatest caution, lest we thereby darken our conceptions of the rule of our duty, and the tenor of the divine government. It is manifestly absurd to represent two distinct and inconsistent forms of divine government as being in force at the same time. The original form of divine government in the moral law, promising life to the obedient, and threatening death to the offender, is very different from the form of divine government set forth in the gospel, which sets up the Mediator as universal king, promising life to them that believe on him, and cursing every unbeliever. It gives a very disagreeable character of the divine Being, to represent him as holding mankind under two such widely differing forms of government at the same time. This is an absurdity which has not been suf-

ficiently attended to. The various, glorious and exalted characters under which the Lord Jesus Christ is described to us in the gospel, evidently show that the dispensation which he has brought in, is the present plan of the divine government. The laws that we are under as the rule of life, must be considered as the laws of Christ. Christ is king in his own kingdom : no laws but his can be binding upon the subjects of his own kingdom. It is inconsistent with our allegiance to him, to be in subjection to any foreign government. The law of nature therefore is the law of Christ, enjoined upon us by his authority, and prescribed in the covenant of grace as the rule of duty for us to walk by.

This dispensation of redeeming grace enforceth the rule of duty upon us by promises and threatenings. Some have entertained such a contracted notion of the covenant of grace, as to confine it to a covenant-closure with Jesus Christ, and containing little or nothing more than promises of salvation to believers. But I apprehend, a little consideration might convince us, that commands and threatenings belong to it, as well as promises. Indeed, as it was the subjoining of promises and threatenings to the behavior of man upon trial, which at first changed the tenor of the divine government from that of mere law, to be of the nature of a covenant ; so every particular promise of any good thing may be considered as a distinct covenant : because every one that has those distinguishing qualifications to which particular promises have an express reference, may be said to have a covenant-right to the thing promised. And in this way we may make out as many covenants as there are promises. And to this the apostle gives some countenance, by speaking of the *Covenant of promise*, in the plural number. But still it must be remembered, that all the promises made to fallen man belong to the covenant of grace, and are predicated upon the mediation of Jesus Christ. And threatenings of punishment for sin belong to the same con-

stitution as the promises ; promises and threatenings are counterparts to each other. It belongs to the mediatorial office of Christ, to reveal the wrath of God from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, as well as to set forth promises of mercy to the penitent believer. He was sent into the world, *to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God.* These things make it manifest, that the threatenings contained in the word of God belong to the covenant of grace, as well as the promises : and this shows that the covenant of grace can condemn as well as justify. The wicked in the day of judgment, will stand condemned by the same rule by which the righteous shall be justified.

4. This dispensation which is brought in by the Mediator, is that divine constitution under which mankind are put into a state of probation for life or death. I have often had occasion, in the preceding discourse, to mention our being probationers under the covenant of grace : but a matter of this importance deserves a particular consideration.

When Adam broke the first covenant, that dispensation was superseded by the introduction of the covenant of grace. Life or death no longer depended upon, nor were connected with that particular test of obedience set forth in the first covenant. Indeed, the first covenant was not abolished, nor Adam's breach of it pardoned : but in the introduction of the second covenant, man was considered as a transgressor of the first. That first covenant has so far had its influence, as to fix the character of a sinner, and to fasten the guilt of the breach of it upon mankind ; although his life or death no longer depend upon his behavior respecting that particular test of obedience specified in it. God foresaw the fall of Adam, and in the eternal counsels of the divine mind provided a remedy for him, in purposing to send his Son to redeem and save fallen man, by the introduction of the second covenant. And as it was the introduction of this new

dispensation that prevented the execution of the curse upon Adam, and made way for his posterity to be born into the world according to the course of ordinary generation, to enjoy a time of trial under the covenant of grace : therefore the light in which we are to view mankind, is not as having been only in connexion with the first Adam, and in a state of ruin by his breach of covenant ; but also, as in connexion with the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, and in a state of probation under his mediation. We are born probationers for life or death under the covenant of grace, which is the rule of the divine government over us in this life, and the rule by which our final state shall be judged and determined in the day of judgment.

Although the rule of duty set us to walk by in the covenant of grace, takes in the whole will of God, and requires universal holiness and perfect obedience ; yet it has not made our performance of required obedience the condition of life, or the term on which we shall enjoy the salvation offered in the gospel. Under the first covenant, perfect obedience to the whole will of God, was the duty of man : yet his probation for life or death (as has been shown) was limited to the particular precepts relating to the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And thus it is in the covenant of grace ; perfect obedience to the will of God is still our duty : yet our trial for life or death is limited to a single point ; viz. *Union with Jesus Christ by faith*. As the first covenant was made with Adam, as the covenant head of mankind ; so the second covenant is made with Christ, as a new covenant-head. Our union with the first Adam was the foundation of our ruin through his apostacy ; and so our union with the second Adam by faith, is the foundation of our recovery and salvation, through his obedience. Christ stands related, in some sense, to all mankind, as their covenant-head ; in that it was his standing in this capacity, that prevented the human race from becoming ex-

unct by the immediate death of Adam after his fall ; and made way for his posterity to be born. But there is a union with Christ of a higher kind, a moral, voluntary inward union of heart ; which is the distinguishing character of a believer.

Faith in the general notion of it, is a firm belief of the truth of the things which God has revealed to us in his word ; which shall cause them to have an effectual influence on the heart. That belief of the gospel as true, which does not cause the truths in it to have their proper, effectual influence on the heart, is not faith, in a gospel sense. According to this general account of faith, it appears that many and various exercises of heart are included in it. But that faith in particular which is of such special importance in the covenant of reconciliation, as being the peculiar point of trial to man in his present state of probation, is such a belief of the report of the gospel concerning Christ, as that the heart is pleased with him, and receives him in all his offices and relations, in which he is offered to us in the gospel. When this faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ takes place, we shall cordially join in with him in the same cause and interest ; the effect of which will be, that we shall walk even as he walked. Herein there is inward, hearty, spiritual union with Christ in the new covenant.

This spiritual union with Jesus Christ here briefly described, is the faith to which the promises of salvation are made in the gospel ; and all the descriptions of a saving faith contained in the gospel, agree with this representation of it. And that this faith is the special test prescribed in the covenant of grace, or the point in particular on which our salvation, or condemnation depends, I shall endeavor to evince by the following considerations.

1. This appears to be the particular test in the covenant of grace, from attending to the character and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first and leading character in which Christ appears in his in-

roducing the dispensation of redeeming grace, is that of a covenant-head. For the new covenant is firstly made with him, as the head and representative of his people ; and he is to act in, and transact the affairs of the covenant for them. And this title of covenant-head, with his other titles and offices, show that his obedience is the righteousness by which his people are justified, his sufferings are the atonement on account of which their sins are pardoned, and his mediation is the foundation of their acceptance with God : Therefore he is *the Lord our righteousness* ; he is *the propitiation for our sins* ; and he is *our advocate with the Father* : all which make it evident that our pardon, justification, and acceptance with God, flow from, and are the effects of his mediation. And if these benefits are procured for us by Christ's mediatorial work, it is evident our dependence for obtaining them, must be grounded, not upon any thing which we do for ourselves ; but upon what Christ has done and is doing for us. And for this cause, we are so abundantly cautioned against a legal self-righteous spirit, which inclines us to substitute some doings or attainments of our own, as the foundation of our hope, instead of the righteousness and merit of Christ ; which disposition is properly opposition of heart to the way of life by Christ. By acting under the influence of such a spirit, we impose upon ourselves a much more difficult condition of life than God laid upon man in his innocent state. Adam's trial was confined to a single point ; but here we set ourselves the task of keeping the whole law. But a due acknowledgment of Christ in his mediatorial characters evidently implies the renouncing all confidence in the flesh, and placing our whole hope and dependence on him.

As the mediatorial offices and work of Christ is the meritorious and procuring cause of all divine favor, and saving mercies ; therefore it is necessary we should be united to him by faith, in gospel-fellowship, that we may receive those benefits through

him. And accordingly this matter is confirmed by the tenor of the call of God to sinners, in the gospel. Matt. xi. 28. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And very express to the purpose are those words of the apostle in 1. Corinth i. 9. "God is faithful, by whom ye are called unto the fellowship of his Son, Christ Jesus our Lord." In these words there is an allusion to fellowship which is practised among men. When a number of men join in fellowship, they put their several interests into one common stock, have one common interest, and all pursue one common design; and such a federal union takes place among them, that if one makes a good bargain, they all share the benefit of it; if one contracts a debt, they all stand obliged for the payment; and if one makes payment, they are all discharged. And in allusion to these things, we are called of God, unto fellowship with his Son, Christ Jesus our Lord. He took our nature on him, and came into fellowship with us, in our fallen sinful state, by becoming our covenant-head; and being thus numbered with transgressors, he became liable to pay our debts to divine justice; for which cause he bore our sin in his own body on the tree, and was made a curse for us. And the end for which he entered into this fellowship with sinners, was that they also might join in, and enjoy fellowship with him, in the merits of his holy obedience and sufferings. By being united to Christ in the new covenant, we enjoy fellowship with him in all the privileges and benefits of his mediation: our sins are pardoned, we are justified, have peace with God, are admitted as his children, have the spirit of his Son sent into our hearts, and are made heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

2. Union to Jesus Christ by faith, appears to be the special point of trial set forth in the covenant of grace, from this consideration, *That there is forgiveness of sins granted to us in that covenant.* Perfect obedience to the will of God is unchangeably the duty

of man. In the first covenant, although man was put upon trial only in a single point ; yet he was not left without a rule to walk by in other matters : but perfect obedience to the whole will of God was still his duty ; whilst the perfection of his obedience was put to trial but in a single instance. So it is likewise in the covenant of grace. Perfect obedience is still our duty : yet our yielding this perfect obedience is not made the condition of life. Our trial for life or death is contracted to the single point of union with Christ by faith : and yet, the rule set us to walk by, requires perfect obedience. And it is because our trial for life or death is confined to a single point, that there is any room in the covenant of grace, for the exercise of God's pardoning mercy to sinners. The great inquiry to be made in the day of judgment, into our conduct in our probation-state, in order to determine whether life or death shall be our portion, is not, *How many duties we have performed ; or How many sins we have committed : But it will be, Whether we have believed in Christ.*

Perfect obedience is manifestly our duty in our present state of trial, because we are required to repent of all that imperfection which is found in our performances. But if any obedience which is short of perfection, did come up to the demands which are made upon us in the rule of duty which is set us to walk by, there would be no need of repenting of that imperfection which is found in our obedience. For where there is no law, there can be no transgression. But if the law does not require perfection from us, our imperfection cannot be a transgression of it. But it is evident that every imperfection which attends our obedience is sinful in the sight of God, and we are required to repent, that we may be pardoned. God hath made provision in the new covenant, by the atonement of Christ's blood for the exercise of his pardoning mercy in the forgiveness of sins ; yea Jesus Christ came into the world to save even the chief of sinners ; therefore whosoever will, though his sins

are as scarlet, and red like crimson, may come, and receive a free pardon.

Such ample provision being made for the pardon of the repenting and returning sinner. it is an evident consequence that our pardon, acceptance with God, and title to life do not depend upon our own righteousness, or our performing the duties required of us in that rule of duty set us to walk by in our present state : but they must depend upon what Christ has done for us, by whom these privileges are procured : from all which it is an evident consequence, that our interest in Christ, or union to him by faith, is the turning point on which our life or death depends. Very express to this point, is that text in John iii. 18. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned : but he that believeth not, is condemned already ; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

3. It appears that union with Christ by faith, is the special point of trial in our probation-state ; because all the promises of special favor are made to believers "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved : but he that believeth not, shall be damned. By him, all that believe are justified. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Our interest in all the blessings of a complete salvation, is represented as depending upon our union with Christ. Gal. iii. 29. "If ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Yea, as Christ is constituted the covenant-head of mankind in this dispensation of redeeming grace ; so all the promises of it are made to him, and through him to them that are united to him by faith. Gal. iii. 16. "Now to Abraham, and to his seed, were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many : but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ." Here Christ is pointed out as the seed, to whom the promises of the covenant are made. But then, we are not to understand the seed to be Christ personally : but Christ mystically ; including all such as are united

to him, and made members of that body of which he is the head.

4. Union with Christ by faith is our special point of trial because this faith is the root and principle of universal holiness. This faith is a covenant-closure with Christ, or such an hearty receiving of him, and devoting ourselves to him in all his offices, as inclines the soul to return to God through him, and to join heartily with him, in his cause and interest. And when this faith comes to be acted upon in the various occasions of life, it will bring forth the good fruit of new obedience. Good works, (such as are good in a gospel-sense) do not go before, but do follow after, and flow from faith. The believer is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works. And for this reason, new obedience is so abundantly insisted upon, as the principal evidence of our title to life ; because it is the sure evidence, and genuine fruit of that faith which savingly unites the soul to Jesus Christ.

5. This faith which unites the soul to Christ, is properly the point of our trial in the new covenant, because, in the first act of it, the whole image and likeness of God on the soul is included, complete in all its parts, though greatly defective in degree. In the trial of the obedience of Adam, under the first covenant, although his obedience was not brought upon trial in every point of duty ; yet that one point contained a full trial of the perfection of his obedience, and gave him an opportunity either to exercise and express the several properties of the image of God in which he was created or to counteract them. His dependence upon God, his complacency in him, his subjection to him, and the purity and integrity of his whole heart were there put to the trial. So likewise in our trial under the new covenant, in which believing is the special point ; therein we shall exercise and express the complete moral image of God in all its essential properties. And as all the essential properties of the divine image take place in the soul,

union, or in the first act of believing; so we shall be hereby led to such a conduct as will express and manifest this conformity to God, in the several actions and on the various occasions of life. Our trial with respect to believing or not believing in the name of the Son of God, is a proper and full trial of our conformity to God. Altho' therefore our trial is brought into such a narrow compass, and confined to a single point; yet it is so ordered, that the nature of this union with Christ will answer all the salutary purposes of the grace of God; it will effectually secure the honor of the divine government, and restore the believing soul to a conformity to God in the practice of universal holiness.

Thus graciously has God dealt with mankind both in the first and second covenant, as not to let his trial for life or death lie at large, and extend to the whole compass of his duty; but has in both, limited it to a single point. In the first covenant, the trial was confined to the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and in the new covenant, the trial for life or death is confined to a single point of faith in Christ; he is the true tree of life, of which we may eat and live forever.

As Adam finished his state of trial under the first covenant, when he broke it; so we may be said, in a sense, to have finished our trial under the covenant of grace, when we become united to Jesus Christ. For then, we obtain a *saving interest* in him. It thereby becomes a determined point that life shall be our portion, according to the tenor of the many gracious promises made to believers. In a larger sense, all mankind may be said to be interested in Christ, and to partake of many benefits through him. For it is through him, we receive this present life, with all the comforts and enjoyments of it; and through him, we enjoy the day of grace, and the means of grace. Yet there is a special sense, in which believers may be said to be interested in him, which is peculiar to such, on account of the many great and precious pro-

mises made to believing, both of grace here, and glory hereafter. When therefore we become united to Christ by faith, our probation may be said to be finished, so far that it is become a determined matter, or settled point, that we shall inherit eternal life. Indeed, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Perseverance must be maintained, that we may inherit the promises. But that communion with God, and the indwelling influences of the Holy Spirit in the heart, by which believers shall be kept from total and final apostacy, is one of the privileges promised to believers in the new covenant. Therefore, notwithstanding the necessity of persevering, the title to eternal life becomes sure, upon the first act of faith. But although eternal life is the sure portion of the believer, according to God's promise; yet the reward in glory shall be according to their works. Their fruitfulness in holiness is that by which their degree in glory shall be proportioned. The believer then, in this respect, is still in a state of trial for his future reward; and will be, till death puts a complete end to his probation: but after union with Christ, his probation is, in some respects, very different from what it was before.

The method which many practical writers have taken, is to divide mankind into two great classes, believers, and unbelievers; believers are represented as being under the covenant of grace; and unbelievers, under the law, as being *some-how*, a covenant of works. These two classes are considered as being under two different constitutions, or forms of divine government; and the law is considered as a constitution distinct from the covenant of grace. They suppose man in his natural state, is under the law; and stands condemned by it, to suffer the wrath of God for sin: but when he becomes a believer, he comes from under the law and is taken into the covenant of grace.

Although this representation of mankind has, for a long time, passed current with many, yet there ap-

appears to me so many absurdities in it, that I am obliged to give it up. For if the moral law is the law of Christ's kingdom, it cannot be any thing distinct from, but must be part of the new dispensation which is brought in by his mediation. Its having been binding upon man before, under a former dispensation, is no reason why it should not be again taken into this second covenant. But if the moral law is not the law of Christ's kingdom, then his subjects cannot be condemned for breaking of it. For to their own master they stand or fall. It is inconsistent with their allegiance to Christ that they should be under the jurisdiction of any foreign power. Besides, it gives a very disagreeable idea of God, to represent him as treating with man in his fallen state, about the great concerns of life and death, upon the footing of the moral law; and a still more injurious character to represent him as putting man, in his fallen state, upon probation under the law, and at the same time denouncing a curse upon him because he has not believed in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. This would represent the divine government as inconsistent, absurd, and self-contradictory. Where shall we find a text in the bible that represents fallen man as being in a state of probation under the law? Indeed, the apostle often represents the Jews as being under the law, and the Gentiles as being without law; but it is easy to see, that in such texts, *being under the law* means a visible covenant relation to God; which is widely different from the subject we are upon. The dispensation brought in by the mediation of Jesus Christ is, as I have shewn, the foundation of God's moral government over the world, and therefore it must be the constitution under which we are probationers for eternity, and by which we must be accordingly judged in the last day. The covenant of grace can condemn, as well as justify. It contains the revelation of the wrath of God from heaven, against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, as well as promises of pardon to believers. The character

in which God has there revealed himself, is, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, *and that will by no means clear the guilty.*" Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. And when we come to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, the wicked will fall under condemnation, not as being transgressors of the law, simply considered: but as transgressors against the divine authority exercised over them in the covenant of grace, which is this new dispensation brought in upon the fall of Adam, by the mediation of Jesus Christ. Thus is the case represented, John, iii. 18. "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already." Why? Because he hath broken the law? No. But because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the true reason why he falls under condemnation, and receives the punishment due to all his sins.

When a sinner is brought to believe in Jesus Christ, he then passeth from death to life; from a state of condemnation, to a state of justification; but he still remains under the same plan of divine government. His state is changed, but this makes no change in the rule of divine government over him. It was the covenant of grace that declared him to be a child of wrath, in his natural state; and 'tis that which declares him to be a child of God, in his believing state.

All mankind, heathen as well as professing christians, are under this dispensation, the covenant of grace, which was brought in by Jesus Christ, after the fall. It is through the influence of the Mediator that Adam's posterity are born into the world; the dispensation of the new covenant is the rule of God's government over them whilst they are in the world; and their state will be decided by it in the world to come. They have not, indeed, the advantage of divine revelation, to instruct them in the knowledge of

the tenor of the divine government, or of their own state of probation : but they have the light of nature for their guide, which, as far as it goes, teacheth them the same things as are taught by divine revelation ; if not sufficient to make them wise to salvation, yet sufficient to leave them without excuse. The light of nature teacheth that God is gracious and reconcilable to sinners. And in this sense, *Christ is the light of the world, and enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world.* For as it was through the influence of his mediation that the world was upheld after the fall, and nature preserved in its course ; therefore the course of nature, the sun, moon and stars may be said to preach the gospel of Christ, wherever they shine. Thus the psalmist, in showing how “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work,” saith, “Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.” Psalm, xix. 4. Which is mentioned by the apostle, and explained to be the preaching of the gospel.—Rom. x. 17, 18. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” All nature therefore joins in publishing the grace of God to fallen man : and to call upon, and invite them “To seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.” Acts, xvii. 27.

5. The covenant of grace is the foundation on which God carries on a treaty of peace with fallen man, in the covenant of reconciliation.

Under the preceding head, I have essayed to prove that the covenant of grace is the divine constitution under which God hath put mankind into a state of probation for life or death ; that union to Christ by faith, is the special test of our present trial ; and that heathens as well as Christians are under the jurisdiction of this dispensation. But when we consider the characters under which our Lord Jesus Christ is

described to us in the gospel, especially in the exercise of those offices which are included in his mediatorial character, by which he carries on a treaty of peace with fallen man, in the covenant of reconciliation; it is easy to see a wide difference between the visible covenant-people of God, and the heathen part of mankind. They are explicitly taken into covenant, and the treaty of peace is actually carried on with them in their enjoyment of gospel light and privileges, and communion and fellowship with the visible church: but the heathen are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and are, in a great measure, neglected by God. But that I may proceed in this inquiry, in a more clear and distinct manner, I shall range my thoughts in the following order.

I. I shall inquire after the first rise of the visible church, and consider why, some are members of it, and esteemed the covenant people of God: and others are not.

II. Show how, or by what it is, that this visible distinction is made.

III Represent the great privileges and advantages which the members of the visible church enjoy, whereby the treaty of peace and reconciliation with God, is carried on with, and in a great measure confined to them.

IV. Show what obligations people are under to seek for, to attend upon, and to improve these privileges.

I. I shall inquire after the first rise of the visible church; or consider why it is, that some are members of it, and esteemed the covenant-people of God: and others are not.

Some will not allow, any of the children of men are included in the covenant of reconciliation, or do thereby stand in a covenant-relation to God, but such only, with whom the treaty of peace is happily concluded, by their being brought to that saving union with Christ by faith, treated of in the preceding head

of this discourse. This was the leading point of dispute in my former polemic writings ; and as I have no desire to revive that dispute, I shall avoid saying any thing provoking to it, so far as may be consistent with doing justice to my present subject.

It is here necessary to recollect the distinction which is commonly made in the covenant of grace, which I have mentioned in the foregoing discourse. Christian writers have commonly considered the dispensation of the redeeming grace of God, as distinguished, or at least, distinguishable into two parts, or covenants, the one is the covenant of redemption, the other the covenant of reconciliation, of which I have already treated. The covenant of reconciliation, is predicated upon the covenant of redemption ; or in other words, the treaty of peace and reconciliation which God is carrying on with mankind, is predicated upon the mediatorial character, offices and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, as the dispensation of redeeming grace was brought in consequent upon the fall of Adam, whereby he was reprivied from the execution of the curse of the first covenant, and room was made for his posterity to be born into the world, to stand probationers on the footing of the covenant of grace ; so God began this treaty of peace with Adam by the revelation of a Savior, the promised seed of the woman. This was the dispensation which Adam and his seed were then placed under ; and hereby they stood related to God, as his covenant-people, or visible church.

I conceive there is some similitude, and also some difference between God's covenanting with man, and one man's covenanting with another. In man's covenanting, one may propose the covenant : but the other is at liberty, either to close with it, or reject it ; and he cannot be holden by it till he has given his consent. But when the consent is given, the contract is made, and the parties are in covenant one with the other, and under mutual covenant-engagements ; yet

the privileges cannot be claimed till the conditions are fulfilled. And somewhat similar to this, may our relation to God in the covenant of reconciliation, be conceived of. God sets forth the blessings of his grace, appoints the terms on which these blessings shall be enjoyed, and binds himself by promise, to bestow these blessings on all such as comply with the terms fixed. Man is taken into this covenant, and laid under obligations to comply with these terms ; or in case of a refusal, to suffer accordingly : but his title to the blessings remains in suspense till his actual compliance with the terms fixed, gives him a right to them according to the promise. It is plain, here is a real covenant subsisting between God and man ; it is not a sham business, but a real covenant ; and the bonds of it mutually lie upon both God and man, antecedent to man's actual compliance with the terms of reconciliation.

And as God's covenanting with man, is in some respects, like one man's covenanting with another : so there are likewise some respects in which there is a difference. When God covenants with man, *He takes state upon him*, according to his glorious majesty and sovereign power, and puts man into a covenant-relation to himself by an act of sovereignty. God has never consulted mankind whether they would be in covenant with him or not : but by his own sovereign authority, has laid his covenant upon them. They have no right to dispute the matter with him ; nor so much as to deliberate whether they will be in covenant with him or not. This was the case in the first covenant, made with Adam ; it was laid upon him merely by divine authority Gen. ii. 16, 17. "And the Lord God commanded the man saying," &c. And in like manner was he put under the covenant of grace, after his fall, by sovereign authority, without consulting his will in the least, about it. This was also the case when God took Abraham and his seed, into covenant ; that dispensation of the covenant was

from God's sovereignty alone. That God has dealt thus in the dispensations of his covenant, is evident from incontestible facts ; and that he has a right so to do, none surely, will dispute. Such as would exclude all mankind but true believers, from being in covenant with God, under the covenant of grace, hold, that some consent on our part, is necessary to the being of a covenant-relation to God ; and I grant, our concurrence is necessary to our being entitled to the special blessings promised in that covenant : but to make this an objection against the being of a covenant-relation, is to dispute against undeniable facts ; and all objections of this kind may be justly silenced by the sovereign, absolute authority of God, in laying this covenant on man, whose injunction supplies the place of all human engagements, as to the actual existence of the covenant.

As Adam was put into this new covenant-relation to God, and the visible church, and treaty of peace were begun with him, under which he was to stand a probationer for the rewards or punishments of eternity ; so his children also were born in the same state, and covenant-relation to God, that he was in ; and were the real church, or covenant-people of God. This was the case with all his posterity till Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, renounced and forsook this covenant of reconciliation, and rejected the treaty of peace ; from which time, we are to view him, as being much in the same state, with respect to the church, and the covenant-people of God, as heathen nations are at this day. Cain rejected God ; and then God rejected him, no longer carrying on the treaty of peace and reconciliation with him. Cain's going out from the presence of the Lord, did not disannul his obligations to God, to submit to, and be governed by this new dispensation : but that which he forsook, and from which he was rejected by God, was the treaty of peace and reconciliation, which God is carrying on with his covenant-people through the mediation of Jesus Christ. Cain forfeited these priv-

ileges ; and then God deprived him of them. And this is the true and real state of such as are excommunicated from the church of Christ. They that are duly cut off from the church, are cut off from the treaty of peace, no longer to have any interest in the special privileges of Christ's mediation. And this gives us to see the great weight, and solemn importance of that discipline which Christ hath set up in his visible kingdom, and shows what just reason we have to dread the church censure. Persons excommunicated from the church, are to be esteemed as those who are rejected of God, and cut off from those privileges of the church, by which the treaty of reconciliation is carried on. They are not indeed, released from their obligation to yield obedience to the will and authority of God enjoined in the covenant of grace ; nor are they discharged from a liableness to condemnation by that rule of the divine government : but they are rejected of God as persons given up, no longer to be treated as those whom God will acknowledge in a covenant-relation to himself, to carry on a treaty of peace with them. Indeed, as they were placed in this world, in a state of probation under the general administration of the covenant of grace ; therefore, as long as their day of grace lasts, they may repent, and return, and God will again receive them. And one kind purpose with a view to which, discipline is appointed, is to give the offender, a very solemn, and awakening admonition of the necessity of repentance and reformation ; because such a separation from the covenant-people of God in this life, made, by the due exercise of the discipline of the church, carries in it a solemn prelude to the awful separation which our righteous judge will make between the righteous and the wicked, in the day of judgment.

Thus the distinction between such as were the visible covenant-people of God, and such as were not, first began among men, when Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. And there sprang from him, a sinful posterity who were aliens from the common-

wealth of Israel. To this distinction Moses alludes in Gen. vi. 2. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men, &c." The posterity of Cain, by living without God in the world, made swift progress in all manner of wickedness. And when the sons, of God, (the descendents of the other branches of Adam's posterity) made intermarriages with these daughters of men, (the descendents of Cain) the infection soon spread through the whole church : and Noah only was found righteous before God ; with whom God established his covenant, and preserved his church in his family after the flood. And when mankind had again greatly corrupted their ways, God saw proper to distinguish his covenant-people by instituting circumcision as a token or seal of the covenant, in his dispensation to Abraham ; from which time, the rest of mankind were rejected of God for their apostacy from him, till they were again called into the church, under the gospel-dispensation. Thus I think, the scripture affords us sufficient light for discovering the original of the church of Christ : and how, and whence there is a distinction between the covenant-people of God, and the rest of mankind.

1. *Objection.* If mankind are born under the covenant of grace, to be probationers upon the footing of it ; and if the covenant of grace is the rule of God's government over mankind in this life, and by which they shall be judged hereafter ; then it follows that heathen, and excommunicated persons are still related to God in that covenant, and are included under it, as really as the members of the visible church.

Answer. I readily grant this to be in some sense, and in some degree, true. It has been observed, that the dispensation of redeeming grace which was brought in upon the fall of Adam, which by christian writers, has been styled *the covenant of grace*, includes both a covenant of redemption made with Christ, and a covenant of reconciliation made with fallen man through him. And it has been likewise observed, that

Christ is described under various characters, clothed with various offices, and standing in various relations to, and connections with mankind. It has been shown that Christ is, in some sense, a covenant-head to all mankind, as well as to his spiritual body of true believers ; although there is some difference in his headship with reference to these very different bodies. And the like may be said with respect to his being called a *Redeemer*, and *Savior*. He is *the Savior of all men, especially* (in a special sense) *of them that believe*. But Christ considered in his character of a *Mediator*, is much more confined, and, in a great measure, limited to his visible church, and covenant-people, (as I shall shew hereafter) with whom alone, the treaty of peace which is carried on in the covenant of reconciliation, is ordinarily confined. Although therefore all mankind, good and bad, are under the general administration of the covenant of grace : yet it is very consistent that apostates, and incorrigible offenders should be cut off, and rejected by God, from the peculiar privileges of the treaty of peace which God is carrying on in the covenant of reconciliation, and the precious advantages of Christ's mediation. It is as consistent for God thus to treat heinous offenders in this life, as it will be, to condemn them in the last day.

2. *Objection*. If mankind are born probationers under the covenant of grace ; then the children of heathen, and of excommunicated persons have as good a right to the seal of the covenant, and the privileges of the church, as the children of believers. The children of Cain for instance, were born in as good an estate and standing, as the children of any other branch of Adam's family.

Answer. God hath manifestly so formed human nature, and so ordered the state of things, that children are necessarily, in some degree, sharers in the state and portion of their natural parents. They come into the world in a weak, helpless state ; and the God of nature has committed the care and dispo-

sal of them in their minority, to their parents. And if parents who have the care and disposal of their children, go out from the presence of the Lord; they necessarily carry their children with them. And thus is there a foundation in nature, for God to visit the iniquity of the parents upon their children. Indeed; when children are grown to years of understanding, they may return; and the door of the church is open for their reception. But if they cleave to the error of their fathers, they make their father's sin their own. And in this manner the divine conduct is vindicated by the prophet in the xviii. chapter of Eze-kiel. But with respect to the return of such sinners into the church, another objection may arise in the minds of some, from the tenor of the moral law.

Objection. All that God hath required in his law, is LOVE; love to God and man; nothing but love, or what is included in it, or is a proper expression of it, can be consistently required of man. Therefore nothing that a sinner does, or can do, whilst his heart is destitute of true love to God, can be called obedience, nor be said to be required of him by God.* There-

* Some people have strangely bewildered themselves with those words of our Savior in Matt. xxii. 37—40. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." They suppose, these words will authorise their saying, "All that the law requires is love; nothing but what is contained in love, or is a proper expression of it, can be said to be required by the law." And such will be ready to find fault with the description I have given of the moral law in the beginning of this discourse, where I have said it consists in *maintaining, exercising and expressing the divine image, in the various actions, and on the various occasions of life.* This divine image I have there illustrated, as consisting in the exercises of dependence, complacency and subjection, with moral integrity of heart. Dependence and subjection are as distinct exercises from complacency or love, as any different exercises of

fore God has not required such to join with the church or come to ordinances, whilst they remain in this natural state.

the heart, and they are as essential parts of the divine image and as much required as love or complacency. Their great mistake about those words of our Savior, is owing to the want of careful attention to their just import. He has not said that *All the law and the prophets are contained, comprised, or included in these two commandments.* But his words are "On these two commandments *HANG* all the law and the prophets." The true import of the word *hang* will be readily discovered, if we attend to the description of *moral depravity*, given in the preceding discourse. I have there mentioned five particulars wherein it consists. The three first are extrinsic of the will. The fourth may be said to be intrinsic, as it consists in the prepossession of the heart in favor of creature-enjoyments. This carnal mind is voluntary and chosen; and the gaining of the will for God, would very much remove our inability for his service in this respect. The introduction of the covenant of grace has taken off that disfranchisement laid upon fallen man by the broken law; and has taken out of his way all such extrinsic impediments which disabled him for the service of God. And the only remaining impediment is this *carnal mind*, which is internal in the heart. This is removed by a clear discovery and cordial belief of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Hereby the soul is reconciled to God, and the love of God shed abroad in the heart. And this love will be attended with, or will draw after it all moral virtues, or christian graces, whereby complete conformity to God, or a corresponding agreement of the whole heart with the divine perfections will be introduced. And hence has our Lord, with great propriety, represented every moral virtue inculcated upon us by the law and the prophets, as *hanging* or *depending* upon love. Love will draw the whole heart to God, and will lead to the due exercise of every gospel-virtue whereby the divine image complete in all its parts, will be restored. And although many of these exercises are quite distinct from love, and cannot properly be said to be included in it; yet they may be said to *hang* upon it, because love will lead on the soul to all these exercises. Again; our Lord by saying, "On these two hang all the law and the prophets" shows us, that love is the great mark or point to which all that is contained in the law and the prophets is calculated to bring us; which is very consistent with there being many things previously enjoined upon us, in order to bring us to it.

Answer. There was a great difference between Cain's remaining in a natural state, and his going out from the presence of the Lord. He did very wickedly in going out ; and it was as great wickedness, to tarry there, and not return. We are required to *cease to do evil*, as well as to *learn to do well*. A covenant-relation to God was the state in which Cain was born : and he did very wickedly when he quitted it, and went out from the presence of the Lord. Consequently, when a man joins to the church, he therein *ceaseth to do evil*, or returns, and re-assumes his native station, the station in which God set Adam and his seed, when the covenant of grace was introduced. The *being* of this covenant-relation to God ; and consequently, our right of acting agreeable to it in maintaining communion with the visible church, is founded on the divine authority which put fallen man into this state. The truth of this cannot be denied, unless the preceding account of the introduction of the covenant of grace, as the foundation of God's subsequent dealings with mankind, shall be disproved. And shall we say, our being in a natural state disqualifies us for keeping that native station which the God of nature and grace has put us into ? We must either justify Cain in going out from the presence of the Lord : or allow a natural man to sustain a covenant-relation to God in the church.

It may be said, he was not to be justified, either in going out of the presence of the Lord ; nor yet, in continuing in his impenitent natural state.

Be it so. But was he required to repent and turn to God without a Mediator, and without an attendance upon, and improvement of those means and privileges which God, in the covenant of grace, has freely given through Christ to mankind in their natural state, for the purpose of bringing them to repentance ? and in the use and improvement of which they are required to exercise and express their return to him ? But that covenant relation to God in which the visible church stands, together with all the

privileges of it, are granted by God to mankind in their natural state, as means to bring them to repentance, and in which they are to exercise and express their return to him ; as is evident from all the arguments which prove the federal right of our infant seed : all which will more fully appear when I come to point out the privileges of the members of the visible church, under the following third head of this discourse.

II. I am next to inquire how, or by what it is, that this visible distinction is made ; or how it is that we become members of the visible church, and are entitled to the privileges of its communion.

Although God put Adam and his seed into this covenant-relation to himself, after the fall ; yet since there has been an apostacy from it among men, it has pleased God to put a mark of distinction upon his covenant-people, whereby they are separated to him, from the rest of mankind, by affixing seals to his covenant. Thus in the covenant dispensation to Abraham, when mankind had greatly corrupted themselves after the flood, and were apostatized from God, circumcision was instituted to be the token, or initiating seal of the covenant ; and God commanded him to confirm this covenant upon his seed after him at eight days old. Hereby Abraham and his seed became the visible church, or covenant-people of God : but the rest of the world were rejected from this relation for their apostacy. And under the gospel dispensation, instead of circumcision, baptism is appointed to be the initiating seal of the covenant. And as it was required under the former dispensation, of the stranger that would join himself to the church of Israel, to circumcise himself and his seed ; so, under the gospel dispensation, all such as are received into the church are admitted by baptism. For since it has pleased God to affix seals to his covenant, it is evidently necessary his people should be confirmed in their covenant relation to him by receiving the appointed seal.

It is the well-known practice of the churches in this land, to require the person to be received to the communion of the church, to make some express promises, and come under covenant engagements by some form of words, previous to his receiving the seals; and the administration of the seals thereupon to the person thus covenanting, seems to be esteemed as a confirmation of the covenant which he has before expressed. And if this is the light in which these things are to be viewed, it appears to be of great weight, not only thus to covenant, but also what form of words we make use of upon this occasion. This, it is well known, has been a subject of much debate in these churches. It is very evident that the disputes and contentions which have perplexed and divided the church in all ages, have generally, if not always, been about some human invention, that has been introduced without sufficient warrant from the word of God. And if this practice of covenanting in some certain form of words when a person is received into the church, is not of a divine original, but a mere human invention unadvisedly brought in, it is no wonder that it should cause much strife and division, as it manifestly has done. A divine warrant therefore is here to be demanded for requiring a person to make a verbal covenant in order to his being owned as a member, and admitted to communion in the church. As far as I can learn, this practice wholly rests upon *the tradition of the elders*. And it is high time to consider seriously, whether we have not made void the commandment of God through our tradition. If this practice is of divine original, it seems strange we should be unable to find either precept or example for it, to which we might appeal for a decision of our disputes; yet, upon a careful inquiry, I presume none that is in any way plain and express, can be produced. But when we make this inquiry, we must keep in mind the distinction between making a profession of our belief of the truth of the christian religion, and our making

promises, or coming under covenant engagements by any set form of words, to live a christian life.— It is evidently reasonable that one who has been brought up a Jew, or a heathen, when he comes to ask for christian privileges, should declare his belief of the christian religion ; and for this we have sufficient warrant in the sacred scripture, both from precept and example. To this purpose are the words of our Savior, Matth. x. 32. “ Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven.” And the apostle declares, Rom x. 9. “ If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus.” In these texts it is plainly taught that we should confess Christ with our mouth. And in Heb x. 23, the apostle exhorts us to “ Hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.” As the apostle connects this with our having our bodies washed with pure water, which doubtless means baptism, as that is the only washing with water under the gospel ; we may reasonably conclude the profession of faith here intended, is that profession which is made *at the time of, or in baptism.* But the most express text is in Acts, viii. 36, 37. Where the Eunuch said to Philip, “ See here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ” It is here plain that Philip required a verbal profession of the christian faith previous to baptism. But in all these texts it is to be observed, that no mention is made of any promise, or previous covenanting ; nothing more appears in them than a profession of the christian religion : but it is quite another thing to express covenant engagements.

If we attend to the account we have in the bible of entering into covenant with God, we shall see reason to believe this was done by actions rather than words. For when God made a covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. he instituted circumcision to be a token of the

covenant, and commanded him to circumcise his household ; and gave in charge that every man child among his seed should be circumcised at eight days old, in their generations. We have no account that Abraham, upon this occasion, made any covenant with God, by any form of words ; or that he spoke so much as one word by way of promise, that he would keep this covenant which God had prescribed : but all that he did, so far as we have any account of the matter, was to circumcise himself, and the males of his household on that same day, as he was commanded. And it was by his so doing that he took hold of, or did enter into that covenant with God. Circumcision being thus appointed, was a significant action, and the meaning of it limited and fixed by God himself, as the act by which this covenant-relation to himself was to be entered into, and confirmed. If Abraham had made never so many promises, and that, in the most solemn manner, how obedient he would be, it would have signified nothing ; because the way, by divine appointment, for him to enter into this covenant, was circumcision ; but promises would not have answered the end in this case. Hence it is that God calls circumcision, *my covenant*, in verse, 10. “This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man-child among you shall be circumcised.” By this dispensation God set up his church in Abraham’s family. And these things being attended to, it appears evident, that the way in which any one could become a member of it, was by being circumcised.

After this, we have an account that the children of Israel several times renewed covenant with God ; at Mount Sinai, on the plains of Moab, afterwards in the days of Joshua, and once more after their return from the Babylonish captivity, under the direction of Ezra and Nehemiah. But with respect to all these instances, it is to be observed, that to enter into any new covenant-relation to God different from what subsisted before, was not the thing intended in them ;

it was not in order to their being God's visible church and covenant-people : but for other important purposes. They were in covenant with God before, and had been his visible church from the days of Abraham, and continued to be so in their generations, till the gospel dispensation took place. Although therefore these instances of covenanting may properly be attended to, that we may learn the general nature of a covenant-relation to God ; yet they will not so plainly determine whereby it is, we are added to the church, or how a covenant-relation to God is first entered into.

In some of these instances of covenanting the people made express verbal promises of obedience ; and in some, they did not. In the time of bondage in Egypt, it may be presumed, the children of Israel had very much lost their knowledge of this covenant. When therefore Moses had brought them out of Egypt unto Mount Sinai, it was very proper to lead them to renew their covenant, that they might have a more just conception of it : especially as God was about to give them a new body of laws, and to form them into a more complete church state. Upon this occasion of covenanting, the people promised, saying, " All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient."

After this covenanting at Sinai, the children of Israel provoked the Lord to anger ; and he laid upon them the heavy judgment of wandering forty years in the wilderness, till all the men of that generation were consumed. But when they arrived at the borders of the land of promise, on the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho, Moses again led the people to renew covenant with God. The whole book of Deuteronomy is to be considered as the speech which he made to them upon that occasion. And in the xxix. chapter, 10th and 12th verses, he tells them, " Ye stand this day, all of ye before the Lord your God—that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day." And in the 14th

and 15th verses, it is added, “ Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath ; but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day.” In this instance of covenánting, Moses did not require the people to make any promises, or bring themselves under any obligations by words ; but all they did was to present themselves there before the Lord : and even this was not essential to their being included under the bonds of this covenant and this oath ; for such as were not present were as much included, as them that were. Our imagination often leads us astray about our coming into a covenant relation to God, by comparing it too closely with covenant transactions among men. When a covenant is made between two men, their mutual consent is ordinarily necessary to the being of the covenant ; and we do not look upon ourselves holden, till our consent is given : but this is not necessarily the case when God covenants with man. God is so infinitely above us, and has such absolute, sovereign authority over us, that he can put us into a covenant relation, and under covenant bonds to himself without asking our consent. Thus God dealt with our first parents in putting them into a state of trial under the first covenant, in their innocent state ; they were not consulted upon it, nor asked whether they would consent to stand a trial under it or not. And thus God dealt with them after the fall, in putting them into a new state of trial on the footing of the covenant of grace ; whether they consented or not, the bonds of that covenant were upon them. In like manner he dealt with Abraham and his seed ; there was no previous consent asked, before God laid the covenant upon them. And as the being, the validity, and the binding authority of that covenant was the sole effect of, and did wholly rest upon the divine authority ; it shows the capacity of children to be included in it, and the propriety of laying it upon infants eight days old, as well as upon people grown to years of under-

standing ; because the being, and the binding authority of this covenant relation to God, did not at all depend upon any human consent or concurrence whatever. And it appears to be the same case in this covenant transaction on the plains of Moab : no consent of the people was asked ; and the covenant was extended to them that were not present, as well as to them that were. Moses here styles it, " This covenant and this oath," because there is no material difference between a divine covenant, and a divine oath. We find that such as were clothed with a divine commission, had power to lay a person under the solemn ties of an oath, without asking his consent. Such authority the Aaronical high priesthood was vested with. Hence, when our Lord Jesus Christ was brought before the Jewish high priest, he had a divine oath imposed upon him. Matthew xxvi. 63. " But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Here, the high priest acting in his office, imposed a sacred oath upon our Savior, to extort from him a confession of his own divine character and mission, that he might find matter of accusation against him. And then Christ answered him ; although under all the questions put to him before, he held his peace ; herein reverencing and submitting to the authority of a divine commission, although exercised by a person of a vile and infamous character, and with a very wicked design. Thus also Moses acting with divine authority in this covenant transaction on the plains of Moab, extended the bonds of this covenant, and this oath to them that were absent, as well as to those present, without asking any consent in the case.

The instances of covenanting in the days of Joshua and Nehemiah also, are not to be considered as an entrance into a new covenant relation to God : but as a renewal and recognition of that covenant relation which before subsisted, for special reasons at that time proper.

If we proceed in our inquiry, and survey the practice of the Apostles, we shall find no account of any verbal covenanting or promises made by such as they received as members of the church, under the gospel dispensation. The first instance of their admission, is recorded Acts ii. where we find three thousand taken into the church in one day. When they were pricked in their heart by the conviction set before them of their heinous crime of crucifying the Savior, they said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And Peter answers, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." And we are told in the 41st verse, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand." We have not the least hint that the apostles first led them to make any promises, or to enter into any covenant engagements whatever, before they were baptized: but that by which they were added to the church, was their being baptized. All the vows, promises, or covenant engagements that could be spoken with tongue, would not have made them members of the church, or visible disciples of Christ: it was baptism, and that only that could do it. There was at that time no other way known or practised of uniting with the church, but by being baptized, as we have any the least hint of in the bible; which is the only rule we have to go by in this matter. And after they were baptized, it is said of them, "That they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." As soon as they were baptized, they were esteemed and treated as members of the church in complete standing, in fellowship with the apostles in all church privileges; even in the Lord's supper, which is here styled "breaking of bread," as well as other christian privileges.

Another remarkable instance we have in Acts x. when Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius; while

he was speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. Upon this, Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Here also we find not the least hint of any previous covenanting, or any thing like it, before Peter commanded them to be baptized; nor any thing else required of them, in order to their enjoyment of all the privileges of the visible church. And we may here further observe, that the apostle Peter, acting with a divine commission, as Moses did on the plains of Moab, without asking any previous consent, enjoined the covenant upon them in commanding them to be baptized. To these we may add, the instances of Lydia and the jailor, Acts xvi. in which there appears nothing but baptism required of them.

Having thus brought into view the principal texts that can discover to us what the practice of the apostles was, in their receiving people to the communion of the church; we may from thence collect an answer to the question under consideration, viz. *What it is that makes a person a member of the visible church, and gives him a right to all the privileges of its communion in special ordinances?* We must say, *It is no verbal profession of the faith, nor any covenant engagements which we express with our mouths, that will do it: there appears no other way of being added to the church, but by receiving that ordinance which God hath appointed to be the initiating seal of his covenant.* Thus it was under the law of Moses, while circumcision was the instituted rite by which a person entered into covenant with God. There was no way of becoming a member of the church at that time, but by circumcision. To this agrees the command of God to Moses, Exod. xii. 48. "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover unto the Lord, let all his males be circumcised; and then let him come near and keep it," Here is no verbal covenanting directed to: but it was only by

submitting to the rite of circumcision, that the stranger acquired a right to come near and keep the pass-over. And it is a like case under the gospel, where baptism succeeds in the room of circumcision. A person must be taken into covenant by baptism, before he can have a visible right to the privileges of the covenant: but when the stranger is baptized, he thereby acquires a visible right to come near, and partake at the Lord's table.

Herein we see, that baptism is a significant ordinance; and the import of it is fixed by its divine author as a *covenanting act*. We thereby confirm, or enter into covenant with God, are laid under covenant bonds, and are entitled to covenant privileges; all which further appears from the institution of it.—Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. “Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Here is contained the institution of christian baptism. Indeed, we read of baptizing before this. John the baptist did baptize; and so did the disciples of Christ, before his suffering: but the baptism of John was not christian baptism: but quite another ordinance, instituted for another purpose, and had quite another meaning. Indeed, John used water in his baptism; and in that respect it had some resemblance of christian baptism; but in all other respects, it was quite different.

Objection. Jesus himself was baptized by John. And was not that *christian baptism*?

Answer. Not at all the more for that. Christian baptism is an ordinance appointed by Christ himself; by which, our relation to him, as his covenant-people is confirmed. But Christ's being baptized by John doth not in the least prove John's baptism to be christian baptism. Nothing can be more evident than that John's baptism and christian baptism are two different things. John did not, by his baptism, bring people into a covenant relation to God; for

they were as much in covenant with God before as afterwards : He did not make them members of the visible church ; for they were members of it before : His baptism could not be instituted by Christ ; for he was before Christ ; and therefore it could not be christian baptism. John's baptism referred to a Saviour to come ; but christian baptism refers to one already come. Christian baptism is administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : but John did not baptize in the name of the Son, because he had not then publicly appeared ; nor did he baptize in the name of the Holy Ghost, for some that had received his baptism, had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost. See Acts, xix. 1, 5, "Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized ? And they said, unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, this is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." From this text also it further appears, that some who had been baptized by John, were afterwards again baptized with Christ's baptism ;* which unde-

*It is pleaded by many learned men that we must understand this fifth verse to be the words of the apostle Paul ; and not the words of Luke (who is supposed to be the penman of the book of the Acts of the Apostles) in his recording this discourse between the apostles and the disciples of John ; because the *de* in this verse, stands as a redditive to the *men*, expressed by Paul in the foregoing fourth verse. And it must be acknowledged that it is agreeable to the Greek language for the word *men* to be thus followed with *de* as a redditive to it : yea, perhaps this is always the case, unless in such instances where there is an ellipsis in the discourse. But this notwithstanding, I am of the opinion

nably proved them to be quite distinct ordinances. And as these were so distinct, no argument can be raised from John's baptism, with respect to either the subject or mode of christian baptism. Were it granted that John baptized none but adults ; it can be no

that this fifth verse must be understood as the words of Luke, setting forth the effect which the apostle's preceding discourse had upon these disciples of John, for several reasons.

1 The sense of the discourse seems to plead for it, and is doubtless so understood by all such readers as are not influenced by the position of *men*, and *de*, to understand it the other way.

2. To understand this fifth verse as Paul's words, doth not seem well to agree with the subject of the apostle's discourse. Had the apostle been shewing that the baptism of John was a true and valid christian baptism, it would have been suitable to his design to tell them, that John's disciples ought to look upon themselves as being baptized into Christ, because that John, by his baptism, brought his disciples under obligation to believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus Christ. But this doth not seem to have been his aim. His inquiry respected the Holy Ghost. The apostle asked them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" It was their professed ignorance that there was a Holy Ghost, that led the apostle to inquire into their baptism. For if they had been baptized into the Trinity, they must certainly have heard that there was a Holy Ghost. And upon the Apostle's asking them, "Unto what then were ye baptized !" they said "Unto John's baptism." And upon this, the apostle lays open the tenor and import of John's baptism, saying, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." But how does this explanation of John's baptism account for their ignorance about the Holy Ghost, if John's baptism was administered in the name of the Trinity, as well as christian baptism ? The whole scope of the apostle's discourse therefore shows that these disciples of John had not received christian baptism, but were yet to be baptized : which makes it necessary to understand the apostle's discourse as finished with the fourth verse ; and that the fifth verse is the words of the historian, setting forth the effect

objection against infant baptism : and were it fully proved that he baptized by plunging ; it will not at all prove that christian baptism must be so administered. Christ's baptism was not instituted till after his resurrection ; nor was it once mentioned, till Christ gave this commandment to his apostles, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. 'Tis here that Christ gave commission

which the foregoing discourse of the apostle had upon these converts, that when they heard the apostle declare this, then were they baptized into Christ.

3. Where the sentence is elliptical we often find the word *men*, used in the Greek language, without being followed with *de* as a redditive to it ; although the *de* would naturally come in, if the ellipsis were filled up. Instances of this often occur. See Acts xxvii. 21. " Ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have saved this harm and loss." If the ellipsis had been filled up, these words would have been added at the end of the verse, " But ye would not," in which the *de* would have stood in its proper place. See also Rom viii. 12. Rom x. 1. II Corin. xii. 12. Colos. ii. 23. Heb. xii. 9. And in the place under consideration, it is most natural to understand the apostle's discourse as elliptical, and that it ends with the fourth verse ; which ellipsis if it were filled up, would be an explanation of the different tenor and import of christian baptism. For we cannot suppose that Luke has recorded the whole discourse which Paul had with these disciples of John. Doubtless when he found them so ignorant in the fundamental doctrines of christianity as not to know whether there be any Holy Ghost, he would instruct them in the way of the Lord more perfectly ; although Luke, in his recording these things, has only given us a brief summary of the matter.

It is objected, that when these disciples tell the apostle they had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost ; it cannot be supposed they were ignorant of the doctrine of the Trinity ; but that which they were ignorant of, was the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost : and therefore John might baptize in the name of the Trinity, notwithstanding this ignorance of his disciples.

To this I answer. Although the doctrine of the Trinity is an article of the public faith and explicit profession of the gospel church ; yet it was not so under the former dispensation. By the clearer light of the New Testament we are plainly taught the doctrine of the Trinity, and are enabled

to his Apostles to make disciples of all nations. In this institution, we may observe, the word *teach* is twice used, according to our translation. "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." But in the original, they are two different

to discover some references to it, and intimations of it, in the writings of Moses and the prophets. But were we to collect our knowledge of it only from the Old Testament, we should find that it is not there so plainly revealed as to suppose it to be the common faith of the Jewish church, held forth by an explicit profession ; nor so plainly taught, but that these disciples of John may easily be supposed to be ignorant of it ; yea, such strangers to it as honestly to tell the apostle, that they had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

To say that what these disciples confess their ignorance of, was the descent of the Holy Ghost in his miraculous gifts on the day of pentecost, is not to the purpose ; for our being baptized unto the Trinity, refers to the third person in the God-head, not so much with respect to his miraculous gifts, as to his sanctifying influences.

4 Admitting that Luke had finished his account of the apostle's discourse in the fourth verse ; it was proper and agreeable to his common customs to introduce his own words, in his recording the discourses of others, with the word *de*, just in the manner he has done here. See Luke's Gospel, chap. xx. 16. "And when they heard it, they said, God forbid." The words "*akonsantes de eipon*," cannot belong to the preceding discourse of Christ ; nor yet to the reply of the Jews : but are manifestly the words of Luke, in his recording this discourse between Christ and the Jews ; and introduced with the word *de* just in the manner as in the text under consideration "*akonsantes de ebaptisthegan*." Compare also Acts ii. 37. Acts v. 21. Acts vii. 54. and many other places. These reasons which I have now offered constrain me to believe this fifth verse contains, not the words of the apostle, but of Luke : and that these disciples who had before received John's baptism, were now baptized into Jesus Christ.

The critical remarks of many great and learned men on this text, giving it a contrary signification, will, I hope, be admitted as a sufficient excuse for this long note.

words; doubtless because different things were intended by them. These two words in the Greek language, although they have some agreement in their significations, yet they have also some difference.— The first word, in strictness of speech, signifies *to disciple*; but the second word properly signifies *to teach* or *instruct*; as is commonly observed by Annotators. And therefore the most exact translation of the text would be, “Go disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Or without referring to the Greek; our English translation conveys the same distinction between these two words; as they are both explained, and have their precise meaning fixed by our Lord, in the words following each of them. “Go, teach all nations, baptizing them.” The word *baptizing*, which follows after, explains and fixes the meaning of the word *teach*, which goes before. And so in the latter word *teaching*, the meaning of it is fixed by what follows, “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The thing commanded to be done in the first word *teach*, is performed by baptizing them: but the thing commanded to be done in the second word *teaching*, is performed by instructing them which have been baptized, to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. The text therefore, as it now stands in our translation, if the sense of it is taken according to the rules of just construction, will give precisely the same meaning as it would have done, if it had been translated, *go, disciple all nations, baptizing them, &c.*

Upon the whole then, it appears from the institution itself, as well as from the examples of the apostles, that the way in which they were to make disciples of all nations was by baptizing them. There is no mention made, nor any direction given about requiring people to make any verbal promise, or to bring themselves under any previous covenant-engagements, before they were to baptize them; but it

is baptism itself by which they are visibly made the disciples of Christ, the subjects of his kingdom, or members of his church. By that ordinance, a person is set apart from the rest of the world ; and is federally sanctified, or consecrated, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whose name is thereby put upon them. Thus the import or signification of that ordinance is plainly fixed and determined, in its confirming a covenant relation between God and the person baptized. And herein lies the difference between baptism and the Lord's supper ; baptism is an *initiating* ordinance, that is, an ordinance by which we enter into covenant with God, or have that relation publicly sealed upon us ; and for this reason it is but once to be administered to the same person : whereas the Lord's supper is often to be received, because it is the design of that ordinance, *to bring to remembrance*. We therein enter into no new covenant relation with God different from what we were in before ; but rather call to mind, and renew our covenant engagements : But baptism is our first entrance into, or confirmation of our covenant with God ; and it is an everlasting covenant that can never be made void. Indeed, this covenant may be broken, that is, we may carry ourselves so contrary to it as to forfeit all the privileges of it ; and may be turned out of the church, as persons condemned by the covenant, and cut off from all the privileges and blessings of it : but the covenant can never be disannulled ; but it remains as the rule by which the offender shall be finally judged and condemned. That the covenant which is confirmed upon us in baptism, is thus an everlasting covenant, appears from this, that although a person for his bad conduct, should be cut off from God's covenant people ; yet there is room for repentance, and upon his repentance, the church will restore him : but there is no re-baptizing to be used in this case ; which shows that the covenant relation still subsists, although a person by his bad conduct forfeits the privileges of it ; instead of enjoying privileges by it, the obstinate of-

fender is bound over to an aggravated condemnation by the covenant.

As the covenant we enter into by baptism is everlasting, so the bonds of it are very sacred : the person is thereby devoted to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; is laid under the most sacred engagements to renounce the ways of sin ; the service of his own lusts, and the vanities of this evil world ; and to yield himself up to God without reserve. Gal iii. 27. " As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." We thereby not only put on a profession of christianity ; but we also come under obligations to have an answerable frame of heart, and manner of life. We must so put on the Lord Jesus Christ, as to be clothed with his righteousness and adorned with his image ; that both in the eye of God who sees the heart, and in the eye of man who sees our actions, we may appear to be clothed with Christ. We must have the answer of a good conscience towards God, according to the bonds of the covenant which is sealed upon us in that ordinance. I. Peter, iii. 21. " The like figure whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Without this answer of a good conscience, our covenant relation to God will be matter of aggravated condemnation to us.

If baptism is that by which we enter into covenant with God, and are made members of the visible church, as I trust has been sufficiently proved ; it follows, that all baptized children are to be esteemed the real members of the church, and entitled to all the privileges of its communion, which they are capable of improving. It is therefore here necessary to exhibit some evidence of the divine right of infant baptism.

God has, from the beginning, included children in the same relation to himself with their parents. This was evidently the case in the first covenant

made with our first parents in their state of innocence. It has been already proved that the seed of Adam were included with him in the first covenant. And when the covenant of grace was brought in after the fall, through the interposition of the Mediator, Adam's seed were equally interested in it, with himself. God had said to Adam in the first covenant, "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And had it not been for the mediation of Christ, which took place between God and fallen man when the promise of the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head, was given, he would have died on the day that he sinned. But by giving this promise, the covenant of grace was introduced, and Adam was put into a new state of probation under it. If the first covenant had had its full operation, Adam and his seed would have been cut off at one stroke : but by the Mediator he was relieved from present death ; and his seed were born into the world according to the originally appointed method of ordinary generation to stand probationers under the covenant of grace, upon the same footing with him. All this is evident from facts too plain to be denied. Here God began his visible church with Adam ; and this church was the church of Christ, as is evident, because that dispensation was the fruit of his mediation. And it is equally evident that his seed were as much members of the church, and by birth interested in all the privileges of that dispensation, as Adam himself was : their natural birth was obtained by the introduction of the new covenant, which shows that the privileges of the covenant were their birth right.

So also the church, as established by the dispensation given to Abraham, is the church of Christ. For the Abrahamic dispensation was properly the gospel, as the apostle testifies, Gal. iii. 8. "The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, say-

ing, in thee shall all nations be blessed." As that dispensation was a dispensation of the covenant of grace, or was really the gospel ; so the church thereby established, was the church of Christ. Christ has had a church in all ages, and he has never had but one ; although various have been the dispensations by which it has been outwardly established among men. The church of Christ therefore at this day, is the same church as was set up in the days of Adam.

Some perhaps may here object, that the covenant with Abraham was typical, and was therefore abolished when Christ came ; and for that reason cannot be admitted as an evidence of the divine right of infant baptism.

But to this I answer by a peremptory denial that the Abrahamic covenant was typical. That there were types and shadows in the former dispensation I readily grant ; the law of Moses was full of them. But the covenant with Abraham was not a shadow of good things to come ; but a plain and express appointment for the time then present, of a covenant between God and him, and his seed. And the great truth held up to public view in it, was that such faith as Abraham had, would justify and save all such as have it. See Rom. iv. 11. " And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised." This, instead of being abolished, is the great truth which runs through the whole gospel. Covenants can never be abolished till the engagements of both parties in the covenant are fulfilled ; and promises stand in force till they are performed. Now the thing promised to Abraham was, that in his seed should all nations be blessed. As long therefore as there remains any of the nations of the earth to be blessed in Christ, who is more especially the seed meant ; so long the covenant which God made with him stands in force. And this is the light in which the apostle understood that covenant, as appears from Gal. iii. 16. " Now to Abraham and his seed were

the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Compared with verse 29. " And if ye be Christ's, then ye are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." And hence, Abraham is called the heir of the world through the righteousness of faith. Rom. iv. 13. Indeed, the particular rite of circumcision by which the covenant at that time, was confirmed, is now superseded by the christian circumcision, or baptism. The change of the particular rite of confirmation, makes no change of the covenant. When the covenant was first given to Adam, there appears no other rite of confirmation to be instituted at that time, but sacrifices. To which there is an allusion in Psalm l. 8. " Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." But in the dispensation to Abraham, circumcision was instituted ; and under the new testament, it is baptism that seals the covenant : but in all these dispensations, it is the covenant of grace that makes the relation between God and mankind. And as it was in the first dispensation of the covenant of grace to Adam, that his seed were thereby brought into the same relation to God as he was ; so this likewise very expressly appears in the dispensation to Abraham. Gen. xvii. God there covenanted to be his God, and the God of his seed after him ; and instituted circumcision as a token of the covenant ; and commanded him, and his children after him, to circumcise their seed at eight days old. It is undeniably evident, that by virtue of this covenant, the seed of Abraham became the covenant people of God, and visible church, from that time forward, till the gospel dispensation took place. But such as deny infant baptism, deny that the church under the gospel, is the same church continued that was before established among the children of Israel, by the covenant with Abraham. But as infants were expressly acknowledged as members of the church under the Abrahamic dispensation ; therefore if the

church now is the same church continued, it will follow that infants are still to be treated as members of it. And in further confirmation of this truth I shall mention a few things.

1. There were many promises made to the ancient church, established by the covenant with Abraham, which were not to be accomplished till the gospel dispensation took place : and if that church was abolished before these promises were fulfilled, and another church set up to inherit them ; then the faithfulness of God who had promised these things to that church, has failed. A promise to this purpose we have in Isa. liv. 1, 3. " Sing, O barren thou that didst not bear : for thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left ; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles." The barren woman here spoken to, the apostle tells us is Sarah. Gal. iv. 27. This promise was evidently given to the church established by the covenant with Abraham. God here promised, that the seed of that church should inherit the Gentiles ; and the apostle expressly so applies it. Gal. iv. 28. " Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." We brethren, that is, we christians of Gentile nations, are the children of promise ; we are the seed of the church meant in the promise. Here then, we have the testimony both of the prophet Isaiah, and the apostle Paul, that the gospel church is the same that subsisted under the former dispensation. The whole sixtieth chapter is a promise made to the church, that the Gentiles should come to her light, and kings to the brightness of her rising. There is another promise to the same purpose in the sixty-sixth chapter, twelfth verse. " For thus saith the Lord, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." And in Amos ix. 11, 12. We have a promise mentioned by the apostle, Acts xv. 16, 17. " After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down : and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up ; that the resi-

due of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doth all these things." Here again, we have the united testimony of the prophet, and of the apostles assembled in council, that this promise to the ancient church was to be fulfilled under the gospel; and that the gospel is so far from pulling down the church established, that it is really a building of it up. Again Micah iv. 1, 2. "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, come and let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways." Here, the Gentiles are said to go to the house of the God of Jacob, which is evidently the church which the God of Jacob had established by the covenant made with him, and with his fathers. And in Micah vii. 20, the great things which God would do for the gospel church, are said to be, "Because thou wilt perform thy truth unto Jacob, and thy mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers, from the days of old." This is an express testimony that the gospel church is an heir of the privileges and promises of the covenant with Abraham.

Now these and many other promises in the prophets, were made to the church then in being; which were not to be accomplished till the gospel dispensation should take place: but if that church does not still live to inherit them, then these promises have fallen to the ground, and the covenant faithfulness of God has failed, which none can suppose: and therefore the church at this day, must be acknowledged to be the same church as then existed, to which the promises were made.

2. As a farther evidence that the church under the gospel is the same church continued, and is interested in all the privileges of the Abrahamic covenant;

I shall mention some testimonies out of the New Testament. See Rom. ix. 4. There the apostle speaks of the Jews as the people "To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." But how did these church privileges pertain to the Jews under the gospel, but by virtue of the covenant with Abraham? and as the seed of the covenant, not yet finally rejected? Indeed, their refusal of Christ did forfeit these covenant privileges, as Moses had forewarned them. Deut. xviii. 15, referred to by the apostle, Acts iii. 22, 23. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among his people." Here the apostle testifies, that the prophet spoken of by Moses, was the Lord Jesus Christ; and that their not hearing him, is one of the sins for which they were to be cut off. But how could they be cut off from the church, under the gospel, unless they were in it? And it is certain they never were in it, only as they were members of it under the former dispensation. This therefore is an evident proof, that the church is one and the same under both dispensations. And the apostle further urgeth this argument, in the 25th verse, to persuade them to hearken to Christ, that they might keep their standing in the church, and not be cut off, "Ye are the children of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." This is a clear evidence that the church established by the covenant with Abraham, did continue after the resurrection of Christ; and the Jews who were members of it, were not cut off from it, till by their obstinate refusal of Christ, they forfeited these privileges. The same argument the apostle largely urgeth in Rom. xi. 17.

“ And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree.” Verse 20. “ Well, because of unbelief they were broken off.” Verse 23. “ And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in : For God is able to graft them in again.” The olive-tree from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off, and into which believing Gentiles were grafted, is one and the same tree : this cannot be denied. Some only, and not all the natural branches were broken off. And even these which are broken off, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in again. But what shall they be grafted into? Shall the gospel dispensation be set aside, and the Abrahamic dispensation be again restored, to make way for their being grafted in again? For when they become believers, they are to be grafted in again, into the same olive-tree from which they were broken off for unbelief. What total confusion doth it make of this whole discourse of the apostle, to deny the church to be the same, under both dispensations! It will amount to charging the apostle with gross abuse and perversion of the scripture, in his applying these things to the church, and to the rejection of the Jews from it for their unbelief. The Jews had most grievously sinned in crucifying the Son of God ; for which, after the gospel dispensation took place, God dealt with them as persons under suspension, for a season, that the offer of the gospel might be first made unto them. But by continuing obstinate in unbelief, they appear to be wholly cut off, as God by Moses, had threatened them. Therefore the apostles, in this time of their suspension, might properly urge their interest in the covenant, as a motive to hearken to the gospel. I will mention but one text more under this head, and that is Gal. iii. It is manifestly the design of the apostle in this chapter, to show that the covenant with Abraham extends to, and is in force under the gospel dispensation ; that he might thereby establish his doc-

trine of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law. See verses, 6—9. “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed so then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.” And hence he observes, verse 14. “That the blessing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ.” More fully to lay open and confirm this matter, he adds, ver. 15, 16, 17. “Brethren, I speak after the manner of men ; Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many ; but as of me, and to thy seed, which is Christ, and this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, (or to Christ) the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” Here the apostle shows us that Christ is more especially intended as the seal mentioned in the covenant, to whom the promise was made, that is, Christ mystical ; or Christ as the head of that body of which believers are the members. And this covenant could not be disannulled by giving the law. For although covenants may be altered four hundred and thirty years after they are made, by the mutual consent of the covenanting parties, as well as the next day ; yet the covenant made with Christ, in Abraham, could not be made void by giving the law, because he did not then exist as the seed of Abraham ; and therefore could give no consent to any alteration in the covenant. For whatever existence Christ had before ; yet he did not exist as the seed of Abraham till his incarnation.

The apostle next proceeds to answer the grand objection of the Jews, ver. 19, 20. “Wherefore then

serveth the law ? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made ; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator. Now a Mediator is not of one ; but God is one." Moses evidently acted the part of a Mediator between God and the children of Israel at the time of giving the law : for which reason, I suppose, commentators have generally understood him to be the Mediator here meant. But the apostle is here speaking, not of giving the law ; but of its continuance, and the purpose it was to serve, till the seed should come ; in which respect it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator. Moses therefore could not be the Mediator here intended. If we look into the dispensation by Moses, we shall see the moral law comprised in the ten commandments as the leading part of it ; the design of which is to convince of sin. And in addition to this, is the institution of sacrifices, and the appointment of the priesthood ; especially the high priest, who on the great day of atonement, went into the most holy place, to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy seat : by all which Christ Jesus the great high-priest of our profession, who is now passed into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us, was eminently shadowed forth. The high-priest therefore is evidently the Mediator of whom the apostle here speaks. But to act as Mediator under that dispensation was not the office of one man ; but a succession of priests offering often times the same sacrifice, to the same God ; which plainly shows there was no real atonement for sin, made by those sacrifices. Thus the apostle proves that the law was given to shadow forth Christ ; and was to continue in force only till Christ the seed of Abraham should come. And therefore the way of justification exemplified in Abraham, is the way in which all his seed must be justified. And therefore he expresseth the conclusion of his argument in verse, 29. " If ye be Christ's, then be are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." To deny there-

fore that the covenant made with Abraham extends to, and is in force with the church, under the gospel dispensation, is as much as to say, the apostle has here used a false, and fallacious argument to support his favorite doctrine of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law.

The above explanation of the dark and difficult 19th & 20th verses of this chapter, perfectly agrees with, and beautifully illustrates the apostle's argument in this place; and fully agrees with this same apostle's more large explanation of the law, in his epistle to the Hebrews.

Many other arguments might be offered in proof of this truth; but I choose to come nearer to the point we are upon, and essay to prove it with a special reference to the church seed, which will clearly evince the divine right of infant baptism.

That the seed were included with their parents in the dispensation of the covenant of grace, both to Adam and to Abraham, is indisputable. And unless the tenor of that covenant is changed, the church which was thereby related to and in covenant with God, must be still the same, and an heir of the privileges and promises of the covenant, with respect to the church seed. This is also evident from the express terms in which many promises are given to the church, which relate to the times of the gospel. A promise to this purpose is made to the church in Psal. xlv. 16 "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." Here the seed are expressly mentioned; and it is evident from the thing promised, that the church was to wait in faith, till the gospel dispensation took place, and by its spread among the Gentiles made way for the accomplishment of it. Psal. cii. 28. "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." If we compare the 25th and 26th verses of this psalm, with the remarks of the apostle upon them in Heb. i. 10, 11, we shall see this 28th verse is a promise

made to Christ respecting his servants and their seed ; and therefore it is a promise that believers and their seed are now heirs to, and interested in. The children of Christ's servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before God. In Isaiah xl. 11, is another promise to the church, to be fulfilled under the gospel. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd ; he shall gather his lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom." Isa. xlix. 22. "Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people ; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried on their shoulders." And in the 25th verse there is this promise made to the church seed. "I will save thy children." Isa. lix. 21. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." Isa. lx. 4. "Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side." Isa. lxxv. 23. "They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." Isa. lxxvi. 22. "For as the new heavens, and the new earth which I shall make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed, and your name remain." Jerem. xxx. 20. "Their children also shall be as afore-time."

Now these, and many more such like promises were made to the church, for the accomplishment of which, she was to wait in faith, till the gospel dispensation should bring her the promised blessings. The church therefore under the gospel, is evidently interested in these promises, and an heir of these privileges, with respect to her seed. It is abundantly evident that the apostles esteemed the church seed, under the gospel, as joint heirs with their parents, to church principles. This appears both from their testimony and practice. In proof of this, I will mention

tion, Acts, ii. 39. "For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." It will admit of some dispute, what promise the apostle here speaks of: but all will allow it to be either the promise to Abraham, to be his God, and the God of his seed; or the promise which the apostle, in his foregoing discourse, recited from the prophet Joel. But be it either of them, it will amount to the same thing. If it is conceded to be the promise in the covenant with Abraham, it will follow, that in the apostles view, infants are now, as much included in the covenant with their parents, as they were, in the covenant with Abraham; and must be admitted as an un gainsayable evidence of the divine right of infant baptism.

But to me, I confess, it appears more rational to suppose the promise intended in this text, is that which the apostle had mentioned in his foregoing discourse, taken from the prophet Joel, ii. 28, &c. because that is the only promise expressly mentioned, to which he could have reference; and because he here recites the last clause of the promise, as it is contained in the prophet. "The remnant whom the Lord shall call" Or as the apostle expresseth it, "As many as the Lord our God shall call." It is observable that the prophet makes no mention of *children*, in this promise. And the reason, or authority which the apostle had, to put in children with their parents, in this application of the promise, saying, "The promise is to you, and to your children," will appear plain, by looking into the promise as given to the church, by the prophet Joel. The church to which the prophet gave this promise, was evidently and confessedly, the church that was established by the dispensation to Abraham, which took in children with their parents. Every promise therefore which God made to that church, from time to time by his servants the prophets, must be necessarily understood agreeable to the tenor of that covenant by which the church was established, and under which it received

the promise. And hereby it appears that such promises extend to the church seed. Therefore the apostle had good right, and authority from the promise itself, to mention their children as being interested in it, although children were not expressly mentioned by the prophet.

The evasion of the anabaptists therefore upon this text, is nothing to the purpose. They say, "The children must be first called," before the promise can belong to them; and that therefore *they must first grow up to years of understanding*. By this evasion, they make the apostle assert that for truth, which was, in fact, false. For if the promise did not belong to the children till after they were grown to years of understanding, and had the call of the gospel set before them, the apostle could not know that the promise would ever belong to them. Yea, I say, the apostle could not know this, even by inspiration; because it was false in fact. For as to the children of such Jews as continued in unbelief; they were soon given up by God to destruction; the chief of them killed by famine, sword, and pestilence; their temple and city destroyed; and such as escaped, sent into captivity to the ends of the earth; and but few of them even to this day, really enjoy the call of the gospel. And besides, the apostle speaks in the time present, and saith, "The promise *is* to you and your children:" but if the promise did not belong to their children at that very time, it does not appear that it ever did belong to them at all. And further; it is evident that the apostle mentions *children*, as an argument to influence his hearers; whereas, if they had understood him to represent their children in no better case than such as were afar off, there could be no motive in it: but it would rather raise a prejudice against the gospel, in the minds of these Jews, who had ever been used to consider God, as in covenant with their children, as well as with themselves. But such quibbles, and foolish reasoning must never be ascribed to the apostles. No; their doctrine is with-

out guile ; and this their testimony was grounded upon the oath and covenant of God with Abraham, which warranted them to use this argument with the Jews, to persuade them to acknowledge Christ, as the way to secure an interest in the promises and privileges of the covenant, under the gospel, to themselves and their children.

Again, we have a most express testimony that the infant seed of the church are included in the covenant with their parents, under the gospel, in like manner as they were in the covenant with Abraham, by the apostles and elders when they came together to consider of this very point, Acts, xv. 10. "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear ?" It is here evident that the infant seed of the gospel church are declared to be disciples ; which fully confirms the preceding explanation of the apostle's words in his saying "the promise is to you, and to your children."

Another testimony of the apostle, we have in Gal. iv. 28. "Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise." This is spoken to the churches of Galatia, which were gospel churches, composed chiefly of Gentile converts ; and the apostle testifies that they are, as Isaac was, the children of promise. Isaac is mentioned by name in the covenant with Abraham, as the seed in particular with whom God would establish his covenant ; and who was to have the covenant confirmed upon him at eight days old, including his seed after him. To deny therefore that the gospel church is interested in the Abrahamic covenant, or that its infant seed are entitled to covenant seals, is a full contradiction to the apostle.

So likewise, Gal. iii. 13, 14. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us :—that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Here the apostle, in express terms, tells us, That the blessing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles. And what

this blessing of Abraham is, that is here intended, appears from the next words, "That we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith;" which promise of the spirit was the principal thing contained in, and the chief substance of the covenant that God made with him, "To be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." This blessing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles.

To the same purpose are the apostle's words in Eph. ii. 12. "At that time, ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise." And chap. iii. 6. "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the gospel." In both these texts, believing Gentiles are represented as being no more strangers from the commonwealth of Israel: but as members of the same body, as fellow-heirs of the same privileges, and partakers of the same promises with the commonwealth of Israel: But it is evident that the seed were parts and members of that commonwealth, and heirs together with their parents of the promises and privileges of it. And let it be here observed, that the apostle is here speaking of the church as a visible body, a commonwealth: he is not speaking of sincere believers, as so many particular persons, or individuals in an unconnected state; but as a visible body, a body-politic, a commonwealth: and is therefore evidently setting forth the privileges of their visible church standing. And the tenor of his argument necessarily extends the privileges of the church to the church seed; not of Jews only but of Gentiles also.

The remark, also of the apostle upon the dealing of God with Noah, in Heb. xi. 7. contain the same representation of the matter. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." It was with

Noah that God established his covenant, when the whole world had corrupted themselves. Gen. vi. 18. He only is mentioned as a believer ; yet his whole family shared great privileges by the covenant, being saved in the ark during the flood. And the apostle Peter speaks of the same thing, I. Pet. iii. 21. " The like figure whereunto, baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." By baptism we secure a great privilege to our children which may be compared to the saving of Noah's family in the ark, whereby they were preserved to the enjoyment of church privileges, when the rest of the world were drowned by the flood.

Thus have I collected some from among many texts, both in the old and new testament, which evidently show the visible church under the gospel, to be that very church which was established by the covenant with Abraham ; which expressly represent the church seed under the gospel, to be joint heirs with their parents to the privileges of the covenant : and the texts produced from the new testament evidently show that the apostles so understood them.

It is objected that we have no instance or example of the apostle's baptizing any infants. I might for argument sake grant it : for we need not any, to establish infant baptism. It is undeniably evident that the seed were included with their parents in all former dispensations. This was the case in the first revelation of the new covenant to Adam, after the fall, when the visible church was begun with him ; and his children continued members of it till Cain apostatized, and went out from the presence of the Lord. This was the case in the renewal of the covenant with Noah. And this is most expressly the case in the dispensation of the covenant to Abraham ; and with all the renewals of it with his seed throughout all former ages. And as it is manifest by such a great variety of sacred texts that the church under the

gospel, is not another, but the same church ; and the church-seed so frequently and expressly mentioned in the prophecies and promises contained in the writings of the former prophets, when they evidently speak of the gospel dispensation ; it fully proves the divine right of infant baptism. The seed having been once included in the covenant, is a sufficient evidence that they are still in it, till our adversaries are able to produce plain and evident proof that they have been since cut off. It does not therefore properly lie upon us to prove that the right of the seed to the seal of the covenant, holds good under the gospel : But it belongs to them to prove that the seed of God's covenant people has been cut off. But the sum total of the evidence they can, or even pretend to produce in the case, is, that there is no instance of any infant's being baptized by the apostles : and the want of a capacity in infants for the exercise of faith.

As to the first of these arguments, that we have no example of infant baptism ; *Answer*, We have no need of any, in order to prove the point. For when we consider the prophecies and promises of the old testament, which relate to gospel times, so expressly representing the church seed to be included in the covenant ; which were so understood by the apostles, who have expressly applied them to the church under the gospel ; it will appear manifest that they did baptize infants : or at least, if it could be proved that they did not, it would at the same time prove an inconsistency, and self-contradiction upon the apostles, which may not be supposed. If infants are cut off, let our opponents shew us the text that cuts them off.

And as to the example of the apostles ; so far as their example is recorded, it is manifestly in favor of infant baptism. For when the Lord opened the heart of Lydia to receive the gospel, her household were baptized. Acts xvi. 15. And when the apostle preached to the jailor, he tells him, " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy

house. Upon which he, and all his, were straight-way baptized." Acts xvi. 31, 33. I grant, it is not certain there were any infants in either of these families; but on the contrary, there might be some in both of them. And if there were infants in either of them, it is plain from the text, that they were baptized, because the whole households were baptized; which would not be true, if there remained any unbaptized children in either of them. There does not appear to be any believers in either of these families, but Lydia and the jailor: and the baptism of their households, whether infants or adults, is represented to be on the covenant right of the heads of the families, according to the most easy and natural construction of the words: which examples considered in connexion with the representation of the promises and privileges which belong to the visible church, and church-seed, as they stand recorded both in the old and new testament, are sufficient evidence of the divine right of infant baptism.

When the right of a person, whether infant or adult, to any privilege in the visible church, is established by plain scripture testimony, although there should be no record of any example of it, it is very injurious to deprive them of the privileges to which their right thus appears. We have no example in the bible, that any woman ever partook of the Lord's supper. But who ever doubted of their right to it, for such a reason as this? And yet, there is as much sense, or rather *nonsense* in this argument, when applied to children, as there is when applied to women. The right of the church-seed to the seals and privileges of the covenant of God with the visible church, is so expressly declared in the prophecies and promises delivered to the church, by the former prophets, to be fulfilled under the gospel dispensation, which were so repeatedly asserted, claimed for, and applied to the church by the apostles, that it must be owned that their practice contradicted their profession and doctrine, if they denied baptism to the infant seed of believers. So much silence in the scripture

concerning the baptism of infants, is not to be thought strange of. For if there was, at that day, no dispute raised about it, there could be no occasion to make mention of it; their right being plainly asserted, there was no need to subjoin examples of it. Yet it is morally certain, that if the seed had been denied the seals of the covenant, it would have caused disputes, and raised prejudices in the minds of the Jews against the gospel. For since their seed had always been acknowledged as included in the covenant of God, from the days of Abraham down to that time; it must have been surprising, and very grievous to them, to find their seed cut off under the gospel. Such a change could not have failed of producing discontents and disputes among a people who were so zealous of the law, and of the customs of their fathers, as the believing Jews were. The silence therefore of the new testament about the baptism of infants, is so far from being an argument against it, that it is a strong and very conclusive one in favor of it. For if their seed had been cut off from the covenant under the gospel, there is the strongest presumption that such disputes about it would have arisen in the church, that we must necessarily have had some mention of it in some apostolical writings. How weak and ridiculous then is it, to make the silence of the scripture an argument against the baptism of infants, when its whole force is thus evidently in favor of it!

And their other argument taken from the incapacity of infants to exercise faith, is full as little to the purpose. Let them first prove that the real exercise of a saving faith is necessary to our being included in the covenant of God with the visible church. Till this is proved, the want of faith in infants is no objection against their being baptized. That the exercise of true faith is necessary to our being interested in the promised blessing of eternal life, is readily granted. But it does not therefore follow that the same faith is necessary to our belonging to the visible

church, and being included in a covenant relation to God, under the covenant of grace. Was Adam regenerated after the fall, before God had revealed to him the covenant of grace in the promise of the seed of the woman? No, it is plain he was not.*— Yet at that very time God put him into a new state of trial for life or death, under the dispensation of the covenant of grace, in a church covenant relation to himself, in which his seed were included with him, and they all continued in this relation till Cain apostatized. The want of a saving faith both in Adam and in his seed, was no objection in the way. So also when God established his covenant with Abraham, his seed, although by nature children of wrath even as others, were to have the seal of the covenant put upon them at eight days old; their unregeneracy was never objected against them. And when from time to time God renewed the covenant with his seed, their unregeneracy, altho' evidently manifested in their lives, was not attended to as an objection against their covenanting. For at the very time when they stood before the Lord, to renew covenant with him, Moses tells them, "You have been rebellious against the Lord, from the day that I knew you. Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." Deut. ix. 24, and xxix. 4. And the reason which is assigned of the divine conduct in that in-

* Some may ask why there is no room for the supposition that Adam was regenerated before God brought in the new covenant by the promise of the seed of the woman? To such I answer: God had not revealed any gospel-truth to him after the fall, before he gave this promise. And as God had not revealed any thing for him to believe, therefore he could not be a believer. If he was regenerated, it must be such a kind of regeneration as may take place in one who still continues in a state of unbelief. But those who entertain such a notion of that regeneration which is taught in the gospel, are to be classed among those who still need that one should teach them which are the first principles of the oracles of God.

stance is full to the point of infant baptism. Deut. iv. 27. "Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them." And this reason of the divine conduct holds equally good under the gospel; if he loves the parents, he will choose their seed after them. And in Deut. x. 15, all other reasons are rejected, and this covenant love to the parents is assigned as the *only* reason of taking the children into covenant. "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day." The conduct of Moses upon many occasions, clearly shows that he looked upon the children of Israel as a people in covenant with God, even when they evidently discovered the want of a gracious state of heart; particularly on occasion of their rebellion at the time of the return of the spies. Deut. ix. 25—27. "Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the Lord had said he would destroy you. I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And verse 29. "Yet they are thy people, and thine inheritance." It is here evident that Moses lays the stress of his argument for them, upon their being the covenant people of God; and that by virtue of the covenant of God with their fathers.

Wherefore, as it is by being baptized that our covenant relation to God in the visible church, is entered into or confirmed, we are made complete members, and entitled to all the privileges of its communion; yea, and laid under obligations, not only to submit to the government of Christ in his church; but also to come forward and take and improve church privileges for our spiritual profiting, as fast as we can attain to the proper qualifications for these exercises: and infant baptism being thus evidently warranted

in the word of God, it follows that baptized children are to be looked upon as members of the church, and entitled to all the privileges of its communion, and ought to be acknowledged and treated accordingly.

Having exhibited abundant evidence of the divine right of infant baptism ; the same arguments equally prove their right to the other ordinance, or seal of the covenant, the Lord's supper : and it appears as evidently, to be the duty of parents to dedicate, and present their children to God, for his blessing, at the Lord's table, as in baptism. Baptised children, when they are grown to be capable to eat and drink with decency, ought to be brought to the table of the Lord, to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

In the institution of the passover their whole families were to partake of it. And after the children of Israel were settled in the land of Canaan, and they were required to go up to Jerusalem to keep the feast, their children, especially the males, were to go with them. Indeed, such as lived remote, could not bring all their children, while they were small. Our Savior went up with Joseph and Mary, when he was twelve years old ; which probably was near about the common age at which such as lived at a distance, brought their children to that ordinance. But in the first institution of it in Egypt, it is plainly represented as a family meal, in which their children did partake : which is probably one reason why it was required of the stranger who would keep the passover, that all his males should be first circumcised. And there is the same reason why children of christian parents should partake of the Lord's supper, as there was why Israelitish children should eat the passover.

It may be here asked, what advantage it can be to little children, to partake of that ordinance ? But we may as well ask, what advantage it can be to them, to be baptized ? They may receive benefit from one ordinance, as well as from the other. All the arguments which are brought in defence and support of

infant baptism, are equally strong and conclusive of their right to be brought to the Lord's table. For they are the children of God, being children of the covenant; and ought to eat of children's bread. When the new covenant was brought in, after the fall of Adam; his seed came into the world upon the same footing on which he then stood, and were interested in like privileges. So when God renewed his covenant with Abraham, God promised to be his God, and the God of his seed after him. The covenant with all the privileges of it, belonged to his seed as much as to himself. And when God renewed the covenant with the children of Israel at Mount Sinai the covenant and all the privileges of it, belonged to the whole congregation, in which their children were included. And when the covenant was again renewed on the plains of Moab, their little ones are expressly mentioned, Deut. xxix. 11. And as their children were circumcised at eight days old, by which the covenant was confirmed upon them; so in all the dispensations of the covenant with them, their children were considered as included in it, and entitled to the privileges of it. And it is a like case under the gospel; children are still included in the covenant, and interested in the same privileges with their parents. For saith the apostle, "The promise is to you, and your children." Acts, ii. 39. And as the right of children to one seal of the covenant, *viz.* baptism, is hereby made evident; so likewise their right to the other seal, the Lord's supper, is equally manifest.

God of the riches of his grace, has granted to his covenant people the privilege of presenting themselves before him, at his table, for his blessing. And as this is one privilege of the covenant; so it is the privilege of all such as are included in the covenant. And as children are included with their parents in the covenant; therefore they have a like right to be brought, and presented to God in that ordinance.

It may be objected, we have no example in the

scripture, that the apostles suffered little children to be brought with their parents to the Lord's table. I grant it. So neither have we any express example of their baptizing the infant seed of believers : and yet the silence of the scripture in that matter is not allowed to be a sufficient objection against infant baptism ; and therefore it cannot be a sufficient objection against their coming to the Lord's supper. The silence of the scripture in this matter, is so far from being an objection against the right of infants to both ordinances, that it is a strong argument in favor of it. The book of Acts contains the history of the apostles planting and building up the gospel church for the space of about thirty years ; in which time, many christians doubtless had children born, and grown up ; and yet we have no account how these children were treated by the apostles. But as the church was composed only of converts from among the Jews, for a number of years at first, who still retained a great veneration for the law of Moses, under which they had been brought up ; so, if their children had not been treated with like privileges under the gospel, as they had been under the law, it must have given them great uneasiness. Under the law, they had looked upon their children as interested in the same privileges of the covenant as themselves. But if the apostles had treated their children as not being included in the covenant, nor entitled to the privileges of it : but as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, and as being in no better state than heathen ; it must have occasioned great uneasiness, and brought on such contention and disputes, as that we must necessarily have had some accounts about it, in some part of the new testament. But no hint of it is to be found there : yet we have frequent mention of and references to their disputes about circumcision, which is but a trifle in comparison with this privilege of their infant seed. Thus it is evident that the whole force of the argument taken from the silence of the scripture in

this matter, is in favor of the right of infants to both ordinances.

As I have before shown, the examples, of the apostles, so far as their practice is recorded, is evidently in favor of infant baptism; in that, they baptized whole households: so likewise their example, so far as it is recorded, is in favor of bringing children to the Lord's table. See Acts. ii. 46. "And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." Here it appears, that in these primitive times, these first converts had the Lord's supper administered in their own private houses, and that it was connected with their meals; because their *breaking of bread* is here mentioned in connexion with *eating their meat with gladness*; which strongly intimates that their whole households did partake in it. How far what is here said will warrant the practice of administering that ordinance in private to particular persons, on special occasions, I shall not undertake to determine. It is pretty obvious, that one principal design of that ordinance is to be a public expression, in the face of the world, of our devotedness to Christ; and that therefore it ought to be administered in a public manner. Although the apostles at first administered this ordinance in private houses, to the families of the first converts on the day of pentecost; yet after the church was wrought up into a more complete state, it appears to have been their practice to assemble the church together for an attendance on the Lord's supper. Hence we read, Acts xx. 7, "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples assembled together to break bread." And the church of Corinth came together in one place for the celebration of this ordinance. I. Cor. xi. 18. But then, as the apostles at first administered this ordinance in private houses, to the families of their first converts; so when the church was formed into a more complete state, and believers came together in the church for

an attendance on this ordinance, we have good reason to conclude they brought their children with them.

Although there is no express mention in the scripture of bringing little children to the table of the Lord ; yet such as have searched into the writings of ancient christians, tell us, that these ancient fathers of the christian church testify with one voice, that it was the practice of the church, for the first three hundred years after Christ, to bring their young children with them to partake at the table of the Lord. And if this testimony of the most ancient christian writers may be depended on that this was a real fact, it must be allowed that it was what the apostles practised. And although the opinion of those ancient writers in doctrinal points is not of decisive authority ; yet I know of no reason why their testimony, as to particular facts, of which they must be supposed to have the means of knowledge, may not be depended on ; especially since we have so much evidence and reason from the sacred scripture, to conclude that it was the case.

I know of but one text in the whole bible that contains any thing which looks like an objection against bringing our children to the table of the Lord ; and that is, 1. Corinth. xi. where the apostle is blaming the Corinthians for not discerning the Lord's body in that ordinance, and directing them to prepare themselves for a due attendance upon of it by self-examination. I grant that children so soon as they can eat and drink, are not capable of performing the duty of self-examination, nor of making a full distinction between that ordinance and common food ; but this contains no sufficient reason why we should deny them this privilege of the covenant, or exclude the parent from publicly giving a practical expression of his faith in that promise of the covenant, that God will be his God, and the God of his seed. When a parent offers his child in baptism, we are to view his conduct as an expression of his faith in that promise of the covenant. And it is equally the parent's duty

practically to express and exercise his faith in that promise, by presenting his child to God, at the Lord's table, for his acceptance and blessing. In coming to the Lord's table we practically own the covenant: but if we own the covenant, we ought to own it in its true extent, as it takes in the seed with the parents: but by excluding our children, we practically disown the covenant, especially in that part of it which extends the promise to the seed. The incapacity of children therefore for moral exercises in both ordinances is entirely out of the question; and the duty of parents is left free, in which they have full scope for exercising and practically expressing their faith in the promise of the covenant, as it extends to their seed.

But we are to practise the duty of presenting our children to God for his blessing in gospel ordinances, not merely as the duty or privilege of the parent; but as a privilege also of our children. Their title to one ordinance is as evident from the word of God, as their title to the other. Here, I might go over again with all the texts and arguments which have been produced in defence of infant baptism, and show that they equally prove their right to the other seal of the covenant. The general reason by which infant baptism is established, is God's extending his covenant and promise to the seed; which equally confirms their right to one seal, as well as to the other. And they are as incapable of those moral exercises which are agreeable with the design of baptism, as they are of those which are agreeable with the design of the Lord's supper. When we baptize a person grown to the years of understanding, we require him, (as Philip did the Eunuch) to make a profession of his faith in Christ; but we baptize children without waiting for such a profession from them. And so, grown people must prepare themselves for a due attendance upon the Lord's supper by self-examination; the direction for this preparatory exercise is given to grown people: but that is no reason why

children should be kept back till they become capable of it, any more than why they ought to be kept back from baptism till they are capable of the moral exercises which are agreeable to the design of that ordinance. Although little children cannot make any actual improvement of gospel ordinances, yet they may receive some benefit by them. "They brought little children to Christ, and he took them up in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them." And may not we also hope he will receive and bless them, when we bring them to him in his own appointed way? To be dedicated to God, and to have his covenant confirmed upon us, and established with us, is in itself a great privilege, which is one advantage of infant baptism; and the same is also done for them, in bringing them to the Lord's table. We ought not therefore to keep off children from gospel ordinances because they cannot, in that stage of life, make all the improvement and reap all the advantages from them which adult people can. If their being brought to gospel ordinances can be in any respect an advantage to them, it is a good reason why it should be done for them. And I think it is evident from what has been said, that it is of great advantage, both to the parent, and to the children; to the parent, as it affords proper scope for the practical exercise of faith in the promise of the covenant, as it extends to the seed, as well as the parent; and to the children, as there is great reason to hope, Christ will receive, own and bless them. The incapacity of children therefore for exercising self-examination, or discerning the Lord's body in that ordinance, is an objection of no weight. While children are too young for such moral exercises as are agreeable to the design of the ordinance, we are to view their being brought to it, as a practical exercise and expression of the faith of the parent, in the promise of the covenant: but when children are grown to sufficient maturity, the duties of self-examination, and of discerning the Lord's body, are to be inculcated upon them.

Children will, in the early part of life, take notice of a difference between the Lord's supper and a common meal. They will soon perceive that it is made use of for a religious purpose; which will put them upon asking after the meaning of it, and lay open their attention to receive such religious instruction as it is the duty of parents to inculcate upon them on such an occasion. Isa. xxviii. 9, 10. "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." And hence it is that Moses gave that command to the children of Israel, Deut. vi. 20. "And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, we were Pharoah's bond-men," &c. In like manner our children, by being brought to the Lord's table, would be put upon inquiring into the meaning of it; which would give us a fair opportunity of instilling into their young and tender minds, the knowledge of divine truths, which, through the blessing of God, would have a saving influence on their hearts.

But with respect to this matter, I apprehend it is manifest from what has been offered, that God has not left it to us to determine this case by our own reason or prudence; but hath determined it for us, in that the right of little children is so plainly determined, with respect to both ordinances, and all the privileges of the visible covenant people of God.

Accordingly the apostle has taught us to consider our children as being in this sense holy. I. Cor. vii. 14. "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." And the command enjoined on parents "To train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," Eph. vi. 4, plainly requires us to bring them up according to their interest in

the covenant, and their title to the seals and privileges of it. And inasmuch as every argument which can be brought in defence and support of infant baptism, as fully proves the duty of bringing them to the Lord's table ; it manifestly appears to be an absurdity and inconsistency to plead for and practise the one, and not the other. That admonition therefore of Christ, Mat. xviii. 6, challengeth our special attention : " Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, *which believe in me*, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," which seems to be spoken by the spirit of prophecy, as a warning to those who, in after ages, should cut off the infant seed of the church from the seals and privileges of the covenant ; which seems to have been the effect of those errors that early sprung up in the church, which finally terminated in the doctrine of transubstantiation ; from which we are not fully purged to this day.

Some will be ready to find fault that I should open the doors of the church so wide as to let in all baptized persons to its communion. To this I answer : It does not belong to us to open, or to shut. We are none of Christ's counsellors. It is our business to follow his directions, and trust him with the consequences. Indeed, I grant that many baptized people, by reason of the manner in which they have been educated, treated and neglected by the church, are far from being meet subjects of its communion. But this might serve to convince us of the error of our past conduct, and should admonish us of the necessity of a reformation, and not to persist in such departures from divine rules in our treatment of the rising generation, as have been productive of such evil effects.

It is manifest there is but little of the divine presence with these churches, but little effect of the gospel and its institutions on the hearts of people ; which is not without a reason. The primitive church, while

she retained her simplicity and apostolic purity, was greatly enlarged among the heathen nations. But when she became corrupt, and innovations and human inventions were brought in, her enlargement has ceased ; and her bounds, for these many hundreds of years, have been rather contracted than extended ; which must be because of the withdrawalment of the divine presence, on account of some accursed thing that is found with her. As to the churches in this land, I trust they are built upon the true foundation, and have some *gold, silver, precious stones*, in the building ; but I apprehend there is also *wood, hay, stubble*, which must and will be burnt up. If there is any truth in what I have said of the visible church, of membership in it, and of the privileges of it ; we greatly need a reformation, even in the outward and visible form of the church. The apostles, according to the command of Christ, made disciples by baptizing them, which was the only way they received people into the church ; but we do not treat baptism as that which constitutes discipleship, or makes people members of the church. Instead of this we lift up our tool upon them, we receive members into the church by personal professions, and verbal covenanting of our own devising ; in which one useth one form, and another another. And why not ? For every one has an equal right to make his own forms. And when we undertake to make members of the church of our own manufacture, it is to be expected that every one, while he has them in hand, will fashion them to his own liking. But the apostle has given us a very seasonable caution, I. Cor. iii. 10, 11. “ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” The charge which God gave to the children of Israel, Exod. xx. 25, doubtless had a mystical meaning in it : “ And if thou wilt make me an altar

of stone, thou shalt not make it of hewn stone : for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." And the particular notice which is taken of the building of Solomon's temple, I. Kings, vi. 7, that there was neither hammer, nor ax, nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was building, seems to be a mere trivial circumstance, otherwise than as it contains a very instructive moral to the builders of the gospel church.

Although there is no express mention of the apostles treating the infant seed of the believers as disciples, or members of the church ; yet they are said to be disciples, Acts, xv. 10. and there are many things said which strongly imply such a treatment. The charge given to parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as I have shown, must be understood in this sense. The command that children should obey their parents in the Lord. Eph. vi. 1. plainly implies that the apostle considered little children as disciples, and subjects of Christ's kingdom. And the apostle John, expressly and repeatedly directs his discourse to old men, to young men, and to little children ; I. John, ii. 12. which plainly shows that he viewed them in the same light. All which well agrees with that express command of our Lord given after his resurrection to Peter, and through him, to all the apostles, to feed his lambs as well as his sheep, John, xxi. 15. Ought not then, these lambs of Christ's flock, to be fed with children's bread, as well as the sincere milk of the word ? And that kind and affectionate treatment with which our Lord used little children, when they were brought to him ; together with that reproof he gave to his disciples, when they shewed a disposition to have little children used in like manner as we have treated the children of the church ; might well cause us to tremble, and think seriously of a reformation. Mark, x. 13, 14, 15, 16. " And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them ; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But

when Jesus saw it, he was *much displeased*, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them." Here, Christ himself declares infant children are of, or do belong to his kingdom. And have we not evident reason to conclude that he is much displeased with us, for denying them the privileges of his kingdom ? It is an acknowledged principle, that believers are entitled to all church privileges. But our Lord declares that the infant seed of his people are believers. Fore-cited Matt. xviii. 6. " Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me." We cannot here understand our Lord, speaking of these little ones as believers, on account of the internal exercises of faith in the heart ; for that is a matter about which we are not capable of judging ; but it is here implied, that we are capable of distinguishing among little ones, which are believers, and which not : which rule of judging can be no other than the covenant of God with his people and their seed. Christ has therefore here expressly determined the case, that it would be better for us that a mill-stone were hanged about our neck, and that we were drowned in the depth of the sea, than to treat our children as we have done, in excluding them from the privileges of the visible church. I ask no pardon for this warmth of expression ; for it is no more than is fitting, while I am pleading the cause of those little innocents, those young believers, those injured lambs of Christ's flock who cannot speak for themselves. These lambs are included in, and are parts of the flock, as well as the sheep ; they belong to the same owner, should feed in the same pasture, and lie down in the same fold : and he that will separate them, acts more like a wolf than a shepherd ; and is condemned of himself for practising infant baptism. For every argument which

can be brought against bringing children to the Lord's supper equally militates against infant baptism.

Some may object to my applying Matt. xviii. 6, to little children, because it was the intention of our Lord to teach humility to his disciples by what is here said. And I grant that in what is said concerning offending, our Lord has a reference to little ones in a moral sense; but not to the exclusion of little ones in a literal sense. For unless what is here said is applicable to little children, the argument is not conclusive respecting our treatment of such as are little ones in a moral sense. For the tenor of our Lord's argument here, is from the less to the greater.

Baptism which gives a child a right to the privileges of the church, subjects him also to the discipline of it, according to his age and capacity. And hence it appears, that although a person has been baptized in his infancy, and was thereby made a member of the church, and entitled to all the privileges of it; yet, by his own misconduct, may have forfeited his right, and it may be the duty of the church to deny him the enjoyment of them, till he shall give gospel satisfaction.

To confine the discipline of the church to such among us as come to the Lord's supper, is attended with many very hurtful consequences. It makes people think light of baptism, and slight the sacred bonds of duty sealed upon them in that ordinance. Hence also they take the liberty to live more loose and careless lives. And when they fall into scandalous practices, it deprives them of that ordinance of Christ which was instituted to guard them from sin, to keep them upon their watch against it, and to recover them to repentance when they have fallen. And if the church exercised due discipline over their baptized seed, by giving them proper instruction, taking care of their education, and giving them suitable reproof when they go astray; and when they arrive to a proper age, to bring them to the Lord's sup-

per ; in this way, bringing the matter to a point with them, either to comply with the rule of the gospel or to be censured as covenant breakers, and cast out of the church ; it would have a great influence upon them, and an happy tendency to prevent sin, and quicken them to duty. In this way, the distinction between the *precious* and the *vile*, would be kept up by the institution of Christ ; and the profane and hardened sinner be put out of countenance. But whilst there are such great numbers of people, who have been baptized in their infancy, of good conversation, and reputable characters, that keep back from the communion of the church, and are not looked upon as members ; the vicious and profane who ought to be debarred from church privileges for their wicked lives, find themselves in good company ; and this keeps them in countenance, and hardens them in iniquity. Whereas if none kept back from the communion of the church but such as were debarred for their bad conduct ; the wicked and profane would see themselves evidently pointed out to deserved shame and contempt for their iniquities ; and would make them see more evidently, the necessity of repentance and a religious life. But when they see many of as good public character as the communicants, who enjoy no better privileges in the church than themselves ; it greatly tends to keep up their courage, and to strengthen them in their iniquity.

As it is baptism that seals a person a member of the church, entitles him to its privileges, and subjects him to its jurisdiction ; I can find no rule in the gospel, for enjoining any thing further, (such as verbal covenanting, or any thing of that nature) in order to his enjoyment of the privileges of church fellowship. It is true, a person must be qualified for, as well as entitled to these privileges ; but one who is already a member of the church, is entitled to a different treatment, from one that is not, but now comes to ask for admission into it. One who has not been baptized, but now comes to ask for admission into the

church, ought to exhibit positive evidence of his being duly qualified : but when one who is already a member, by having been baptized in his infancy, comes to seek privileges ; that church which will deny him, ought to be able to produce positive evidence that he has forfeited his right to these privileges, or is disqualified for the enjoyment of them. A little consideration will show, there is a wide difference in these two cases, and the burden of proof lies upon different parties.

Discipline which ought carefully to be kept up in the church, is attended with peculiar difficulty. We cannot easily determine what sins should lay a person open to a censure in the church. For although some sins are more heinous in the sight of God than others ; yet no sin can, in a proper sense, be called *small* : yet it is easy to see the impropriety of treating every imperfection, as a matter of church censure. Perhaps, the same sin may, at one time, and under some circumstances, be treated as a censurable evil, which at another time, and under other circumstances, may properly be winked at, and passed over in silence. For instance, polygamy was practised by the best of men in former ages ; such as Abraham and David ; yet we find no censure passed upon them for it. And if we look into the practice of the apostles we shall find it a general rule of their conduct, not to make any alteration in the civil state or circumstances of their converts. And in their receiving people into the church, they seem to have winked at this practice of polygamy, which was common among the heathen, and to have passed over it in silence, in their admission of such. Indeed, they plainly discovered their disapprobation of this practice of having more wives than one, at the same time ; in that they excluded such from any promotion in the church, they were not to be made bishops or deacons. But these prohibitions plainly imply that some such were admitted to common privileges of church members : otherwise it would have been impertinent to have

made exceptions to their sustaining offices in the church.

Objection. The apostle also directs that such should be chosen bishops and deacons, who were not given to much wine, &c. Does it therefore follow that private members might be drunkards, and not be censured?

Answer. Doubtless many were received into the church by the apostles, who, in their unconverted state, had contracted a strong habit of drinking, and of other vices; consequently would be more liable to fall into this sin, than those who had not contracted such customs. Bishops and deacons were not to be chosen, of such as had these blemishes. There are degrees in most other vices; but there can be none in polygamy; it therefore plainly follows, that such were received by the apostles, without being obliged to put away any of their wives which they had married before their conversion.

But notwithstanding this connivance of the apostles we shall doubtless agree at this day, to treat polygamy as an offence worthy of church censure. And like reasons may be given why some other sins may be connived at under some circumstances, and not under others. The power of discipline which Christ has given to the church, is designed, not for destruction; but for edification. There may be cases, in which it may be more for edification to connive at certain offences, than rigidly to treat them as censurable evils. And here *wisdom is profitable to direct.* Moses, by divine direction, suffered the children of Israel to give their wives a bill of divorcement, and to put them away; although that practice was, in itself, far from being justifiable.

But there is one case in particular, in which we are far from being agreed; and that is, whether unregeneracy is to be treated by the church, as a censurable evil. Not only *Anabaptists*, but many other churches among us, look upon a person's being in his natural, unregenerate state, as a sufficient reason why he

should be kept off from communion in the visible church, although he has been made a member of it by baptism.

But how criminal soever it may be, for a person to continue in an unregenerate state ; yet it appears to me, to be expressly excepted by Jesus Christ, as what should not be deemed censurable by the church. In the parable of the *Tares*, the servants were for going and gathering them out : but our Lord says, “ No, let both grow together till the harvest ; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat also.” Here observe : The servants plainly saw tares among the wheat, and knew them to be tares ; yet the Lord suffered them not to gather them out. Separating them from the wheat is a work Christ has reserved to himself, as the business of the day of judgment. Unregeneracy is a matter for which we are not to be dealt with by fellow-servants. Had it been the will of Christ that unregeneracy should be treated by the church as a censurable evil, he would have given some rule to judge by, and determine who were regenerate, and who not ; but no such rule is given. Indeed, in some instances the case is easily discerned. The openly loose and unsavory lives of some, clearly show the unrenewedness of their hearts. Thus the servants plainly saw tares among the wheat. But although we may easily distinguish in some instances, yet there are many in which we cannot. This is plainly implied in the reason the Lord gives why the servants should not gather up the tares, “ Lest they should root up the wheat also.” Although they might discern in some cases which were wheat, and which were not ; yet there were many in which they could not. And even where they could distinguish the tares, they were to let them stand. Therefore it may be properly said, Christ has given us no rule whereby to judge of others, whether they are regenerate or not ; but has let us know we have no business with it. For that cannot be properly called a rule, which will not enable

us to make up a safe judgment in one half, nor in one quarter of the cases to which we shall have occasion to apply it. And seeing that even when we know them to be tares, we are not to meddle with them, it would be useless to have given us a rule of judgment in the case.

The Lord gave a special charge to the children of Israel to be kind to strangers, because they knew the heart of strangers; for they had been strangers themselves in the land of Egypt. And for the same reason, the church ought to have a tender regard to unregenerate sinners, because that is the common state of all men by nature.

Unregeneracy cannot be a reason why Christ should not undertake to perform the office of a Mediator between God and us, for then he must have nothing to do with any of mankind. But church privileges and gospel ordinances belong to Christ's mediation; by them it is, that he carries on a treaty of peace with God among mankind. To debar therefore a person from church privileges, is to cut him off from the benefit of Christ's mediation. And if a sinner is denied the benefit of a Mediator, by what means shall he ever become regenerate? Such therefore as exclude people from church privileges because they are unregenerate, act in direct opposition to the evident purpose for which the Redeemer's kingdom was set up in the world, and the important purposes for which he came clothed with the character, and is performing the work of a Mediator between God and the sinful children of men; and totally subvert the doctrine of infant baptism.

Would we decide this dispute by facts, plain divine facts, as they stand upon record in the word of God; we shall see that unregeneracy never was objected to any one, nor admitted as an objection against his enjoyment of any of the privileges of the visible church. There is no room for so much as a supposition that Adam was regenerated after the fall, before God brought in the covenant of grace, and the

visible church began with him. When God renewed the covenant with Abraham, and commanded him to confirm the covenant with his seed after him, as the visible church, and included in the number of his covenant people, at eight days old ; it cannot be supposed that it was expected they would all be regenerated at that age. So likewise when the children of Israel were led to renew covenant with God, from time to time ; it was at the same time evident, that they were, as to the greater part of them, in an unrenewed state. And God often acknowledged his covenant relation to them, when, at the same time, their general character was far from that of real saints.

Some have evaded the evidence which these instances afford in the case, by saying, the children of Israel, when they renewed covenant, professed a cordial compliance with the covenant of grace ; and that God, in admitting them to covenant privileges, did not act in the character of the searcher of hearts ; but accommodating himself to the ways of men, trusted to their profession, and, after the manner of men, allowed them to come into covenant upon the charitable presumption that they were sincere.

Is this then really the case, that a man, when he visibly enters into covenant with God, in joining to the church, is to consider and regard the divine Being with whom he has to do in the solemn matter of covenanting, not as the searcher of hearts ; but as a God that trusts to, and will accept of an outside profession ? This representation of the matter provides a very good, and I think a very justifiable pretence for the hypocritical professor. For if, in the solemn matter of covenanting, we are not to regard that God with whom we covenant, as the searcher of hearts ; it will be a matter of little or no consequence whether we act from the heart, or not. Nor can I see how an hypocritical heart, covered over with a splendid outward profession, can justly be deemed matter of condemnation in the day of judgment. For if God lays aside the character of the searcher of hearts

when he covenants with us, but assumes it when he sits in judgment upon us ; shall we not have good reason to complain, *that he hath put the change upon us ?* It is sometimes the case with men, that they will appear with *two faces*, upon different occasions : but who dare ascribe such a conduct to the blessed God ! Or shall we rob God of the glory of some of his essential attributes, that we may, at all adventures, support a favorite hypothesis ?

Is it needful to essay to prove to any one that has read his bible, that God searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men ? If we look into the instances of God's allowing his people to covenant with him, it will most expressly appear, that he therein appeared in the character of the searcher of hearts. This was the case in renewing covenant at Sinai, as Moses relates that matter in Deut. v. 27, 28, 29. "Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say,—and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words when ye spake unto me,—they have well said all that they have spoken. *O that there were such an heart in them.*" Does not God here appear in the character of the searcher of hearts ? So also in the instance of covenanting on the plains of Moab, not only God, but Moses too appeared to be well acquainted with their wicked heart. Deut. xxix. 4. "Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, unto this day." And what words can be more plain and express than those words of Christ. Revel. ii. 23. "And *all the churches* shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and heart."

The most plausible text which has been produced to support this charge of double dealing upon God, is in Isa. lxiii. 8. "For he said, surely they are my people, children that will not lie : so he was their Savior." But this text contains nothing more than a divine declaration of that which God might justly and equitably expect from his covenant people. God

doth not here complain that they had deceived him ; much less is there any hint, or even distant implication, that he had not acted in the character of the searcher of hearts, when he undertook to be their Savior : but he here sets forth just matter of charge against them, for their false and perfidious conduct, in not living answerable to their solemn engagements, and sacred covenant relation to himself. That God, in his relation to, and in all his dealings with his covenant people and visible church, is to be considered and regarded as the searcher of hearts, is abundantly evident from every representation which he hath given of himself in his word ; and the denial of it is no less than bringing up a vile slanderous report of the divine character, to evade plain scripture evidence, which, if admitted, would effectually demolish a favorite scheme.

Some seem to view the discipline prescribed by Christ, as intended chiefly to keep the unregenerate from being received into the communion of the church. But this opinion is inconsistent with many sacred texts, some of which I will mention. The parable of the marriage of the king's son, Matt. xxii. 2. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son." Here I would observe that by "the kingdom of heaven" we are to understand the church, as established by the gospel dispensation. For when Christ sent his disciples before his sufferings, he sent them to preach, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," which could mean no other than his church, as established by the gospel dispensation. And in the same sense he means his church, by "the kingdom of heaven" spoken of in this, and many other parables. Verses 3—7. "And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding : and they would not come : Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner ; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready : come unto the marriage. But

they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandize : and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth ; and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.”

Thus far the parable primarily respects the Jews ; and the repeated calls, refer to their having the first offers of salvation, to whom a preached gospel was confined for a number of years after the resurrection of Christ ; till their obstinate refusal provoked the king to send forth his Roman armies, and burn up their city.

8, 9, 10. “ Then said the king to his servants, the wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was turnished with guests.”

This part of the parable respects the calling of the Gentiles. Here observe, the servants are sent into the highways, to bid as many as they should find : without respect to character, or any regard to age or dress. And they gathered together all they found, both BAD and GOOD. Here, as commentators generally observe, our Lord alludes to a custom which at that day prevailed. Kings and rich men kept large wardrobes of garments made ready to put on. And when they made public entertainments, the guests were to appear cloathed out of the king's wardrobe. For the king in the parable could not expect, that such as the servants should find in the highways, would be dressed in garments suitable to honor the marriage of his son. This to be sure, must be our Lord's meaning in the spirit of this parable. For the wedding garment is not of the sinner's own providing, but it is provided for him by Christ.

11, 12, 13. “ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a

wedding garment : and he saith unto him, Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment ? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This part refers to the day of judgment. For the man that had not on the wedding garment is arraigned, convicted, condemned and executed ; all which is evidently the procedure of the day of judgment. Here observe, it is the king himself who came to see the guests ; it was not one of the servants. No ; ministers of the gospel are the servants who are sent to bid all they can find. They have nothing to do with kingly power in the church. They have no right to wriggle themselves into Christ's throne, to take the work out of his hands, and undertake to purge the church of such as have not on the wedding garment : but their business is to bring in all they can find, *bad* and *good*, regenerate and unregenerate ; to set open the king's wardrobe to them, set before them the wedding garment, the righteousness and image of the Son of God, and urge them to put it on : it may be they will be prevailed with to put it on, before the king comes in to see the guests.

It is a question with some, what is meant by the feast which the guests are to partake of, whether the privileges and blessings of the church in this world, or in the heavenly state. I think both are included. And it is therefore a direct contradiction to both the letter and spirit of this parable, to make a regenerate state a necessary qualification of the person to be received to the communion of the church.

Several parables in Mat. xiii. represent the matter in the same light. Particularly, the parable of the net cast into the sea, which gathered of every kind, bad and good, plainly shows that we are to gather bad as well as good, unregenerate and regenerate, into the church. The parable of leaven hid in three

measures of meal, till the whole was leavened, teacheth us, that it is in fellowship with the church, that the unregenerate are to have their hearts leavened with gospel leaven. So likewise the parable of the tares, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field : but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares." The good seed are the children of the kingdom ; which expression evidently includes, if not primarily intends the infant seed of the church. But while men sleep ; while parents sleep, neglecting to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; while ministers sleep, neglecting to feed Christ's lambs, as well as his sheep ; and while church members sleep, neglecting christian watchfulness over one another, the devil improves his time to sow tares, by corrupting the minds, and vitiating the morals of youths. And it is not the mind of Christ to separate them here : but to let both grow together till the harvest.

Some will here object, that this sets the door of the church wide open to the most abandoned sinner, and excludes all discipline. But I query. May not the door of the church be open wide enough to receive a sinner in an unregenerate state, and yet not be so wide open as to receive such as abandon themselves to the practice of vice ? Christ has expressly enjoined discipline ; and several important purposes are plainly pointed out for which it is to be exercised. Particularly, to make offenders sensible of the necessity of repentance ; to prevent the evil effect of bad examples ; to prevent stumbling blocks from being laid in the way of others, to discourage them from joining to the church ; and that the way of truth may not be evil spoken of, to the dishonor of the divine governor. But there is not a single text in the bible that directs to the use of discipline for the purpose of excluding persons from the church because of unregeneracy. No, that practice wholly rests upon some remote inferences which we draw from some gene-

nal precepts, by our own fallacious reasoning ; which casts great reproach upon the divine wisdom of the head of the church ; as if he had made laws for the government of his kingdom that were inconsistent one with another : first, to bring in the unregenerate ; and yet, keep them out for unregeneracy : as it is evidently the case with the doctrine of infant baptism ; unless we make baptism when administered to an infant, an essentially different ordinance from what it is when administered to an adult.

There is a great difference among them that are yet in a natural state. Some lead a regular life, are doctrinally acquainted with gospel truths ; thereby their corruptions are much restrained, and themselves awakened to some degree of solicitude to know what they must do to be saved, which influenceth them to attend on many duties of a religious life. If persons of this description were admitted to the Lord's table, and withal, had it inculcated upon them that the outward action of receiving the bread and wine, ought to be attended with those inward exercises of heart, wherein Christ himself is received in all his offices ; it would have a direct moral tendency to bring them to a true and saving closure with him. And there is not only this moral tendency in the case, but this is also the way in which divine influences are to be sought after, for the conversion of sinners, as well as the edification of believers. For "Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." Psalm lxxxvii. And in confirmation of this point I might here produce a large number of promises which God hath given to his visible church and covenant people, of regenerating grace. Particularly Deut. xxx 6. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Ezekiel, xxxvi. 26. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give

you an heart of flesh." These are evidently promises to give regenerating grace to his covenant people.

- There are others of a different character, who are but little acquainted with gospel doctrines, are very thoughtless of their own souls, break through restraints, give a loose to their lusts, and lead vicious lives. For persons of this description to be allowed to continue in the church, would be of a very hurtful tendency both to themselves, and to others. For although a serious attendance on the Lord's supper, has a direct tendency to promote the conversion of a sinner; yet for one who lays waste his own conscience by an allowed practice of known wickedness, to be admitted to that ordinance; it would have a direct tendency to harden him in his iniquity. For the church, by suffering him to continue in their fellowship, would practically justify him in his evil ways. And likewise, when a sinner indulges himself in known wicked practices, he not only stifles his own conscience; but he also quenches the strivings of God's spirit, and turns him away grieved: and so provokes God to deny his blessing, without which, all the means of grace will be ineffectual. In such cases therefore, it is necessary to make use of discipline, that offenders may be excited to consideration, and made to see the necessity of repentance; as well as to serve many useful purposes to other people. It is very obvious to reason, that a serious and conscientious attendance on the means of grace, should have a very different influence upon a person, from what a careless and inconsiderate attendance thereon will have; and that there is therefore, sufficient reason for the use of discipline; and yet, rightfully admit unregenerate persons to the communion of the church.

Our sentiments concerning the qualifications necessary to a person's lawfully communicating with the visible church, will be according to the light in which we view the church. If we view it as set up

in the world only for the benefit of true believers, that therein they might hold communion with God ; we shall conclude that none may lawfully join it, but true believers. But if we view it as set up to subserve the purpose of Christ's mediation, in carrying on a treaty of peace and reconciliation between God and sinners ; we shall readily see the propriety of extending the privileges of it to the unregenerate. And that this is the light in which we ought to view the visible church, is evident, in that the enjoyment of the gospel is said to be the chief privilege of it. Rom. iii. 1, 2. "What advantage then hath the Jew ? or what profit is there of circumcision ? Much every way ; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." But it is certain that the gospel is intended for the conversion of sinners, as well as the edification of believers. If then the chief privilege of the visible church is for the sinner, as well as the saint ; it follows that all its other privileges also are : unless some plain and express exception can be produced.

III. I proceed to show what great privileges and advantages the members of the church enjoy for obtaining and securing their own salvation.

It is common for such as deny infant baptism, to ask what good it can do them to be baptized or brought to the Lord's supper, since they cannot understand any thing about it ? But an answer to this inquiry will readily appear by attending to the many great and precious promises which they thereby become interested in. And the heinousness of the crime in denying them the seals of the covenant bears a proportion to the worth of the privileges from which they are thereby cut off. It will be here proper to consider first, that great and leading promise made to the visible church in the covenant with Abraham. Gen. xvii. 7. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant ; to be a God unto

thee, and to thy seed after thee." This promise is made to Abraham, and to his seed ; to the church, and to the church seed ; and in it are wrapped up all the privileges and blessings of the covenant. But how much is contained in this promise, "to be their God," is not easily determined ; yet, that there is something very great and valuable cannot be denied. The different manner, and the various occasions on which this promise is made, show that very different things, at different times, are intended by it. This promise, "to be our God," as it is expressed upon some occasions, appears to include all the glory and blessedness of the heavenly state. Thus it is used in Rev. xxi. 3. "God himself shall be with them, and be their God." But the more ordinary occasions on which this promise is given, show that the blessings which are contained in it, are the good things which God will bestow upon his church and people in this world. It is evidently in this sense, we are to understand this promise, when God so often sent Moses to speak unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, saying, "I am the Lord your God." Upon these occasions, the promise was made to the whole congregation, young and old, good and bad ; it was made to the church, as a visible church, a collective body of people, formed into a visible church state. It is therefore manifest violence and abuse of the scripture, to suppose there is as much included in this promise, when made to the visible church in this life, as when it is made to the church triumphant in heaven. That we are to understand this promise in such a limited sense, when made to the visible church in this world, as respecting the good things which God will bestow upon them in this life ; is undeniably evident, not only from the manner of giving the promise upon various occasions, but also from God's own explication of it. To this purpose we may consult, Exod. vi. 5, 6, 7, 8. "I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage ; and I have remembered my covenant,

Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage : and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God : and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob ; and I will give it you for an heritage : I am the Lord." Here God expressly promiseth to be their God ; and particularly tells them what good things they were therefore to expect from him. So also, Exod. xxix. 45, 46. " And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongst them. I am the Lord their God." Compare also Levit. xxvi. 11, 12, 13. " And I will set my tabernacle amongst you : And my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." No rational construction can be put upon these and such like texts, unless we understand this promise to be their God, as being expressive of good things to be bestowed upon them in this life. And what is still more to our present purpose is, that in these explications of the contents of this promise, there is an express reference to the covenant with Abraham, where this promise was first given. And hereby the promise of that covenant to the visible church and church seed, to be their God, is clearly limited to the good things God would do for them in this life.

The same is likewise evidently the import of that common appellation which the divine Being so frequently assumes to himself, in being styled " The God of Israel ;" it refers to his covenant relation to the visible church, and is expressive of the benefits which

his covenant people are to receive from him in this life. And as God is styled "the God of Israel," so they are called "his people." Deut. xxxix. 9. "The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." They were the people of his choice, separated unto him from the rest of the world, taken into covenant, under covenant bonds, and heirs of many great and peculiar privileges above the rest of mankind. In these things Israel was considered as one collective body of men; and the promises made unto them, as such a collective body, must necessarily relate to the good he would do them in that capacity. Whereas when God sets forth the promises of eternal life, they are never made to collective bodies of men; but are predicated upon personal qualifications, or the distinguishing marks and character of the true believer. But the promises made to the visible church have no reference to the exercises of saving grace in the heart, as the condition of the promises: but to a covenant relation to God in the visible church. See, Deut. x. 15. "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them; and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day."

Now as God stands related to the visible church by covenant, and has promised to be her God: it is not an unprofitable relation, or empty title; but includes very great and valuable privileges, as I shall mention in a few particulars.

1. It is a privilege of the members of the visible church, that they are taken near to God. The apostle styles such *them that are nigh*: but others, *them that are far off*. Eph. ii. 17. They are taken into God's house and family, they have his name named upon them, and are called his children. Deut. xiv. 1. "Ye are the children of the Lord your God." Such as are in the visible church, are much more highly favored than those who are left in a state of heathenism. And although the advantages of this relation are not profitably improved by many that en-

joy them ; yet it is in itself a great privilege, and is constantly so represented in the word of God. Exod. xix. 5. "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." Deut. vii. 6. "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God : the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." How were they an holy people ? Surely this was not spoken with reference to internal holiness : but to outward, relative, or federal holiness ; holiness which belonged unto them as a people, chosen to be God's special people above all that were on the face of the earth. And shall we say, This is no privilege ? That God herein shewed them no favor ? Nor did them any good ? Shall we say, the heathen were as well off, and as well dealt with as they ? Surely this is not the light in which Moses viewed their case. Deut. iv. 7. "For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for ?" It is to be observed, that Moses speaks of this, not as the privilege of *here* and *there* a true saint among them : but as a national privilege, a privilege belonging unto them as they were God's visible church. This is always justly to be esteemed a great favor. Psal. cxliv. 15. "Happy is that people that is in such a case : yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." They are not particular saints ; but *nation* and *people*, that are here spoken of.

2. Another privilege of church members is, that God will afford them the means of grace and salvation. It is obvious the seed of Abraham partook of great privileges in this respect, above all other people ; and that, on account of the covenant which God made with their fathers, wherein they were included. On this account God preserved them in Egypt, and afterward redeemed them from thence. Deut. iv. 37. "Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight, with his mighty power, out of Egypt. On the

same account he renewed his covenant with them at Mount Sinai, and on the plains of Moab. Thus Moses sets before them the reason of the renewal of the covenant. Deut. xxix. 13. "That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself; and that he might be to thee a God, as he hath said unto thee; and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." It was a privilege granted to them in this covenant, that God should set up his worship among them, give them laws and ordinances, make his abode with them, take them under his special care, defend them against the nations round about them, and send them all his servants, the prophets. Shall we say, there is no advantage in these things? That God shewed them no favor in granting them these privileges—and that still they were no better dealt with than their heathen neighbors? The psalmist had quite another thought of the matter—Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. "He shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: And as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord." He thought God's name worthy to be praised for these things. The apostle Paul also represents these enjoyments as of great advantage. Rom. iii. 1, 2. "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Our Lord himself manifested great favor to the Jews upon this very account, as they were a people in covenant with God. Hence he declared he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And after his resurrection, he gave commandment to his apostles to make the first offer of the gospel to the Jews, (though they had been his betrayers and murderers) before they should carry the glad tidings of salvation to the Gentiles. For this cause the apostle tells them it was their privilege by covenant, to have the first offers of Christ and salvation made to them; and improves it as an argu-

ment to persuade them to acknowledge Christ. Acts iii 25, 26. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. *Unto you first*, God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." And to the same purpose we read in Rom. xv. 8.— "Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Yea, and so much regard did God show to the token of his covenant, that he sent the gospel to the Samaritans many years sooner than he did to those nations which were wholly heathen. The Samaritans were the posterity of the heathen which were planted in Samaria by the king of Assyria, after the captivity of the ten tribes. And having a priest sent among them *to teach them the manner of the God of the land*, they so far obeyed as to receive circumcision; and in that respect took hold of the covenant; but still continued idolaters, and never fully joined to the church of Israel. But because the token of the covenant was among them, God favored them with gospel privileges much sooner than the other nations. See Acts viii. And the gospel church still enjoys these privileges. They are privileges which the church and the church seed have an interest in by covenant, that God will use means with them for their good, make them the offers of grace and salvation, and afford them the proper means and advantages for securing spiritual blessings; as saith the prophet Hosea xi. 3, 4. "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love, and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them."

3. The mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ is, in a great measure, the peculiar privilege of the visible church. The treaty of peace which is carried on in

the covenant of reconciliation, by the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, is mostly confined to the church : the rest of mankind have little or no interest in it.— The church was erected in the world for the sake of carrying on this treaty with the children of men ; to the church are committed the oracles of God—there it is gospel worship and privileges are to be enjoyed ; there it is the divine presence is promised, and there it is the blessings of redeeming grace are dispensed ; but with the rest of the world, Christ ordinarily useth little or no means to reconcile them to God.

These gospel privileges are the appointments by which Christ exerciseth his mediatorial office among men, by which sinners are converted, and saints edified. So likewise when he appears in the presence of God as a Mediator, it is on behalf of his visible church and covenant people. He there improves his mediatorial influence, not for the world, but for his church. The high-priest who was a type of Christ under the former dispensation, had the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraven upon his breast-plate, for a memorial when he went into the most holy place, to appear before God. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, the great high-priest of our profession, in his appearing in the presence of God, has a special regard for his church. That the mediation of Christ in heaven is very much the peculiar privilege of his visible church, is evident from many sacred texts. See Mat. x. 32, 33. “ Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” But how will Christ deny such ? Surely he will not deny them, considered in every character and relation. He will not deny them as being of the number of the human race of whom he was made a federal head in the covenant of redemption ; nor will he deny them as he is a great king over all the earth. But when he is said to deny such, it can be understood only in his acting

in the character of a Mediator ; that he will not appear in the presence of God as a Mediator for such. But those that confess him before men, will he confess before his Father. They that confess him before men, are evidently such as belong to his visible church, and sustain a visible covenant relation to him in the world ; for such will he appear before God in the character, and exercise the office of a Mediator : even as the high-priest had only the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraven on his breast-plate, when he appeared before God in his office. And if we attend to the specimen which Christ hath given us of his intercession, in that mediatorial prayer recorded in John xvii. it will still appear, that it is with a special reference to his church, that he appears before God in the character of a Mediator. This appears in the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses : “ I pray for them : I pray not for the world : but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.” A question will here arise about the sense in which Christ speaks of a certain number as being given to him. Some have understood this *gift* to refer to the doctrine of election, and the number given to Christ to be the number which God hath elected to eternal life, and given to Christ in the covenant of Redemption. But how true soever that doctrine may be, yet I conceive, our Lord has here no reference to it. For as he several times in this prayer, mentions a certain number as given to him, for whom he especially prays ; I presume it will be readily granted, that he useth this expression in the same sense, in the several parts of this chapter, because it is one continued discourse. And in some places this expression is so used, that we are obliged to understand it as restricted to his apostles. See the 6th verse. “ I have manifested

thy name unto the men which thou hast given me out of the world." And in the 8th verse. "For I have given them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." These words are true, if understood only of the apostles; but they are not true when applied to the whole number of the elect. For Christ had not at that time declared his Father's name unto them; neither had the whole number of the elect, at that time, nor even till this day, received Christ's words. Hence we are obliged to confine these words to the apostles, as the particular number for whom he prayed. And it is a like case in the 12th verse. "Those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." Here Christ owns he had lost one of the men which the Father had given him, Judas, the son of perdition, who at that time was gone away, no more to return to him as his constant follower. And his words in the 20th verse, puts this matter beyond dispute. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe on me through their word." Upon the whole then, I think it is evident that the certain number our Lord speaks of, that the Father had given him, and for whom he prayed, were his apostles; and they are said to be given to him, because they were all the visible and openly professed adherents which, at that time, he had in the world. Christ prayed for them, and for all such as should believe on him through their word. And hence it appears, that it is in a peculiar manner, on behalf of his visible church, that Christ appears before God, in the exercise of his mediatorial character.

To the same purpose we may observe the representation of the mediation of Christ, in Psalm xvi.—The apostle in Acts ii. 25, &c. mentions the 8, 9, 10, verses of this psalm, and so explains them as to show us that we are to understand the whole Psalm as being spoken by Christ. And in the 2, 3, 4, verses we

have a representation of Christ's intercession in heaven. "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord : my goodness extendeth not to thee ; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another God : their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips." In this specimen of our Saviour's mediation we may observe, that his goodness, his mediatorial goodness, extends only to the saints ; but the idolatrous heathen Christ will not mention, nor take up their names into his lips. Particularly he declares, "Their drink offerings of blood will he not offer." It will help us to understand this, if we compare it with Rev. viii. 3 — "And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne." This angel is Christ acting in his mediatorial character, as offering up the prayers of all saints, and rendering them acceptable to God by the incense of his own merits. This Christ does for all saints ; but this will he not do, with respect to the superstitious devotion of the heathen. "Their drink offerings of blood will he not offer."

As the mediatorial character of Christ in general, is thus represented as being peculiarly the privilege of his visible church ; so the several offices which are included in his mediatorial character, are also represented as having a special relation to it. Considered in his priestly character, he therein is peculiarly related to the church. Heb. x. 21. "Having an high priest over the house of God." The church is this house of God over which Christ is priest. When he is styled a *surety*, it is represented as connected with his covenant, as a relation peculiar to his covenant people. Heb. vii. 22. "By so much was Jesus made surety of a better testament." When described as king, "he is seated upon his holy hill of Zion."

His prophetic office also, by which he communicates to mankind the knowledge of divine things, to make them wise to salvation, is very much the peculiar privilege of his church; for to it are committed his written word, his preached gospel, and the exercises of public worship. Rom. iii. 1, 2, "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Psal. xxii. 22. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." As all church privileges flow from Christ's mediatorial character and offices; so they are to be considered as the things *in* and *by* which Christ performs the part of a Mediator, and executes his several offices. In these things he mediates with men that they may be reconciled to God; and imparts of his benefits and saving fulness, for their salvation.

Upon the whole then, it appears that the mediation of Christ is very much the peculiar privilege of, and in a great measure confined to his visible church and covenant people; whilst the rest of mankind have little or no interest in it; from which it appears, how greatly it concerns us to enjoy fellowship with the church, that we may be sharers in Christ's mediation, by which the treaty of peace and reconciliation with God is carrying on in the new covenant. Indeed, the rest of mankind are not totally and forever shut out from all benefit of his mediation. For the father hath given to the son "power over all flesh," that he might gather in from among them, subjects into his visible kingdom, to train them up for, and bestow on them eternal life. And it is one thing promised to the Son in the covenant of redemption, that upon his request, the heathen should be given him. Psal. ii. 8. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Here is an instance in which our Lord is represented as extending his mediation beyond the

bounds of his church. But when the Mediator thus asks, he obtains his request ; and such heathen are thereupon so given unto Christ, as to come into his church, and in that sense, he will have them in his possession. Herein then it still appears that the mediation of Christ is ordinarily the peculiar privilege of his church : which in a clear and strong light shows how great a privilege, fellowship with the church is to be esteemed, not only for ourselves, but for our children.

4. The influences of the holy spirit to accompany the means of grace, whereby they may become effectual for salvation, is a privilege which the visible church, and church seed are interested in by covenant. The influences of the holy spirit to accompany divine institutions, rendering them effectual to begin and carry on a work of grace in the heart, is one of the blessings included in the promise of the covenant with Abraham. For when God renewed the covenant with the children of Israel at Sinai, it was promised, *Exod. xx. 24*—“ In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.” And thus we have the promise of the covenant with Abraham explained in *Levit. xxvi. 11, 12*. “ And I will set my tabernacle amongst you ; and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.” To the same purpose is this covenant explained by the prophet, as including the promise of the spirit. *Hag. ii. 5*. “ According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you : fear ye not ” And of like import is that promise of our Lord to the church under the gospel. *Matt. xxviii. 20*. “ And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” So likewise the apostle applies the promise of the spirit, in the covenant with Abraham, to the church as it takes in Gentiles under the gospel. *Gal. iii. 14*. “ That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the

spirit through faith." These texts clearly show that the presence of God by his spirit, is a privilege which the visible church is interested in by covenant. And that promise to the church stands good in all ages, Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14, 15. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion : he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever : here will I dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision : I will satisfy her poor with bread." There are many such promises of the presence of God, and the influences of his spirit, made to the church, in all which the church seed are interested. For this is the tenor of the covenant, as appears from the renewal of it on the plains of Moab. Deut. xxx. 6. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." And of like import is that promise in Isa. xlv. 3. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Isa. liv. 13. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." Isa. lix. 21. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." And we have the witness of the apostle, that the church and the church seed are heirs of the promise of the spirit, under the gospel. For it is with express reference to this privilege in particular that he saith, Acts. ii. 39. "The promise is to you, and to your children."

The texts above cited, with many others to the same purpose, clearly show, that the covenant of God with the visible church contains many great and precious promises ; and the church and church seed are thereby interested, both in outward privileges, and in inward, spiritual, and soul saving mercies. God himself undertakes for them, has promised his divine

presence and spirit, has promised to circumcise their heart, to bring them to a cordial compliance with the way of life, that they may live. It is a covenant in which God promiseth to work true holiness in the heart of his people and their seed, by his word and spirit. The before mentioned texts expressly assert that the promise of the spirit is given to the church and her seed indefinitely, that God will not only afford them the means of grace, but will also bless these means, that they shall become effectual to bring them to a saving union with Christ, and to eternal life through him.*

I have said, the promise of the spirit is made to the church and her seed indefinitely; not that every one in particular, can thence infer that God will certainly do this for him. No, these things notwithstanding, there are many that have a promise left them of entering into rest, who finally come short of it: and yet there is no breach of promise with God. The apostle very particularly vindicates the divine faithfulness in this case. Rom. iii. Having moved this question in the first verse, "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?" and answered "Much every way," in the

* We may here observe that these promises to the church, expressly relate to the divine influences whereby a work of grace is begun in the heart; which evidently show that converting grace is to be hoped for, and sought after in the way of fellowship and communion with the church. And hereby our controversy about a gracious state as a necessary qualification for joining ourselves to, and holding fellowship with the visible church, appears to be effectually decided by God himself, in the express terms of his promises. For if it was the will of God, that a gracious state should be held, as a necessary qualification to our being received into the church; then these promises of regenerating grace which are made to the church, can have no meaning in them; or if they have any meaning, it must be such as will involve God himself in an absurdity, and inconsistency; in his first instituting a church to be composed only of such as are already regenerated, and afterwards promising to bestow regenerating grace upon them.

second ; he queries upon it in the two following verses, " For what if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect ? God forbid : yea, let God be true, and every man a liar." When God renewed the covenant with Noah just after the flood, he promised that the world should no more be destroyed with water. Gen. ix. Although this promise stands good ; yet no particular person can thence infer, that he himself shall not be drowned. And in like manner are we to understand the promise of the spirit to accompany the means of grace, to make them effectual on the heart to the salvation of the members of the church and her seed ; the promise is not absolute, to every one in particular : but to the members of the church and their seed indefinitely, as a collective body. The dispensation of the covenant of grace by which the visible church is set up, and in which the members of it stand related to God as his covenant people, contains many privileges and many promises ; and some of these promises are absolute and unconditional ; others are expressed conditionally. The promise of eternal life is made conditionally ; that is, in case of faith and repentance : others, many of them, are unconditional and absolute. Consequently all enjoy more or less privileges and blessings. But there are many that belong to the visible church, who act contrary to their covenant engagements, and thereby forfeit all the privileges of the covenant : which forfeitures God has a right to take, according to his sovereign pleasure. Some like Cain, go out from the presence of the Lord, forsake his church and worship. Some neglect to attend upon, or improve the privileges of the church, which are the appointed means of grace, and thereby frustrate the grace of God. And some quench the spirit by doing violence to their own consciences, in the allowed practice of known and heinous sins. Now where there are such breaches of covenant, their mouths will be stopped, although God should deny them his blessing, and deprive them of

forfeited privileges. Psal. lxxx. 11, 12. "But my people would not hearken to my voice : and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own lusts : and they walked in their own counsels." By reason of these forfeitures, there is abundant room for the display of divine sovereignty in the bestowment of his grace amongst his covenant people ; and yet his faithfulness to his promises stands clear of all impeachment.

5. Another privilege of the visible church is that God will gather in his elect chiefly from among them. It is no small privilege to belong to that part of mankind out of which such shall be chiefly taken, who shall be saved. And that part of mankind from among whom the heirs of salvation are gathered in, is doubtless God's covenant people. Who can doubt but that such as were saved from the time God made the covenant with Abraham, till the gospel dispensation took place, were mostly taken from amongst his natural seed ? Can it be supposed with any appearance of reason, that there were as many who obtained salvation, during that period, in any one heathen nation ? Yea, or all heathen nations taken together ; as there were, from among the children of Israel ? And since the gospel has extended the privileges of the church to the Gentiles, will any suppose there has been as many sons and daughters brought to glory from such places, and from among such people as have not enjoyed church privileges, as from those that have ? Although the apostle Paul was not suffered to preach the gospel in many places where he passed ; yet he was directed to continue preaching the gospel in Corinth, a year and six months ; and the reason assigned for it is, "I have much people in this place." Acts xviii. 10. We have therefore abundant reason to adore divine goodness, that our lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, and our God hath given as a goodly heritage, by bringing us into the number, and to the enjoyment of the privileges of those from among whom, he will chiefly

gather in his elect unto eternal life. It is doubtless true, that out of the church, where the ordinary means of salvation are enjoyed there is ordinarily no salvation. The truth of this may be reasonably inferred from the many great and precious promises made to the members and seed of the church, which have been mentioned. And there are many texts which represent the matter in this light. To this purpose our Lord told the woman of Samaria, John iv. 22. "Salvation is of the Jews." The church of the Jews, (corrupt as it was at that time) was the church in communion with which salvation was to be sought after, and hoped for. And in Acts ii. 47. we are told, "The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." But it is grossly absurd for any one to hope he shall be saved, whilst he turns his back upon, and neglects the ordinary means of salvation.

Thus have I taken a brief and general view of the privileges conveyed to the visible church in that covenant, by which it is devoted to God. And they appear to be very great and valuable. And in proportion to the worth of these privileges of this covenant relation to God, is the aggravation of the guilt of those who deny such persons the enjoyment of them, to whom they rightfully belong. To cut off the church seed from this covenant and the privileges of it, under a pretence of their not having grace, is doing what in us lies, to prevent their ever obtaining grace to the saving of their souls, and a ready way to make our children cease from fearing the Lord.

Before I dismiss this particular head, it is proper to mention some things relating to the subject under consideration, the truth of which appears from what has been now offered, and will further serve to clear the subject.

1. The right of infants to the seals of the covenant, and the privileges of the visible church, appears from the tenor of the covenant, to be a gift of the free and sovereign grace of God. It is an objection in the minds of some, against including infants in a cove-

nant relation to God, "That the seed of God's covenant people come into the world as corrupt, and as much the children of wrath by nature, as others." But this objection when searched to the bottom, will be found to arise from that vain, self-righteous spirit which takes its encouragement to have confidence towards God, from some distinguishing worth, whereby one is made to excel another. It is evident to every one who attentively considers the plain tenor of the gospel, that God never treats with the sinful children of men about their salvation because of any distinguishing excellency which he beholds in one more than another. For if one excels another, it is God by his sovereign free grace that hath made him to differ; in which way God often puts great difference among them who are by nature children of wrath, even as others. Thus it is with respect to the seed of his covenant people; it is God himself that hath put a difference between them and others, by the free sovereign grace extended to them in his covenant. Although they come into the world in the same corrupt state as others, yet God himself undertakes for them, to establish his covenant with them, and to cause it to take effect among them. And seeing God is their surety, what better reason or surer ground can there be for putting the seals of his covenant upon them? God did not take the seed of Abraham into covenant, upon presumption that they would be truly holy; but because he intended to make them holy. He did not take them in, because of any holiness which he expected to find in them, more than in others; nor was their interest in the covenant predicated upon any charitable supposition of their being truly gracious: but their interest in the covenant was a free gift of the rich and sovereign grace of God, granted to them in the covenant. The electing love of God is in no case represented as arising from any superior excellency or worthiness which he beholds in one, more than in another.—When God chooseth one to eternal life, it is not be-

cause the person chosen is more worthy of such grace than another ; but it is “ even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” And it is a like case when God elects any to the enjoyment of the privileges of a covenant relation to himself, in this life : it is a gift of sovereign grace. The seed of Abraham were by nature children of wrath, even as others ; yet it pleased God to choose them to be his covenant people, to dwell among them by his word, ordinances and spirit, and to take out from among them the heirs of eternal life. The want therefore of a gracious state in infants is nothing to the purpose ; it is no objection against their being taken into covenant, and being admitted into the enjoyment of covenant seals and privileges in the visible church.

In whatever light we view the covenant of grace we shall find liberty granted to the sinful children of men to close in with it, and in that way, become interested in all the privileges of it, without regard to any previous distinguishing personal qualifications whatever. “ Whosoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely.” This is the case when the covenant is considered in its most limited tenor, or the special promises of it, which insure eternal life to the true believer. It is not necessary for a person to be in a gracious state before he may come to Christ, and close with him upon the gospel offer, and thereby become interested in all the special promises of the covenant. For it is his thus coming to Christ, that is his entrance into a state of grace, and becoming truly holy. And as it is not necessary for a person to be in a state of grace before he may close covenant with Christ ; so neither is it necessary to our entrance into a covenant relation to him in his visible church ; unless we will insist upon better qualifications in the person whom the church may receive, than in him whom Christ himself will receive. The want of a gracious state of heart is no more a reason why we should be kept back from uniting with the church, than it is, why we should be kept off from

uniting with Christ. The right which any one has, whether infant or adult, to come into a covenant relation to God, in any respect whatever, does not arise from any personal goodness whereby one excels another; but their right hereto is a gift of the free and sovereign grace of God, granted in the covenant itself.*

2. God hath made provision for the preservation of his church, and the continuance of it from generation to generation, by extending the covenant with his people to their seed after them. As it is the purpose of God to preserve to himself a church among mankind continually, and has decreed that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; so, he has in such a manner framed his covenant with it, as is wisely calculated to carry this decree into execution, by ex-

* Some have denied that infant baptism includes a real confederation of the infant: and assert that it is only the privilege of the parent to present his child to God in that ordinance. President Edwards, in his treatise upon qualifications for communion in the visible church, labors hard, for a number of pages together, to establish this view of it. And many have thereby been led to consider infant baptism as the doings of the parent; and that the binding influence of it rests upon parental authority. But if baptism is a seal of the new covenant, that single idea of it, totally subverts all that President Edwards has there said upon it. Every thing in religion that rests upon human authority, is vain will-worship. And if the binding influence of baptism rests upon the authority of the parent, it can be viewed in no other light than a commandment of man; and falls under that censure of our Lord, Mark vii. 7. "In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." It was not the authority of Abraham that made it the duty of the children of Israel to circumcise their seed; but the command of God. It is said indeed of Abraham, that he would command his household to serve the Lord. But the command of Abraham with respect to circumcision, was not the command of a parent; but of a prophet: and the binding influence of that command wholly rested upon divine authority. And it is a like case with infant baptism under the gospel. I. Cor. xii. 13. "For by one spirit we are all baptized into one body."

tending the promise to, and undertaking to establish his covenant with the church-seed. This is evidently the case in the covenant with Abraham, wherein God undertook to establish it with Isaac, even before he was born Gen. xvii 21. "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time the next year." Thus also in Psal. cii. 28. "The children also of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." I have before observed, this promise is given to our Lord Jesus Christ, respecting his servants and their seed; and must therefore necessarily be understood to relate to the gospel dispensation. This is an express testimony that God hath taken the same care, and made the same provision for the preservation of his church in the world now, as he did under the former dispensation. And thus the prophet represents the provision which God hath made for the preservation of his church from one generation to another, by taking the seed of the church into covenant, comparing it to an oak when it casts its leaves at the approach of winter. Isa. vi. 13. "But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil-tree, and as an oak whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." God's extending the covenant to the seed, is manifestly the provision he hath made for upholding and preserving his church, that it should not be subject to die with its present set of members. Thus was it upheld under the former dispensation; not indeed in all the branches of Abraham's family; it soon failed in Ishmael, and in the children of Keturah: but with Isaac was it established, and was renewed with Jacob, and from time to time with his seed after him. And it is in like manner the church is preserved under the gospel. It has maintained its succession in the church-seed; not indeed in every place where the church has been set up; for in some instances God has as it were, given a bill of divorcement to particular churches;

when they have greatly corrupted themselves, in consequence of which they have soon come to nothing ; but in other places the covenant has been established with their seed ; they have taken deep root, and spread far and wide ; and by the church-seed, have been handed down from generation to generation ; instead of the fathers have been the children, according to God's promise ; herein displaying his truth and covenant-faithfulness, and proving himself to be the God of his people, and of their seed after them.

Such therefore who, in their great zeal for a pure church, composed only of real saints ; cut off the church seed, deny them the seals of the covenant, disown their interest in the promises, exclude them from the privileges of the visible church, and put them among those who in God's account, have broken his covenant ; are really striking at the very being of the church, and counteracting the express appointment of God for the preservation of it. And if we view facts, it will readily appear that the denial of the covenant right of infants directly tends to the utter ruin and death of the church. Let us look where we will, and inquire after such as have exhibited the best evidence of real religion, in their lives and conversations ; and it will generally be found that they are such as from their infancy have in some good degree been acknowledged and treated as children of the covenant. Indeed, it must be acknowledged as a sorrowful truth, that many, who according to the tenor of the covenant, were early dedicated to God in baptism, and educated in a christian manner, have received the grace of God in vain ; to whom that complaint may be justly applied, Psal. lxxxii. 11. 12. "But my people would not hearken to my voice : and Israel would none of me, so I gave them up unto their own lusts, and they walked in their own counsels." But this notwithstanding, if we compare such families who have been considered and educated as the children of the covenant, with such as have been brought up unbaptized, nor treated

or acknowledged as being included in the covenant with God ; we shall find that generally, the difference is very great. How rare a thing is it to see any one who has had such an unchristian education, that behaves in the world like a person of real religion ?— Those who like Cain, go out from the presence of the Lord, both they and their children very commonly live without God in the world. Much may be seen of this, in single families which live here and there, in a christian neighborhood : but how much more evident does this appear, when we look into such places where it has been the general practice of people to deny the seal of the covenant to their children ? It is generally the case in a few generations, that there is next to nothing of christianity to be found among them.

3. Infant baptism is not an unprofitable ceremony ; but is attended with real and great advantages. I grant, an infant, through his present incapacity of exercising his rational faculties, can make no personal improvement of his baptism : but this is no real objection against it. There are many advantages arising from a covenant relation to God, some of which an infant in his infancy is capable of receiving. A child is capable of receiving the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost ; for John the baptist was sanctified from his mother's womb. And if a child that has had his covenant relation to, and interest in God, sealed upon him by baptism, should die in infancy, before he is capable of personally refusing the offers of salvation which are made in the gospel, I know of no reason why we may not suppose he will reap the benefits and blessings of the covenant, in the future state. As infants are subjected to a bodily death through the sin of Adam, so they are doubtless capable of inheriting eternal life through the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as they are capable of receiving so great a blessing, their being admitted to, and confirmed in this new covenant relation to God in their baptism gives us much more reason

to hope they shall be saved, than we should have, if they were excluded from the covenant. And seeing the promise of God to such a child, to be his God, is so plain and express, it falls but little, if any thing, short of an absolute promise of eternal life, to all such as are thus taken out of the world in an infant state. But this we must leave.

Whether baptism will secure eternal life, to a child dying in infancy, or not; yet there are some privileges to be enjoyed in this life, an interest in which is confirmed to children in baptism, if they live to grow up; especially such blessings and privileges as afford them a fair opportunity to secure eternal life.— There is the special care of divine providence ordering all things which concern them, in covenant love and faithfulness; the enjoyment of the external light of the gospel and means of grace, and the internal strivings of the Holy Spirit, tending to render means effectual on their hearts, for salvation. And can it be esteemed no privilege for a child to grow up, and go forward in life, with a covenant interest in such advantages as these?

Some will object here, that if children grow up among us, they will enjoy the means of grace, the light and privileges of the gospel, as well without baptism as with.

Well, allowing that a child growing up among us unbaptized, may have the advantages of reading God's word, of hearing a preached gospel, and of attending on the common exercises of public worship; I grant, a sovereign God may add his blessing with them, and afford the influences of his Holy Spirit to render these privileges effectual for salvation to such a person: But the question is, whether we have as much reason to expect, or ground to hope God will do it for one not in covenant, as for one that is? Especially since God hath said, Gen. xvii. 14. "The uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant." It is the blessing of God that renders the means of grace effectual for salvation;

but what reason have we to hope for, or expect God's blessing out of his own appointed way? A baptized child has a covenant interest in the means of grace and influences of the spirit, which gives great reason to hope for salvation: but an unbaptized child has nothing to hope in but uncovenanted mercy.

4. It is likewise evident that such as have been brought into covenant by baptism, should look upon themselves thereby under obligations to devote themselves to the service of God. We see that baptism confirms a special covenant relation to God, which involves the person under covenant bonds, and entitles him to special privileges which further serve to add weight to the bonds of duty, upon such persons to whom they are granted. We are very prone to forget our covenant relation to God, to make light of the bonds of duty thereby laid upon us, and to look upon ourselves at liberty to live very much as we please, to regard or disregard the obligations of our baptismal covenant, because it was our parents, and not ourselves, that were active in having the seal of the covenant put upon us. But it should be remembered, that it was not so properly the act of our parents, as the act of God, that the bonds of the covenant were sealed upon us in baptism. It is God's authority and appointment, and not the authority of our parents that makes baptism binding upon us. And shall we dispute the point with him? In covenant transactions among men, no one is holden till he has given his own consent: but it is not so in God's covenanting with us; he has a right to lay us under covenant bonds without our consent; and we are holden by them whether we will or no. Every baptized person therefore ought to know, that he has no right to dispute these covenant engagements; but is holden to look upon himself bound thereby to renounce and forsake the ways of sin, to give himself entirely up to the service of God, and to set himself to seek divine favor in the way pointed out in the covenant: but if he violates his covenant, he does it at his peril. If the discipline of the church was duly exercis-

ed toward all such as are made members of it by baptism; as well as toward such as come to the Lord's table, it would have a direct tendency to lead people to more just conceptions of the bond of duty laid upon them in baptism. But if the church neglects them, and thus treats them as not being members; it has a tendency to lead them not to look upon themselves so much holden by their baptismal engagements as they would do, if the authority of Christ in his church was duly exercised over them.

5. The preceding representation shows the criminal nature of the conduct of those who renounce the baptism they received in infancy, as being of no validity. If infant baptism is a divine appointment, warranted by the constitution of the visible church, and the express terms and tenor of that covenant by which it stands related to God; and if the person thereby obtains an interest in such great privileges, and precious promises; all which have been abundantly proved; then the heinous nature of that conduct by which this divine ordinance, this covenant relation, and these invaluable privileges are renounced, and these sacred bonds violated, is proportionably aggravated. And even that very principle which they profess to act upon, is a double aggravation of their crime. All such as thus renounce their baptism, hold, that a person must be in a gracious state before he receives baptism. This is their professed principle, and they all pretend to act upon it in being re-baptized. Now to admit the supposition, that such persons are not deceived in themselves with respect to that saving change of heart which they look upon themselves to be the happy subjects of; allowing God has poured out his spirit upon them in his saving influences; this then is a very strong confirmation of their baptismal covenant; it is God's own seal, witness and testimony to the divine original, validity and authority of their infant baptism. For here observe; this is one of the blessings promised in the covenant of God with the visible church, that he would afford the influences of his spirit to render the privilege of the gospel effectual for salvation

to the members of the church. I have plentifully proved that God hath promised his people, that he will circumcise their heart, and the heart of their seed, to love the Lord their God, that they may live ; that he will take away the stony heart, and will give his people an heart of flesh ; that he will create in them a clean heart, and renew in them a right spirit. When therefore God according to his promise, fulfills these gracious covenant engagements to his people, in bestowing so great a blessing as the special, saving influences of his holy spirit ; he therein proves their covenant relation to himself, and shows himself to be their covenant God, in this fulfilment of his promise to them. And if God thus owns and blesses his own institution of infant baptism, and that, by the bestowment of such an unspeakable favor, which confirms the validity of their baptism, and their covenant relation to himself ; how criminal then, must their conduct be, in denying their baptism, and renouncing their covenant with God, after such a gracious fulfilment of it upon his part, wherein he has confirmed his covenant with them ? And what still heightens the iniquity of their conduct is, that they take occasion to renounce covenant with God, from his fulfilment of it to them. Such perfidious conduct towards their covenant God gives just grounds to suspect, that they are really deceived in the judgment they make upon their own state, and that their supposed change is really nothing more than a specious delusion of Satan transforming himself into an angel of light.

6. When we look into the tenor of the covenant which God hath made with the visible church, we see a glorious display of the riches of his free and sovereign grace towards mankind, that should influence us to love and gratitude. It is wonderful rich grace in God to treat with the sinful children of men about their salvation, in the form of a covenant ; and much more that he should extend his promised favor unto children's children. Children are very near to their

parents ; they have a very tender regard to their offspring, and esteem a kindness done to them, as highly as one done to themselves. There is therefore a great motive to praise God, set before his people, on account of the many gracious promises which extend to their seed after them. Thus the psalmist excites Israel to praise God. Psal. cv. 1, 2. " O give thanks unto the Lord ; call upon his name ; make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works." And as a motive to enforce these duties, he reminds them of the covenant love of God to his people, and their seed, in the 6th and following verses. " O, ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. He is the Lord our God, his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac ; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." And in Psal. cxlvii. 12, 13. " Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem : Praise thy God O Zion. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates : he hath blessed thy children within thee." It is rich grace in God to take the children of his people into covenant with himself, to put his name upon them, that they should be called the children of God ; to separate them to himself as a peculiar treasure above all others, and to prevent them with his mercy, by laying grace in store beforehand for them, that he may draw their hearts to himself, even before Satan can get any advantage against them. Adoption is one of the grounds on which we are called the children of God. It seems to be the sentiment of some, that the relation of children unto God, both by *adoption*, and by *regeneration* go together, and are inseparably connected, in the same person. But this is a great mistake. To be the children of God by adoption, in some degree at least, is a privilege that many partake of, who are not the children of God by regeneration : yea, it

is a privilege shared in common by all the members of the visible church, that they are the adopted children of God. Hence Moses spake to the whole congregation of the children of Israel. Deut. xiv. 1. "Ye are the children of the Lord your God." And the apostle speaks of the Jews as the people "to whom pertaineth the adoption." Rom. ix. 4. And upon this account it is, that our Lord in the parable of the rich man, represents Abraham as speaking to him in torment with the appellation of son. Luke xvi. 25. "And Abraham said, *Son*, remember that thou in thy life time received thy good things."

IV. I now proceed to show what obligations people are under to seek for, to attend upon, and to improve the privileges of the visible church, that they may be saved.

The members of the visible church being united to the same head, are united one to another, and formed into one body, by the same covenant by which they stand related to God as his covenant people. And the purpose for which the church is thus formed and united, is the joint attendance upon, and performance of the several exercises of public worship; which are the appointed means of communion with God, as well as of communion one with another. The several religious exercises to be attended upon by the church, are prayer, singing praises, reading the word, a preached gospel, and the celebration of gospel ordinances, such as baptism and the Lord's supper. And the Lord's day is the set time for the church ordinarily to meet together for these purposes. And the bonds of the covenant of God, in a very sacred manner, bind and oblige the members of the church to give their attendance on these religious exercises.

Some may imagine, it is no matter whether they attend on public worship or not: they can read the bible, can read as good, yea, better sermons at home, than they shall hear delivered in public; thence es-

them it a light matter whether they give their attendance in public or not. But let such remember, that the thing required in the covenant, is attendance on divine institutions. Our public attendance is that by which we give public honor to God, and to his appointments; it is there we are to present ourselves before God; and there it is that he has promised to meet with and bless his people. The means of grace become effectual on our hearts through the blessing of God; therefore his blessing is to be sought after in his own appointed way. And it is by attending on public worship that the kingdom of the Redeemer is upheld in the world, and the influences of it extended and propagated among mankind. Our attendance therefore on the public religious exercises of the church appears to be a very important duty, enforced upon us by many considerations, but more especially by our covenant engagements.

But the most common neglect of people is their non-attendance on gospel ordinances, baptism, but more especially the Lord's supper. The conduct of many among us is very blameable, who are of the church seed, included in the covenant, and laid under the sacred bonds of it by baptism, to obey all the commands of God, that they keep back from this ordinance, therein acting in direct disobedience to the express command of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of me." Unaccountable is the conduct of many in turning their backs upon this ordinance. Some perhaps are influenced by one reason, and some by another. It seems to be in some the effect of mere carelessness, that they slight that ordinance and care nothing about it; who may be fitly compared to profane Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth right, and so lost the blessing. Some seem to make themselves easy in the neglect of this ordinance, because they think they have some excuse for their neglect, and are very willing to be excused; either because they expect they may take more liberty in the ways of sin, than would be allowed of if they joined in full

with the church ; or because they feel more easy in their minds about their loose and careless way of living, than they imagine they should do if they came to the Lord's supper ; and not being willing heartily to engage in a strict religious life, they choose to stay away. But with some, and perhaps many, it may be a real scruple of conscience whether they may come to that ordinance till they have attained to a truly gracious state. But with such, I would query, *Is it the way to attain to a truly gracious state, for a person to live in the allowed neglect of the means of grace ?*

I will here alledge the express command of the king of the church "Do this in remembrance of me." This command is evidently binding upon the church, and reacheth every member of it. Here then, the only question is, who are the church ? who are the members of it ? for all such come within the binding reach of this command. And I think, the answer to this inquiry appears so plain and evident from the preceding discourse, as to admit of no evasion. The covenant by which the visible church is formed, is evidently that which was brought in by the mediation of Christ, after the fall, which was first revealed to Adam, and afterwards renewed with Abraham : the church was then set up in his family ; and is continued to this day, in the church seed. If therefore we are of the church seed, and have had the covenant established with us by baptism, the command is binding upon us. I have offered abundant evidence that we are made members of the church, not by any personal profession, or covenant engagements and promises : but it is baptism which alone visibly constitutes, or publicly seals and confirms our union with the church, and our covenant relation to God. And if infant baptism is of divine right, as has been proved ; it follows, that the church seed, having the covenant established and confirmed by baptism, are thereby rendered the true and real members of the church, and entitled to all the privileges of its communion, as soon as they attain to a competent age or capacity.—

The truth of this cannot be denied by any, unless they will deny infant baptism, or plead for a mungrel, half-way church membership which the apostles knew nothing of : and yet, I am not so sanguine in my expectations, as to suppose mankind will be easily persuaded to admit it into practice. No, the custom of obtaining accession, to the communion of the church by making a personal profession, and verbal covenanting, has so much, and so long prevailed, and carries such a dazzling lustre with it, that it cannot be easily removed. It has ever been the case, when human inventions have been brought into use in the church, divine institutions have been obliged to truckle to them. The custom of obtaining a right to the privileges of communion in the church by making a personal profession, has something in it which is suited to please the vanity, and elate the pride of human nature ; as it gives them an opportunity to distinguish themselves above others ; and especially in such places where the practice of *making a relation of their experiences* has obtained, which above all other methods, affords to people of a pharisaic turn, an opportunity to trumpet their own praises, that a man must hazard his own character to appear in opposition to it. The bulk of mankind have their eyes so dazzled with the splendor of making personal professions, that baptism has very much lost the sacred veneration which ought to be given to it : and Satan finds his account in it too ; as mankind are thus brought to make light of that divine ordinance, and to feel little or nothing of those sacred obligations which their covenant relation to God lays upon them. It is discernable even by a superficial observer, that the baptism of a person, whether infant or adult, is, in the common acceptance of mankind, but a light thing, in comparison with that profession, and those covenant engagements, which a person makes when he is received as a member of the visible church. Thus have mankind “made void the commandment of God through their traditions,” and very much lost the just

apprehensions of the true import, and sacred nature of that ordinance, which was divinely instituted to be a covenanting transaction. But to return from this digression.

If this command of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of me," is given to the Church, it is binding upon all the members of it; and that, whether the present state of their hearts is gracious or not. We do not inquire whether our children are renewed, before we seek baptism for them; by the receipt of which ordinance they are confirmed members of the visible church, their title to the privileges of it, even to the Lord's supper, as well as other privileges, is confirmed by the ordinance; and they are laid under covenant obligations to come forward, and attend upon all acts of communion, as fast as they grow up to a sufficient capacity. If the unregeneracy of our children is no reason why we should defer their baptism, then their unregeneracy cannot cancel their right to these privileges to which they are thereby entitled, nor their obligations to attend upon God in them: as, I think, is evident to a demonstration.

Some will say, the command under consideration requires us to come to this ordinance with a believing penitent heart: but we may not come without it.

I readily grant, it is the duty of every one to believe in Christ, and repent of sin; no sinner can be excused for continuing one moment in an impenitent state. And I grant likewise, that 'tis the duty of every one to come to this ordinance with a believing penitent heart. But what I assert, as evident from the foregoing discourse, is, that whether such an heart be in us or not, the act of attending is not to be omitted. It is a like case in every other religious exercise; yea, and in every moral action of life. If we pray, the command is to pray in faith; and if the want of a saving faith is a reason why we should not come to the Lord's supper; it is equally a reason why we should not pray. We are required to read

God's word and to hear it preached, in faith ; but if the want of faith is a reason why we should neglect an attendance at the Lord's supper, it is equally so why we should neglect to read the word, or hear it preached. We are required, "Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the glory of God ;" which command implies the exercise of true faith ; But if the want of faith is a reason why we should neglect to eat at the Lord's table, it is equally so, why we should neglect to eat our daily bread. The command to attend on the Lord's supper is of the same tenor with every other command ; they all respect the heart, and require a gracious manner of performance. And if the want of a gracious frame of heart, is a reason why we should neglect to perform the matter or outward act of duty required in one command ; it is equally so in all the rest : and by this argument, the sinner will be discharged from every exertion, or attempt of performing every duty of both natural and revealed religion : and must sit still in total inactivity with respect to the use of all means, waiting for God, to be found of them, who in this sense seek him not. And to be consistent, they must also in like inactivity, wait for common mercies, without using the means of providence.

All such religious exercises as are appointed to the visible church, properly fall under a double consideration. They are duties to be performed ; and they are means to be used in seeking the blessings of divine grace. It is by an attendance on the religious exercises of church fellowship that sinners are to wait upon, and seek to God, that he may meet with and bless them in his own appointed way, according to his promise to the church. *Exod. xx. 24.* "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." Altho' religious exercises, when they are to be simply considered as duties, are to be performed with a gracious heart ; yet, considered as means of grace, they are to be attended on whether there be such an heart in us or not. Such argu-

ments as will support certain conclusions concerning them, considered as duties ; will not support the same conclusions concerning them, when they are considered as means of grace. Thus for instance, to hear the word preached, considered as a duty, we must hear it in faith : but a preached gospel is to be attended upon whether we have faith or not. "For faith comes by hearing." And it is a like case with all the religious exercises which the church is to attend upon ; they are all means of grace, means which by the blessing of God, become effectual to produce grace in the heart. We must wait upon God in his own appointed way, for the blessing of a new heart. Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." The many gracious promises made to the visible church, that God will be their God, that he will circumcise their heart, to love him with all the heart, that he will pour out his spirit upon them, and take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh ; these I say, and such like promises which God hath made to his visible church, with respect to what he will do for its members ; and which therefore evidently stand in close connexion with the means of grace, and the religious exercises which the church is to observe, afford an undeniable evidence, that we are to wait upon God with such hearts as we have, in his own appointed way, in the communion and fellowship of his church, for the bestowment of the promised blessings of his grace.

Objection. Whatever a man does in his natural state, is sin ; and if we eat and drink unworthily, we shall eat and drink damnation to ourselves.

Answer. This objection thoroughly searched, will be found to have no foundation but a self righteous spirit which takes encouragement to go to God, from some supposed personal excellency, like the pharisee, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are." There never was one yet found among the children of men, who in the sense of this objection,

was worthy to sit down at the Lord's table. Worthiness, in the text referred to, respects not the qualification of the person partaking, but the ordinance itself, or rather the manner of partaking of it. The unworthy receiving, of which the Corinthians were reprov'd, consisted in not discerning the Lord's body ; that is not making a proper distinction between that ordinance and common food ; not attending to its spiritual signification. And although it may be in some sense true, that whatever a man in his natural state does, is sin ; yet it is equally true, that he sins as greatly, and perhaps more, in neglecting the Lord's supper, than he might do, in attending upon it ; as he therein rebels against an express command, " Do this in remembrance of me : which shows the objection to have no foundation.

Although God hates the sin ; yet he loves the sinner ; and that, even in his unregenerate state. John iii. 16. " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." Rom. v. 8. " God commandeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Eph. ii. 4, 5. " But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." And although we should make a thousand metaphysical distinctions in the love of God ; as, a love of pity, a love of benevolence, a love of complacency, and the like ; yet it is evident from the scripture, that God loves us whilst we are yet in our sins ; and does express his love towards us various ways. God has expressed his love towards us in the gift of his Son ; he expresseth his love in the bounties of his providence, and in the publication of his word, in setting up his church in the world, in taking us into covenant with himself by baptism, admitting us to the privileges of the Redeemer's visible kingdom, and promising to meet with us, and bless us in his own appointed way. And to pretend that we must not come to

the enjoyment of these privileges, because of our own unworthiness, is voluntary humility ; or rather, the insufferable pride of our own corrupt hearts, that we will not accept of a favor or privilege, as a free gift, at the hands of God's rich, self moving and sovereign love and grace, because we cannot receive it upon the footing of some worthiness or deservings of our own.

As our coming to this ordinance is an action expressive of our devoting ourselves to Christ : so on the other hand, our turning our back upon it, is an action expressive of our rejecting him. We thereby practically say, we will not have this man to reign over us. We act under the influence of the same wicked heart, if we keep back from this ordinance, as we do, when we come to it, without sincerely yielding our hearts to Christ. All the difference is, in coming to the ordinance, the wickedness of the heart is kept under restraint ; but in keeping from it, the wickedness of the heart is complied with, indulged, gratified, and openly acted out. And if there is greater wickedness in practising sin in our lives, than there is in merely conceiving it in our heart ; it must be allowed to be greater wickedness to keep back from the ordinance, than to come to it, with the same unrenewed heart. It was wickedness in Cain to continue impenitent, but it was increased wickedness in him to go out from the presence of the Lord. Thus are we to view the matter with respect to the man himself : but in the eye of the world, in his coming to the ordinance, Christ is openly honored and acknowledged ; in his keeping back, Christ is openly despised and rejected. Although the preparation of the heart ought carefully to be attended to, yet there is not so much depends upon it, as a self-righteous spirit inclines to imagine. For my own part, I freely own I had much rather people should attend on religious exercises with corrupt views, than not to attend at all. For it was doubtless curiosity that brought together that great multitude on the day of pentecost. Acts ii. And yet, three thou-

sand of them, in consequence of it, were gained over to Christ.

Let it be here further considered, that all church privileges and ordinances belong to, and are the exercises of Christ's mediation. Christ as Mediator, has not only to apply to God on behalf of sinners ; but also to apply to sinners, that he may reconcile them to God. He carries on the treaty of peace and reconciliation with God, among his professing people, in his church, by his word, worship, ordinances and spirit. When a man therefore is denied the enjoyment of church fellowship, by any church, he is therein cut off from a share in the mediation of Christ. It therefore greatly concerns every church to take special heed to the grounds and reasons of their own conduct, when they refuse such as offer themselves to their communion ; lest thereby they should be found guilty of restraining the mediation of Christ, and cutting off such from the enjoyment of it, for whom Christ died. And it equally concerns every person to take heed to his own conduct, lest he is found to reject the Mediator, and refuseth to suffer Christ to execute his mediatorial office between God and his own soul ; lest he thrust himself away from those divine appointments by which Christ carries on the treaty of reconciliation, and like Cain, goes out from the presence of the Lord. If we reject and turn from the Mediator, in those things wherein he, in the exercise of his offices, applies himself to us ; we cannot expect he will apply to God for us. For if we deny him before man, he also will deny us before his Father who is in heaven. Shall we think our being in a natural state is any reason why Christ should have nothing to do with us, nor we with him, in his mediatorial capacity ? Is that a reason why he should not mediate between God and us ? Must we be first savingly changed, before Christ may treat with us about our salvation ? Let it then be well considered what we do, when we turn our back upon the exercises of church fellowship ; that we therein turn our back upon Christ, reject his mediation, and refuse to suffer him to carry

on the treaty of peace with us. Such sinners reject the counsel of God against themselves.

Thus I trust it is evident, that all such as are united to the church by baptism, ought to maintain communion with it in all religious exercises, and gospel institutions. Yet it must be remembered that a bare attendance is not the whole, which in these things, is required of us. No, our business there is to meet with God, to devote and give up ourselves to him, with our whole heart, according to those bonds of duty laid upon us in our covenant with him. If we are destitute of a gracious frame of heart, we ought not to make ourselves easy, and sit down content in our outward privileges; for the time will come when such children of the kingdom shall be cast out. And although our not being in a state of grace, is not to be admitted as a reason for our neglecting an attendance at the Lord's table; yet we are not to quiet ourselves in this state, nor look upon it that we have attended as we ought, till we truly yield up our heart to God. As when Moses led the children of Israel to renew covenant on the plains of Moab, he tells them, they stood before the Lord, that they should enter into covenant with him; not barely to recognize their covenant relation; but to yield up themselves to God, from the heart in that relation: so when we come to the Lord's table, we there appear before God, not merely to renew covenant with him; but our business is to yield up our hearts to a sincere closure and compliance with our covenant relation to God, and our obligations to him. And when we have attended, if we find our heart, like a deceitful bow, has turned aside, and our souls are not truly reconciled to God; that sacred transaction should serve to impress our minds with a more thorough conviction of our guilt, and fill us with a more serious and effectual engagedness of soul, to seek a renewed change of heart; and are therefore not to give over, but must renew our attempts, if perhaps a sovereign God may meet with us and bless us in his own appointed

way. It is in this manner that sinners should watch at wisdom's gates, and wait at the posts of her door.

Our not being in a gracious state is so far from being a reason why we should keep back from the communion of the church, that it is really a reason why we should come into it. The many promises to the visible church, in which God engageth to work holiness in its members, should be prevailing motives with such as find their need of grace, influencing them to *come to the waters*, where they may *buy without money and without price*. The right which any one has to come into covenant, and to take and use the privileges of the church, doth not arise from any holiness or worthiness that is in them; but from the free gift of sovereign grace. And if it is the sovereign pleasure of God to grant liberty for the enjoyment of the means of grace, and all church privileges, to the chief of sinners, and the utterly vile, who is he that may gainsay it? All the blessings of redeeming grace are to be sought after in the church; it is there only we can rationally hope and pray that God would meet with us, and bless us. But when we turn our back upon the church, and neglect the privileges of its communion; we do, in just construction, turn our back upon God, and all the blessings of his grace. We therein act like Cain, who went out from the presence of the Lord. And if we, like profane Esau, despise our birth-right, it is but equal that we are like him rejected. It then surely concerns us to hearken to the rich grace of God who invites us into the number of his children, to give us a place in his family, and a seat at his table. We have abundant reason to admire divine goodness in *laying meat unto us*, with this gracious promise to his church: "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread."

Consider further, it is not a matter left to our choice whether we will attend on this institution or not; but it is made our indispensable duty by the express command of Christ. The Lord's supper is an ordinance

that succeeds in the gospel church, to the passover in the church of Israel. I. Cor. v. 7, 8. *Then* it was expressly required to cut off every one that should neglect to keep the passover in its appointed season. Num. ix. 13. And this is a rule that ought *now* to take place in the church ; and would be put in practice, were it not for our criminal neglect of church discipline. I therefore can see no room for any such to hope for salvation in the future state, who neglect and refuse to attend on this institution of Christ. For who can suppose Christ would require any to be cut off from his church in this life, for a matter for which he will not exclude them from heaven in the day of judgment ? And those words of our Savior are very applicable in this case, John vi. 53, " Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Here it is to be observed, that our Lord useth a double asseveration, "*verily, verily,*" thereby to engage our more special attention and regard to the truth which, in this solemn manner, he declares to us. Indeed I grant, our Lord had no reference to the supper, when he spoke these words, for this ordinance was not then instituted. But when our Lord did institute this ordinance, it was manifestly his design that we therein should eat his flesh, and drink his blood, of which he here speaks ; and a due attendance on this ordinance is the instituted way in which this duty is to be performed. And for us to suppose that we can eat his flesh, and drink his blood, so as to live by him, by some private actings of faith, not exercised and expressed in his own appointed way, is at once to set aside his authority, and to make ourselves wiser than he. Herein we act over the same sinful conduct of the pharisees, in the contempt they cast upon John's baptism. Luke vii. 30. " The pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."

Some perhaps will say, I make a partaking of gospel ordinances too essential to salvation. But

wherein? Let us attend to the tenor of that promise of salvation, Mark xvi. 16. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." It is here manifest, that we must be baptized as well as believe, that we may be interested in this promise. Indeed baptism is not taken into the threatening, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." Where God in his providence has put the enjoyment of gospel ordinances out of our reach, it may be hoped, that if there be a willing mind, it shall be accepted according to what a man hath, not according to what he hath not. But what is this to the case of those who have gospel privileges at their doors, and continue to treat them with open neglect and contempt? I confess, I can see no way pointed out in the gospel, for such to hope to be saved. Indeed, what allowances our merciful Savior will make for weak and tender consciences, on account of those many stumbling blocks that have been thrown in their way, we cannot tell. When I consider the many books which have been published, the pains which have been taken, and the plausible arguments which have been used to deter people from their duty, their conduct does not appear so strange; especially when I also attend to the practice of these churches in receiving persons to their communion, not at the door of Christ's institutions; but compelling them to climb up some other way, on ladders of personal professions, and verbal covenanting, of their own devising; which naturally tends to make common people, who generally form their sentiments more from commonly received customs, than doctrinal instructions, to imagine that none must come there but such as are well satisfied of their gracious state. Jeroboam's sinful conduct was often stigmatized, many generations after his death, by the remark that Israel continued to walk in the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, who made Israel to sin. And this practice of neglecting to attend on this ordinance, and of excluding the infant seed of the church from the privile-

ges of its communion, cannot be justified by the example of the church, of a thousand years continuance, through the ages of popish darkness.

I am sensible what I am here pleading for, will have to combat with abundance of popular prejudice. For I have found it not an easy thing to bring my own mind fully to give in to the conviction of the light of truth, in opposition to the prejudices and prepossessions which I have labored under. But if people would be persuaded to look candidly into the matter, and be willing to be guided only by scripture light; I fully believe they would see the reasons I have offered abundantly sufficient to confirm what I am pleading for. I have had this matter under close and serious examination for about fifteen years, in the most mature part of life; so that the sentiments in which I am now settled, cannot be the ebullitions of youth, nor the dotages of superannuation. And as I approach towards the verge of life,* I would leave this as my dying testimony to these churches, of the absolute necessity of a reformation, that they may enjoy more of Christ's presence with them. Yet I have little expectation of success, because I apprehend that prophesy is not yet fully accomplished, Rev. xi. 2. "But the court which is without the temple, (*the external form of the visible church*) leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."

But if such arguments will not prevail, especially with such as are already in the church, and laid under the bonds of the covenant by baptism, to come forward and use the privileges, and take the blessings which God thus graciously lays before them, they must even abide the consequences. Yet let me further urge this matter with these two considerations.

1. Consider that the religious exercises observed by the church, have a natural tendency to promote

* These things were chiefly written when the author was between fifty and sixty years of age.

religion in our hearts ; and not only so, but they are the means which God hath appointed for this very purpose. The rich grace of God in taking sinners into a covenant relation to himself, is a persuasive consideration, and a powerful motive to lead them to repentance. Thus Moses urgeth this argument upon the children of Israel. Deut. 15, 16. "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. *Circumcise therefore* the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Our being in covenant not only lays us under strong obligations to repent, but it is appointed as a means to bring us to it. In like manner the apostle also urgeth the duty of repentance upon the Jews, with the same argument. Acts iii. 19. "Repent ye therefore," &c. alledging as a motive to it, in the 25th verse, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers." According to this tenor and tendency of the covenant, the prophet expostulates with the ten tribes of Israel, after they had been for many years as it were, cast out from the presence of God, in a state of captivity among the heathen. Jer. iii. 1. "They say, if a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, shall he return unto her again ? shall not that land be greatly polluted ? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers ; yet return again to me, saith the Lord." And in the 14th verse. "Turn O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." And in the 22d verse, they are represented as being prevailed upon to return, and improving their covenant interest in God, in their prayers, pleading it as an argument for their recovery and reception. "Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings : behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." And God hath declared his gracious readiness to harken to the cries of such sinners, bemoaning their condition. Jer. xxxi. 18. "I have surely heard

Ephraim bemoaning himself thus. Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." And it is thus the prophet teacheth us to plead our covenant interest in God. Isai. lxiv. 9. "Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity forever: behold, see we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

Thus the bonds of the covenant of our God being upon us, very strongly oblige us to repent; and the great and undeserved favor of God in taking us into covenant, assures us of his gracious readiness to receive repenting and returning sinners, which greatly tends to draw us to repentance. And our holding communion with the visible church in gospel ordinances, is the way to keep up the attention of our minds to divine things, to excite religious affections in the heart, and to draw the soul to a cordial compliance with the way of life. The privileges of church fellowship have not only a tendency to these things in their own nature, but they are the appointments of God for these very purposes: and connected with them is the promise of the influences of the Holy Spirit to render them effectual on the heart, for the production of these effects among the covenant people of God, as has been fully proved. Very strongly then do these considerations urge the duty of coming forward, and improving the privileges of the church, upon all such especially as are laid under the bonds of the covenant by baptism.

2. Our coming forward in the improvement of the privileges of the church, is the way to secure great privileges and blessings to our children, and to transmit them to rising generations. If we desire God should be our God, and the God of our seed after us, we must embrace this covenant in which this blessing is promised. A regard to our children's good, as well as to our own, should influence us in this case. Indeed, to seek the privileges of the covenant merely for the sake of having our children baptized, (and

that perhaps chiefly because it is looked upon as reputable among men) is not the best of motives ; yea, such as herein act only from such views, are very criminal in overlooking motives of the greatest importance, and regarding only the less. But still, this is a motive which ought to have its due weight with us, to quicken us to take hold of God's covenant, and to use diligence and faithfulness in improving all covenant privileges, that we may transmit them to our children after us ; and in that way, discharge our duty to Christ, as well as to our children, in contributing our part towards the support, preservation and propagation of his kingdom in the world. Were it not proper that a regard to the good of our children should have its influence upon us, inclining us to covenant faithfulness, God would not have so often used it as an argument with his people, to this purpose, as we find he has done. Deut. iv. 40. "Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes and his commandments which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee." Deut. v. 29. "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever." Deut. xxx. 19. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing : therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Thus we see God urgeth his people to covenant faithfulness, both for their own sake, and for the sake of their children. The rich grace of God manifested in his covenant, by his promise to be our God, and the God of our seed after us, is an argument to quicken us to duty which is directly adapted to move and influence our parental affections, that every spring of action in our nature may be consecrated to the purpose of religion. Our love to our children is thus improved by divine wisdom and grace, to engage us to prize and improve the privileges of this covenant, because we there see that grace is laid

in beforehand in store for them. God hath made provision for them, that they should be born in his house, and brought up in his family, under the best advantages, and fairest prospects of obtaining eternal life. This gives parents a comfortable prospect for their children. If we view them only as an increase of sinful men, who come into the world under the ruins of the fall, we shall have such a dark and melancholy prospect concerning them, as might reasonably stifle the desire of having children. But by attending to the tenor of the covenant of promise, we are taught to view them in another light, and under another character; as born under the covenant of grace, as God's children by adoption, and as heirs of many valuable privileges and promises. If they die in childhood, I know of no reason why we may not suppose it is well with them: or if they live to grow up, we have grounds of hope they shall reap the benefit of the privileges of the covenant for their salvation. The many gracious promises of the covenant are a strong foundation for the faith of parents to rest upon, and to improve in their supplication at the throne of grace for their children. These promises likewise afford great encouragement to take special pains in their education, in hopes that their endeavors to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, shall not be in vain; but that, whilst they are endeavoring to instruct them, and to lead them forward to know and acknowledge their covenant God, he will pour out his spirit upon them in his saving influences.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE ruin and recovery of man, appear from what has been offered, to be properly ascribed to Adam, and Christ. As Adam was the head and leader of the apostacy of the human race, so is Christ the head and author of their recovery. And by attending to the glorious characters under which the Son of God is revealed in the gospel, it appears that he stands in various relations to different denominations of the children of men ; and they accordingly are differently interested in him, and receive very different privileges and blessings from him. Christ is in some sense a covenant head, Savior and Redeemer to the whole human race ; and they receive from him in these relations, the present life, with all the comforts and enjoyments of it. But Christ in all his offices, is more nearly related to his visible church and covenant people, than to the rest of the world ; and they receive from him the more valuable privileges of divine revelation, with the means of grace, and peculiar advantages for working out their salvation. And as the Lord Jesus Christ is more nearly related, and more closely connected with his visible church, than he is to the rest of mankind ; so he is connected more closely still to his spiritual body of true believers, with whom the treaty of peace is happily concluded, in their being brought to a saving union with him by faith ; in consequence of which they have obtained a sure title to eternal life.

Careful inspection into the character and offices of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only discovers these various connexions with the different denominations of mankind ; but we may also here discover him in some connexions which surpass the human species, and take in the angelic world ; yea. the whole system of the intellectual creation. For it is declared to be the good pleasure of God, “ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together

in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." Eph. i. 10.

It evidently appears in the gospel plan, that the safety, blessedness and glory of men, consist in, and flow out from their union with the blessed God; a foundation for which is laid in the union of the divine and human nature in the Son of God. And as the safety, glory and blessedness of men consist in this, so this must also necessarily be the case with the whole intelligent created system, so far as we are able to judge of it: union with their Creator seems necessary in the nature of things, to their safety and blessedness. And the Son of God appears plainly pointed out, as the person in and by whom this union is accomplished. He seems to be the Mediator of access to God, and of divine communications from him, even to the angels of light, who are gathered together into one, in him, as well as to the children of men. Indeed, the tenor and form of the union of the angelic world with the Son of God, is not so expressly set forth in the gospel, as is that of mankind; doubtless there may be a great variety with respect to that, among the different ranks of beings; but that they are somehow united to Christ, and to God thro' him, is manifestly a doctrine taught in the gospel. This is represented in forecited Eph. i. 10, where we are told of the purpose of God "to gather together in one, all things in Christ." And of the like import is that in the 20—23d verses, where we are told that "God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Eph. iv. 10. "He that descended is the same that also ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11. "Wherefore God also hath

highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Colos. i. 15, 16, 17, " Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature : for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him and for him ; and he is before all things and by him all things consist." And verse, 20. " By him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in heaven, or things in earth." Heb. i. 2, 3. " Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power."

Thus we have the apostolic representation of this wonderful and glorious connexion and union of the whole intelligent system with our exalted Savior, who is the mysterious person in whom the whole intelligent creation are united to God as the foundation of their safety and blessedness. How the Creator and the creature, between whose natures there is such an infinite distance, shall be brought into a state of such a close and intimate union as should be an effectual security of safety, and source of blessedness to the creature, is beyond finite understanding to discover. And that the son of God, who is our Redeemer should be the person, in and by whom this union with God, of all rational, created beings, should be brought about, should render him glorious in our eyes, and precious to our hearts.

And if such a Mediator of access to God is, in the nature of things, necessary to fill up that infinite distance between the Creator and the creature, and bring about that union of the creature to God which is ne-

nessary to their safety and blessedness, as is clearly intimated and implied in the foregoing glorious and exalted character of the Son of God ; it will be necessary to allow, that the case of Adam, in the state in which he was created, did require such a Mediator, as well as the rest of the intelligent creation ; and that the discovery of the Son of God in this character, was included in that covenant dispensation which he was placed under. The record which Moses hath made of this first covenant dispensation is so very concise, that we are unable positively to say whether it contained any discovery of such a Mediator, or not : yet there are some things in the sacred scripture, (as I shall show presently,) referring to that dispensation, which very naturally intimate such a discovery as being contained in it. Indeed, if the Son of God was revealed to Adam in the first covenant, as a Mediator of access to God ; yet we cannot suppose him to be then revealed in such a character, clothed with such offices, and having such work assigned him, as were afterward necessary to his redeeming fallen, sinful man. These things became necessary to him that he might save sinners. But Adam might see the necessity of a Mediator of access to God, although his then present state did not require a Mediator with such characters as were necessary to save from sin. The Son of God is said to be, “ The brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express image of his person :” but I cannot see how he should acquire such a character by his incarnation and sufferings : doubtless this character belonged to him before he was manifested in the flesh. His glory was eclipsed, or as it were, veiled, when he took flesh upon him. But when he was about to finish the scene of his humiliation, we find him praying to be restored to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was John xvii. 5. Which glory, it is natural for us to understand to be that, on account of which he is said to be the brightness of the Father’s glory, and express image of his person. Perhaps, no created mind was capable to discover the

uncreated glory of the deity, and obtain the vital knowledge of, and union to him, without such a mirror, or Mediator of access.

The introduction of moral evil into the system has been supposed by some, to be necessary to the full display of the divine glory : but of this, I can see no necessity. I grant, the glory of God in pardoning sin, never could have been manifested by any exercises of it, if there never had been any sin to pardon. But to infer from this, the necessity of introducing sin ; and even to impute its production to the divine agency, is a very bold assertion, which, instead of exalting, doth greatly debase the divine character. For it is a very *puerile* exploit to make a noble machine, and then throw it into confusion, for the sake of shewing one's dexterity in reducing it again to order. *None but a madman will cast about fire-brands, arrows and death ; and say, am I not in sport ?*

It is not the introduction of moral evil ; but the mysterious union of the created and uncreated nature in the person of the Son of God, that is the device of divine wisdom to enable created intelligences to behold the glory of the God-head : which might have as well been brought about, if sin had never taken place in the system ; and which was most probably the case before sin, or even any creature existed, except he who was the beginning of the creation of God. I see not why the introduction of moral evil may not be satisfactorily accounted for, from the necessarily limited and mutable nature of created beings ; especially when such are put into a state of trial, which necessarily implies a possibility of sinning, because without a possibility of it there could be no trial of the obedience of the creature. When Adam was set a probationer under the first covenant, his security against sinning must be the strength and stability of his own nature : otherwise his fidelity would not have been tried. In like manner also when the Son of God stood a probationer under the second covenant, there was no security that he should not sin, but what arose from his own divine strength and immutability.

There was nothing in the constitution he was under, nor in the nature or circumstances of his trials, to prevent it. But mere created nature must necessarily be liable to sin when put into a state of probation. These remarks show there is no need of supposing the divine agency in bringing moral evil into the system. And although the wisdom and goodness of God appear in overruling sin, and bringing good out of evil ; yet this not at all implies any necessity of introducing sin, that the glory of God might be made manifest.

What would have been the case if sin had never been committed, is a matter of which we are very incompetent judges. For the discoveries which God hath been pleased to make of himself to us, are such as are suitable to be made to such creatures as we are, in our present state ; which are sufficient to enable us to obtain the saving knowledge of himself : but whether his glory would not have been as fully displayed, if sin had never been committed, is what we cannot determine. This however we may see, that God hath wisely suited the dispensation of his grace to the needy circumstances of fallen man ; the peculiar excellency of which is the method thereby laid open for our being brought into such a state of union to Christ, and to God through him, as will be an effectual security of our glory, blessedness, and everlasting safety. Indeed, the first covenant was equitable, wise and gracious ; and the only objection we can have against it, with any color of plausibility, was God's including Adam's seed with him, whereby they should be liable to ruin by his misconduct. But this objection is, in a great measure, removed by this consideration. That if the curse of the first covenant had been executed upon him according to the tenor of the covenant, he never would have had any seed actually existing, to be involved in ruin by it. And when we consider that the safety, glory and blessedness of the creature consist in, or result from union with God ; it may suggest the proper reason of the divine procedure, and

show the necessity of constituting such a union between Adam and his natural seed. For in the second covenant, we very readily see a necessity of our being united to our new covenant head, that he might bring us to God. And we have reason to suppose there was the same necessity of our being in a state of union with our covenant head in the first covenant. We find it is now, the plainly revealed purpose of God, to gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; doubtless because the case of created nature requires such a Mediator of access to God, in order to communion with him, and the participation of complete blessedness in the transcendent perfections of the uncreated Godhead. And if this is the case, as it appears to be from the best light we can get in the matter, it must be conceded that this Son of God, this Mediator of access to God, was necessary to man, in his first estate, and that the revelation of it was made to Adam in the covenant made with him. And this will give us great reason to conclude, the union constituted between Adam and his seed, in the first covenant, was a wise, and even necessary appointment for bringing about our necessary union with God, through this Mediator of access, if Adam had preserved his integrity ; but through his failure, this union brought on our ruin.

With respect to the necessity and usefulness of that federal union which God ordained in the first covenant, between Adam and his seed, something may be argued from the natural union which subsists among them. It was equally easy to almighty power to have made each individual of the human race, at the same time, and in the same manner as he did Adam ; in which case, there would have been no natural union among them. But we see, unerring wisdom judged it best that mankind should come into existence in a state of natural union, by the course of ordinary generation. And as to the state of mankind in this world, much of the wisdom and goodness of

God appears in it, in that this natural union many ways serves to promote our usefulness, and to add to the delight and satisfaction of life. And the nature of man requires a moral, as well as a natural union among them. This appears not only from our need of mutual protection and defence, in our present fallen state ; but also from the sociable tendency of our nature in its primitive state. But it is evident, God, in the formation of our nature, and in ordering our condition, had a higher and more noble end in view, than any thing of a worldly nature ; even our union to and communion with himself. And this natural and moral union which is so conducive to our present happiness, we have reason to suppose, was equally adapted to serve and promote our better and more noble end. Nor is this a mere rational conjecture, but it is much countenanced by divine revelation. This is not a little countenanced by the manifest necessity of our being united to our new covenant head, which strongly implies, there was a like necessity of our union with the first Adam, in order to our communion with God. That our natural union was intended to subserve this purpose is plainly contained in the reason which the prophet assigns why God made but one at first, to be the root of mankind, and chose this natural union, in the course of ordinary generation, as the method to bring us into existence. Mal. ii. 15. " And did he not make one ? Yet had he the residue of the spirit : and wherefore one ? That he might seek a Godly seed." I am sensible the prophet mentions this, to bear testimony against the practice of putting away their wives : but the truth here laid down, from which he takes his argument, equally favors the point under consideration, and clearly shows the reason of the divine appointment of the course of ordinary generation, was a view at promoting godliness. And that our moral as well as our natural union was originally intended for the same purpose, is confirmed by the apostle in his styling Adam a figure of Christ. Rom. v. 14. It is certain our union with

the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, is in order to our life ; and therefore, according to this figure, our union to the first Adam was intended for the same purpose. And it is further to be observed in this representation, that the apostle speaks of Adam in his primitive state, when the first covenant was made with him, and therein represents him as a figure of Christ. But it is not easy to see how he could then be a figure of Christ, in the character of a Savior of sinners ; because there was no apparent room before the fall, for his coming in such a character. It therefore seems necessary we should view Adam, as he was the head of mankind in the first covenant, to be figurative of the Son of God in his character of a Mediator of access. And if, in the first dispensation, Adam was intended to be thus figurative of the Son of God, it will follow, that there was then a revelation of him in that character, made to our first parents in that covenant. Indeed, after the fall, there were given many figures, types and shadows of Christ in the character of a Mediator of reconciliation for the redemption of sinners. But how the Son of God could be figuratively represented by Adam in the first covenant, before the fall, as a Redeemer of sinners, has been a knot too hard to be untied by any that have taken in hand to write upon the types, in any consistent manner. It is therefore here strongly implied, that Christ was revealed to Adam in the first covenant, in the character of a Mediator of access to God ; and that the union which God had ordained between him and his seed, in that dispensation, was appointed to be a means of securing their vital union to God through that Mediator.

The same may be likewise inferred from the representation of the tree of life, as being figurative of Christ. Rev. xxii. 2. The tree of life certainly belonged to the first covenant, before there was any apparent room for the coming of Christ, in the character of a Redeemer of sinners : but it might be then properly ordained to point to him in the character of

a Mediator of access to God, and was therefore properly a sacramental test of obedience, in the first covenant, to Adam and his seed.

It may be objected to these things, that whatever difficulty may attend our viewing Adam in the first covenant, as a type of Christ; yet when the apostle styles him a figure of him that was to come, he plainly alludes to his coming in the flesh, in the character of a Redeemer of sinners. But to this it may be answered, the character given of Christ in the gospel, includes the character of a Mediator of access to God, as well as that of a Redeemer of sinners; and it does not appear the apostle meant to represent Christ as figured forth in Adam, in any other character than that of a Mediator of access; which he might very consistently improve for our instruction in the knowledge of Christ under the gospel, although that figure might properly belong to the first covenant.

Upon the whole then, we have great reason to conclude, the Son of God was revealed to Adam in the first covenant, in the character of a Mediator of access to God for mankind; and that the covenant union then ordained between him and his seed had a direct reference to this Mediator of access, and was a necessary means of securing both to Adam, and to his seed, that union to God, and communion with him, so necessary to the well being of mankind. For although it does not now appear to us, how that union with Adam was to have operated under the first covenant, for securing our vital union with God, in so plain a light as we now see how our union with Christ will answer this important purpose; yet we have reason to conclude that all the obscurity in these things, is because the way of life in the first covenant is not so fully revealed to us in the word of God, as is the way of life provided for us in the new covenant.

When Adam fell, God saw fit not to cut off the whole human race by executing the curse of the first covenant; but thereupon brought in the covenant of grace, wherein his eternal Son, who before was a

Mediator of access to God for the whole intelligent system, was appointed to become incarnate, and be also a Mediator of reconciliation for fallen man ; whereby there was made room for the seed of Adam to be born into a state of probation under the covenant of grace. If therefore any will find fault with the procedure of God with man, either in the first or second covenant, it most certainly is because of their own ignorance of the true state of the case. For if the first covenant with Adam had been as fully laid open to our view in the word of God, as is the second covenant with Christ, we should doubtless see that the first covenant was truly holy, just and good, as well as the second. As it was the mediation of Christ which prevented the curse of the first covenant from taking place upon Adam in the day that he sinned, and made way for his seed to be born into the world, and stand probationers under the covenant of grace ; therefore if we at all find fault with the ways of God, it must be for putting us into a state of trial under such a wise and gracious dispensation as is that of the covenant of grace.

Accordingly we find mankind often complaining that God now requires a compliance with such terms for which fallen man has not in himself sufficient ability. If man in his fallen state, had sufficient ability in himself to c'ose with the terms of reconciliation appointed in the new covenant, it seems that all their objections would be answered. But inasmuch as they are dead in sin, without strength, and are dependent upon the sovereign grace of God for that assistance which shall enable them to believe to the saving of the soul, they think they have reason to complain.

But let us view the matter according to the preceding representation of the ruin and recovery of man. It is true, man, by the breach of the first covenant, was totally ruined ; cut off from all interest in God, and access to him, from all moral dependence upon him, and from all enjoyment of him. But the impos-

sibility fallen man was under of access to God in these respects, is manifestly removed by the introduction of the covenant of grace. And as to the prospect which the sinner has, of obtaining a saving interest in Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the impotence of his fallen state, there is no reason to murmur and complain. For I will just mention several things, the truth of which appears from what has been already offered ; which serve to display the excellency of our present state of trial under the dispensation of the covenant of grace.

One peculiar excellency of the covenant of grace is its containing provision for the pardon of sin. In the first covenant made with Adam, there was no room for pardon : but the first sin was effectually ruinous and decisive of his state. But in the covenant of grace there is rich provision made for the pardon of many sins ; yea, even the chief of sinners have the hope of pardon and salvation set before them. This is a very eligible circumstance in our present state, which had no place in the first covenant.

Another peculiar excellency of our present probation state is the rich and sovereign grace of God freely exercised towards sinners, through the Mediator, which affords great encouragement and grounds of hope that we may obtain salvation.

Here we may consider how fair a prospect Adam had of securing life, when God made the first covenant with him. The test and trial of his obedience must be owned to be as easy and favorable as could be devised ; and he had doubtless sufficient strength for the performance of required obedience. But then, it appears that his own created strength and stability were what he had to depend upon to preserve him from falling. It is essential to created nature, how excellent soever the creature is, to be mutable : but it is the incommunicable prerogative of the divine nature to be independent and unchangeable. And how much dependence may be put upon the strength and stability of a mere creature, even in his best estate

of innocence and perfection, we may see in Adam. We indeed, are ready to think, that were we in his case, we would not do as he did. But what reason have we for it? He had motives abundantly sufficient, had he duly regarded them, to have influenced him to faithfulness; why then should not we be as liable to fall as he? It may be said, if the whole human race were each of them to stand in such a state of trial, if some fell, others would take the warning, and avoid sin which they saw to be so ruinous to others. It might be so; but who can say, how many of the human race would have acted that wise part? We now see, that multitudes are far from taking due warning, by the miscarriages of others, even in cases where there is no room to plead inability. And when we consider how little dependence is to be placed in a mutable creature; we shall see, it is far from being evident, that a greater number would obtain life, were they placed in such an easy state of trial as Adam was, than will now, in our present state of trial under the covenant of grace.

When we consider that a liability to sin is essential to a state of trial, it will appear, there could not have been any effectual security of Adam's persevering in this trial, but by the interposition of God's sovereign, unpromised grace. And I see not why it may not be said, that Adam was as really dependent upon sovereign grace to preserve him from falling, as we are for our recovery. Yea, and I see not how it is possible for any creature to be in a state of trial, in any circumstances whatever, and not be dependent upon sovereign free grace, as his only effectual security. The truth of this is evident not only from the nature of a state of trial as it necessarily implies a possibility of sinning; but also from the necessarily dependent, mutable nature of created beings. And therefore the dependence of the sinner upon divine sovereignty, in a state of trial under the covenant of grace, for that help and assistance by which he shall be enabled to make his calling and election sure, is upon the whole

little or nothing different from what must necessarily be the case of a creature in a state of trial under any constitution whatever.

Dependence on the free and sovereign grace of God for divine aid to secure our salvation, is evidently our case ; but instead of looking upon it with an evil eye, we have abundant reason to esteem *sovereign grace, as a sovereign good*. For the constant representation of the sovereignty of God in the great concern of our salvation, which is set before us in the gospel, is not to make void, or ineffectual, the sinner's endeavors to work out his own salvation : but to point out a source of hope, help and relief to the guilty, under the most distressing and discouraging circumstances. I find no other representation of our dependence upon the sovereign pleasure of God, in the matter of our salvation, than there is in all other affairs of life. It is in God we live, move, and have our being. It is the blessing of God that maketh rich. We can till our land, and cast in the seed ; but it is the blessing of God that gives us the harvest. We can also attend on the means of grace ; but it is the blessing of God that gives them an effectual and saving influence on the heart : we are as dependent on divine sovereignty in the one case, as in the other : and there is the same necessity of attending upon, and improving the means of grace, to obtain our salvation ; as there is of improving the means of providence to obtain the good things of this life. The truth of these remarks I take to be evident from the comparisons of things temporal with things spiritual which so often occur in the scripture ; particularly in I. Corinth. iii. 6. " I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase." These words of the apostle must be allowed to be equally pertinent, and applicable both to the moral, and the natural world.

Dependence on the Creator is essential to, and inseparable from created nature. And the dependence of the sinner upon sovereign grace in the great con-

cern of salvation, is properly called *natural dependence*. Such therefore as will find fault with it, are in reality finding fault that they are made *creatures*, and not *Gods* : for it is the incommunicable prerogative of the God-head to be independent. Moral dependence is a temper of mind that corresponds with our natural dependence ; wherein the soul feels its own dependence on God, with approbation and complacency, with suitable exercises of heart toward him. This moral dependence, I have shown to be a very material property of that original conformity to God, in which that divine image wherein man was created, did consist. This dependence was blotted out of the heart by the apostacy : but it again takes place in the soul, in its restoration to the divine image. This doctrine of the gospel therefore which teacheth the necessary dependence of the sinner upon the sovereign grace of God, for needed divine influences, is wisely suited, and naturally tends to produce in us a feeling sense of our natural dependence ; and in that way, to work in our hearts that temper of moral dependence which is such a material part of the divine image. But all such representations of things as tend to prejudice the mind against, and to take off the attention from this dependence upon free and sovereign grace, do, so far as their influence prevails, oppose the reconciliation of the heart to God, and the recovery of the soul to the divine image. The satisfaction with which a believing soul, in the lively exercises of faith, feels its natural dependence, and exercises moral dependence, upon God, clearly shows that those gloomy and desponding apprehensions that arise in the sinner respecting his dependence on the Creator, arise not from any just ground of objection that he can have of it, but are wholly owing to his unacquaintedness with God's character, and the want of a right temper of mind towards him. Upon the whole then when we consider the unsearchable riches of divine grace towards the sinful children of men, in providing such a glorious Savior, in setting up his church in the

world, giving to it such a complete revelation which is able to make us wise to salvation, instituting such spiritual and heavenly exercises of religious worship, promising his divine assistance and the influences of his Holy Spirit with his church, and institutions, to render them effectual for the salvation of his people ; and that by these things, Christ as a mighty and all sufficient Mediator of the new covenant, is carrying on a treaty of peace and reconciliation with God among the sinful children of men ; I say, when we consider these blessings, we see abundant reason to bless God for the unsearchable riches of his grace ; in setting before us such a fair and glorious prospect of obtaining eternal life ; and notwithstanding the impotence of our fallen state, must acknowledge, that if we come short of it the fault will be wholly our own.

God manifestly dealt very graciously with Adam in making the first covenant with him ; and he thereby had a much fairer prospect of life than he would have had if he had stood under the law of his creation. And if the state and circumstances of our present probation under the glorious Mediator of the new covenant be but fairly viewed ; it will appear that our prospect of obtaining salvation ; provided we would labor for that meat which will endure unto everlasting life, with equal diligence as we do for that which perisheth ; is little or nothing short of that prospect which was set before Adam of obtaining his immortality, notwithstanding all the impotence of our fallen state. In Adam's case under the first covenant, any rational mind would have judged, antecedent to his fall that the prospect of his standing, compared to his falling, was perhaps, ten thousand to one ; yet we see he fell. So when we consider the rich provision divine grace has made for the recovery and salvation of sinners, we should judge concerning all such as live under gospel light, and enjoy gospel privileges, that the prospect of their obtaining salvation stands unspeakably greater than

of their coming short of it; were it not for what we daily see among mankind, of their sloth, carelessness, carnality, and voluntary yielding themselves up to the government of their own lusts; in opposition to the dictates of reason, the remonstrances of conscience and the plain and frequent warnings of God's word and providence. "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

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