

LETTER,

WHEREIN

The Scriptural *Grounds* and *Warrants* for the *Reformation of Churches* by Way of *Covenant*, are succinctly considered and cleared.

In Opposition to some, who, of late, have too boldly (and yet without Censure) vented their *heterodox Notions* against our solemn and sacred *National Covenants*.

By a Webwisher to a Covenanted Reformation.

2 Chron. 15. 12----15. *And they entred into a Covenant to seek the Lord God of their Fathers, with all their Heart, and with all their Soul: ---And all Judah rejoiced at the Oath:---*

Gal. 3. 15. --- *Tho' it were but a Man's Covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no Man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.*

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LETTER,

Wherein the Scriptural Grounds and Warrants for the Reformation of Churches, by Way of *Covenant*, are succinctly considered and cleared.

S I R,

April 27. 1727.

I Send you my Thoughts about the Scripture-warrants for Nations entring into *Covenants*, particularly, for supporting the Reformation of the Church of *Scotland*, as it was carried on *Covenant*-ways, and by *League and Covenant* with *England* and *Ireland*. I do indeed, to my Grief, understand that our worthy Ancestors are found Fault with on that Head, by Persons of sundry Denominations, and at this Time, by some, of whom better Things might have been expected. Therefore, I send you this, in Defence of our solemn and sacred *Covenants*, particularly, the Form thereof: Taking it for granted, that the Matter of them is lawful and expedient; as has been sufficiently proven, by many learned and worthy Authors. What I here pretend unto, is to broach that great and important Purpose, upon Grounds that bear Weight with me: And my Bringing it once upon the Field, may engage others better qualified to treat the Controversy from the Bottom.

It

It is at this Time debated, whether the Church of *Scotland*, and afterward these of *England* and *Ireland* in Conjunction with them did right, and are to be approved in the solemn Practice of entering into *Covenant* with the Lord, towards the advancing of the Reformation, in Opposition to the Enemies thereof. For Answer to this, 1^{mo}, I would offer some little Abstract of these *Covenants*, as to the Matter of them. 2^{do}, It will be fit to enquire into the Grounds and Warrants for national and solemn Covenanting. 3^{tio}, To examine whether the Obligation by these *Covenants* extend to Posterity, and so remaineth binding upon us. 4^{to}, To consider the Requisites for entring aright into *Covenant*. And 5^{to}, The hainous Sinfulness of *Covenant-breaking* may be searched into. And,

First: There is in our *Covenants*, a Confession of our Faith, in Opposition unto the *Papacy*, and other Errors and Heresies: As this Church was gradually reformed from them; whereof we have the Series in the Preface to our National *Covenant*, shewing, that our Reformation from *Popery* was set on a *Covenant-footing*, and carried proportionally forward, as Light grew. (2.) A solemn Renunciation of all these, as of *Popery*, so also of *Prelacy*, and its Appurtenances, being a considerable Part of *Antichristianism*; with a professed Endeavour, thro' Grace, to root out *Error, Schism, Heresy, Superstition, Prophaness, and whatsoever is contrary to sound Doctrine and the Power of Godliness*. (3.) To lay out our selves for the Preservation of that Pitch of Reformation, to which the Church of *Scotland* had been happily raised; and to labour for bringing the Churches of *England* and *Ireland*, to a blessed Uniformity with them in *Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government*, according to the Word of God, and the Examples of the best reformed Churches. (4.) Herein, to hold Hand to one another; and against Enemies thereunto, under whatsoever Disguise. (5.) To bear faithful and true Allegiance to the King's Majesty, in the Defence and Maintenance of Religion, and of the Subjects Liberties; as also to preserve the Freedom of the Nation, and the Privileges

of Parliaments. (6.) To maintain and defend this Church in all her Rights and Privileges, against all who shall encroach upon, or undermine the same, under what Pretext soever. (7.) To be earnest in the Cause, in Opposition to that *detestable Indifferency and Neutrality*, which we therein solemnly abjure. As may be seen at large in the *Covenants*, with the *solemn Acknowledgment of Sins, and Engagement to Duties*, contained therein: Whence it is plain, all true *Presbyterians* will cheerfully own, that the Matter of the *Covenants* is just and good. The

Second Head is, To enquire into the Grounds and Warrants for National and Solemn *Covenanting*. I shall, 1st, Set down what's on either Hand yielded, by these who are sincerely of our Communion, as *Presbyterians*; And then, bring the Matter in Dispute to a narrower Point.

1. It is granted, That there is a previous Divine Obligation to all the forementioned Duties, lying upon us, according to our several Stations; were it not so, no Oath could bind us to them. An Oath cannot be a Bond of Iniquity in any Case, and particularly, cannot bind to any Thing not founded upon the Lord's Word, in his Worship, Service, and the Administration of the Ordinances of his Kingdom, *Isa. 29. 13. Col. 2. 22, 23. Mat. 15. 9.*

2^d. I take it for granted, that our Church, and these of *England* and *Ireland* in Conjunction with us, having such a fair Occasion and patent Door opened to them by a Chain of remarkable Providences, did well in professing their Adherence to the Measure of Reformation attained, and joining Issue for carrying it further; and that the Interruption thereof was a very sad Dispensation.

3. That we ought to pray, that the Lord, of his free Mercy through Christ, would open a Door for the Retrieval of that blessed Work, according to what was professed, begun and carried on a good Length in these blessed Days, with great Solemnity, under a plentiful Effusion of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit of God.

The

The *Question* then devolves precisely into these *two Points*, 1st, *Whether it was just and right to interpose a solemn Oath in the Case?* 2dly, *If this Oath oblige Posterity?* As to the

First, We hold the Affirmative : And for Proof, I reason from *Deut.* 26. 17, 18. wherein we read concerning the Lord's avouching *Israel* to be his People, & their avouching him to be their God ; whereof, I take our Covenants to be a clear and sweet Exemplification. The Lord condescended to avouch the Churches of *Britain* and *Ireland*, as aforesaid, to be his People, in Ways most notable and alluring, by raising a reforming Work, to a lovely Pitch amongst them, under a great and plentiful Effusion of the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit, and a large Ingathering of many to *Shiloh* ; and they avouched him to be their God, swearing through his Grace, and in his Strength, to carry on the Work, according to his Word, and the Examples of the best reformed Churches. If it be excepted, that the *Avouching* in the fore-mentioned Passage was peculiar to the Old Testament Dispensation. I answer, There is no Colour of Reason in this Exception ; For, none will presume to say, that the Lord's avouching or owning a People to be his People, was restricted to the Old Testament Dispensation ; and, a People's avouching him to be their God, is so manifestly required thereby, as the Counter-part, that it were choking even to Reason, and yet much more to Religion, to call in question the Morality of the Duty, being just the solemn Acknowledgment of a Deity, by owning his Truths and Ordinances, as in his Sight. The Relation of Churches to their Lord and Head, implies *Covenanting* in the very Nature of the Thing ; and what is done implicitly by all true Churches, was done more explicitly, and with greater Solemnity, by the Churches of *Scotland*, *England* and *Ireland*, in the Covenant. Do not all true Churches, in some Form or other, bind themselves to the Truths, Worship, and Way of God, and so covenant with him materially?

Second, We have divers Instances of solemn and National Oaths upon Record in the Word. It were too long

and laborious a Task to review each of them. I choose rather to set them down in Bulk, and offer some Remarks about them in general, *Neb.* 9. 38. and 10. 29. *Deut.* 29. 1, 2. — 12, 13, 14, 15. 2 *Chron.* 15. 12, 13, 14, 15. and 29. 10. and 34. 31, 32. Each of these and much more all of them, and the like, evince the Position I am now instructing. And with Relation to them, I offer the following Remarks; (1) Howsoever the Ceremonial Law was included, as some Part of the Matter sworn unto in these Old Testament *Covenants*, binding *Israel* to the Worship then instituted, suitably unto the State of the Church before the Messiah his Coming in the Flesh; yet the Scope, Ground and Nature of the Obligation, being *Moral*, cannot be restricted to that Dispensation. We are in all Ages bound to instituted Worship, and to a keeping the Ordinances of Christ pure and entire; and in our *Covenants*, by which a solemn Oath is interposed, the Obligation is the more strongly fixed. (2.) In these forementioned Oaths and *Covenants*, the chief Matter, Occasion and Calls were *Moral*, as will appear at first Glance; Namely, That in pressing Straits, upon imminent Dangers, in Returnings to the Lord after great and long continued Defections to Idolatry, and other gross Immoralities, they obliged themselves by solemn Vows and *Covenants* to serve the Lord, and to set in Order, what had been out of Course in his Ordinances. Sure none can reasonably say, That the *Moral* (as indeed the whole of the Old Testament *Covenants* were *Moral*) was peculiar to the Old Testament; and Swearing, being in its Nature a moral Duty, can make no Alteration in the Case, as shall afterwards be shewed more particularly. (3.) For 'tis clear, that the *Covenant* in the Days of King *Asa*, as to its Matter, was *Moral*, viz. *To seek the Lord God of their Fathers, with all their Heart, and with all their Soul.* This, none will confine to the Old Testament; and it was also enforced by the penal Sanction of Death, in Case of Defection into the former Idolatries. Hence, I humbly think, our worthy Reformers ought not to be rashly blamed, whose Sentiment was, That the chief Promoters of Popish Idolatry deser-

ved Death ; as is also contained in the Penal Statutes against *Poper*y, enacted by *Parliament*. But, I enter not into any Disquisition about that Matter, as not belonging to my present Design. (4.) And with Relation to the *Covenant*, entred into by King *Hezekiab* and the People, it was also clearly Moral; and the Words are pointed to that Effect; *It is in mine Heart* (said he) *to make a Covenant with the Lord God of Israel; that his fierce Wrath may turn away from us.* It cannot be said with any Shadow of Ground, That this was peculiar to the Old Testament; For, here there was nothing of a *Ceremonial* or *Judicial* Nature peculiar to the *Jews*. And I think it remarkable, that the Record concerning a Turning away of the Lord's Wrath, was in the like Circumstances effectually verified amongst us, only of free Mercy through Christ, in regard our Rising and prospering in all valuable Regards, held Pace with our *Covenants*; and Faithfulness to the Lord, thro' his Grace, in the Observance of them. As also, we fell and were laid still lower and lower by our Breaches of them: From which (as it was said of old concerning the Iniquity of *Baal-peor*) *we are not purged to this Day.* All this I might instruct by Facts, but that it would be too long. And, (5.) Touching the *Covenant* in King *Joash* his Days, &c. We have therein a divine and excellent Pattern of the Allegiance which Kings and People owe to the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; and also of the Allegiance due from Subjects to their *Sovereigns* amongst Men. The Words, *2 Kings* 11. 17. are very express, *Jehoadab made a Covenant between the Lord, and the King, and the People, that they should be the Lord's People, betwen the King also and the People:* Hereof I take our *Covenants* to have been a clear and pleasant Exemplification.

2d, I reason from Vows, which are undoubtedly of a Moral Nature, and owned to be such, in our Standards. See *Larger Catechism*, Exposition of the Second *Commandment*. No Doubt, concerning the Moral here, can be moved about a Person's Vowing, providing these Vows be otherwise right in Matter and Manner. *Jacob's Vow* is

is sweet and plain to this Purpose, as may be seen *Gen.* 28. 20, 21, 22. and diverse other Passages may be compared, as *Psal.* 76. 11. and 132. 2. *Eccl.* 5. 4. *Jona* 1. 16. and 2. 9. *Mal.* 1. 14. As to a Community, in Case any Exception be moved on that Head, I think it plain that a rightly constituted Church is, in the very Nature of the Thing, a confederated Body devoted to the Lord, and engaged to one another explicitly or implicitly; which with great Solemnity was done by Oath in these Lands, and may be justly reckoned their Glory: Besides the sealing Ordinances carry Solemn Engagements to be the Lord's; The strictest Ties and most solemn Vows are entred into by Communities, in the Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

3d, Swearing (duly regulated) is a special Part of Moral Worship, and so cannot be confined to the Old Testament Dispensation; we find it also connected with Duties uncontrovertibly Moral. *Deut.* 6. 13. *Thou shalt fear the Lord, and cleave to him; And N. B. swear by his Name.* It is also of a Weight so very great; that the whole of religious Worship is comprised under it. Moreoyer, (which is peculiarly to be observed) We have prophetical Accounts concerning *Swearing* in the Old Testament, which plainly relate to the State of Churches under the New: The following Texts of Scripture, which are manifestly Moral in their Nature, and also prophetical, concerning what should come to pass in the New Testament Church: Such as, *Isa.* 19. 18. and 45. 23. and 44. 5. which may be viewed: I need not transcribe them.

4th, It is to be considered, that the Ordinances of Christ, the Doctrine, Worship and Church-Government taught in the Lord's Word, are a Trust committed to the Church, and to Persons of all Ranks therein, according to their several Stations and Capacities. The Words in our *Catechisms* are clear, In the second Commandment, it is required of All, That *We keep pure and intire such religious Worship and Ordinances as the Lord hath appointed in his Word*: None call in question the Rights of Superiors, to require, in Things of Weight, the Oaths of

of these whom they intrust, That they shall be faithful to that Trust. This is founded on Reason, and usual in most Nations: And, with Respect to our *Covenants*, what are they? but only an Oath interposed, for binding us the more strongly and effectually to be faithful unto that great Trust we have from the Lord.

Against all this, it is excepted, That *publick national and solemn Swearing was peculiar to the Old Testament Dispensation, and suiteth not the State of the Churches under the New, &c.* To which, I answer, *1mo*, That, the Warrants, as foresaid, which are propheticall of what shall be done under the New Testament, take off the Strength of this Objection. *2do*, As was before observed, the very Nature of a well-constituted Church, implieth an Engagement to be faithful to the great Trust of instituted Ordinances and Worship, both to the Lord, and to one another for mutual Assistance: And our *Covenants* imply no more than the Solemnity of an Oath in the Case. *3tio*, Considering the circumstanced Case in these Lands; the divine Call unto the moral Duty of Swearing, was very clear, in regard our Reformation, begun by a very few, was carried on in the Midst of many powerful Enemies, who, by all possible Means, fought to crush it, both in the Bud, and in all the Parts of its Advance; which rendered Oaths and mutual Bonds most necessary for keeping that blessed Company faithful to God, and to one another; while their Enemies laid out themselves, by all possible Arts, Threats, Terrors and Allurements, to divide and break them: It ever, in any Matter of Moment, an Oath was necessary, it was most needful in these difficult and dangerous Junctures. *4to*, I sincerely think, That the Verification or Accomplishment of the propheticall Scriptures in the Old Testament, which have their Aspect upon the New, is plainly exprest, *2 Cor. viii. 5.* where we are taught, That they who were received into Church-society, *gave themselves to the Lord, and unto the Overseers of the Churches by the Will of God.* I confess, that an Oath is not here mentioned in exprest Terms, yet it is contained materially: And this having been the instituted Order observed in the *Apostolical Churches*

Churches, and so binding upon us, containeth in Substance, what is pleaded in Behalf of our *Covenants*, which import the Nations their devoting themselves unto the Lord, submitting to his Ordinances, and engaging themselves to be faithful to that Trust. If, notwithstanding we be still urged to adduce Precedents under the New Testament; I only add, That if this Argument prove any Thing, it proveth too much, and therefore can instruct nothing: It may be alledged (which the *Anabaptists* do) That we have no direct Example of Infants baptized under the New Testament, nor of lawful Wars, nor of Christians their being invested with the Office of *Magistracy*. But there is no Ground for concluding the Unlawfulness of these Things on that Account: For, the New Testament supposes and confirms what is taught in the Old. We have sufficient Grounds for them in the Word; and whether under the Old or New Testament, it is one upon the Matter, the Church in Essentials being the same, and the Old Testament is our Rule as well as the New. I go on to the

Third, viz. Whether or not our *Covenants* oblige Posterity? Here also, we hold the *Affirmative*. This I think may be soon and easily dispatched, 1st, We find many Instances under the Old Testament of Oaths expressly obliging the Posterity; and of awful Instances, instructing, That the Lord punished the Posterity for breaking these Oaths into which their Ancestors brought them: I shall mention, as before, some Scriptural Passages, from each whereof, this Truth may be evinced. See *Deut:* 29. from the 24, and onward, 1 *Kings* 9. 8, 9. 2 *Chron:* 7. 22. *Jer:* 22. 8. and in particular, 2 *Sam:* 21. 1, 2, 3. &c. where the Breach of an Oath (that seemed very exceptionable) made to the *Gibeonites*, was justly punished in the Remains of *Sau's* Family. Compare *Josh.* 9. throughout. In Sum, the Defections of the Old Testament Church (as of ours also) were reducible to the sad Head of Covenant-breaking, upon which the Prophets of the Lord, in their several Messages, did much insist: And many Acknowledgments of this Tenor we have scattered through the Word; as in *Psal.* 78. and

105. and 106. with diverse other Places not necessary to be mentioned. If in any Case, lawful Oaths do oblige Posterity, it must especially take Place, where God himself condescendeth to be the Party, upon the one Hand, (may it be exprest with due Reverence) and the Community hath the Honour to be the other. 2d, I argue from a Maxim generally acknowledged, That in the Matter of Oaths and Covenants, into which a Community enters, the Society is to be considered as a Person: And hence, so long as the Community stands; the respective Oaths (in Things just and lawful) continue to oblige: Were it not so, the Faith of such Contracts betwixt States and Kingdoms, as to Peace, War, Commerce, and whatsoever else may be the Matter of them, would be quite enervated; For the Persons themselves, who engage into the respective Oaths, may soon be carried off. It were a strange Position, and is, for what I know, condemned by all Nations, that a Society cannot be bound by any Oath longer than the Persons subsist, who first entred into it: What Confusions, this would bring in upon Kingdoms, States and Churches, is so manifest, that I need not deduce the Matter. 3d, I take the Ordinance of *Baptism* to bear so much, wherein, as I understand it, the Engagements of the Parents derive to the baptized Infant; not only from the Duties, themselves, being of a moral Nature, but also upon the Account of the Parent's Oath or solemn Engagement; and when the Children arrive at the Years of Discretion, it is the Duty of their Parents to acquaint them, That these Vows ly binding upon them, which the Parents undertook in their Stead, because of the Infant's Incapacity, while in an Infant-State. So, I think, is this Sacrament understood by the Reformed Churches. I proceed to the

Fourth, viz. To assign the Requisites of entring a-right into Vows and Covenants, which we have summ'd up, Jer. 4. 2. I refer to Commentators, for the Exposition of the Passage, and shall only touch the following Requisites and Cautions therein comprised: And I presume

sume, the impartial Consideration thereof, will be of Use for answering the strongest Objections.

1. Oaths especially religious Ones, must be taken with Understanding. The Matter, the Call thereunto, with whatsoever else pertaineth to them, must be understood: While Doubts remain, and the Mind is not disintangled from these Thickets, the Person cannot swear in Faith: *And, whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, Rom: 14. 23. *Eliezer*, Abraham's Servant, and the Spies sent to search the Land of *Canaan*, took not the required Oaths, until the material Questions they proposed about them were satisfyingly answered, *Gen: 24. 1, 2, 3, 4. Josh: 2.* from the 12. And I must say, considering the vast Pains our worthy *Progenitors* were at, for explaining every Point belonging unto the fore-mentioned Oaths, with the diligent Attention and weighty Concern which were upon the Spirits of People about them; as also, the clear Light, which did shine in these blessed Days, and the plentiful Effusion of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit of God; It is not to be thought, that so many rushed ignorantly, or without a due Concern upon them, as some do now uncharitably alledge: But, whatever be of that Matter, the Fault was upon the Part of the Ignorant, and impeacheth not Duty in the Case.

2d, Lawful Oaths, whether more private or solemn, must be gone into heartily, and willingly: The Matters which concern Religion, Heart and Sanctuary Reformation, may not be Fruits of Constraint. Moreover, to swear from the Influence of carnal and selfish Ends, mainly with a Design to advance some worldly Interests, is a Juggling with God and Man, in the most solemn Act of Worship. A dismal Instance hereof we have, *Jer. 42. 5, 6, 20.* Nevertheless, a Difference must be put betwixt these, who refuse to go in to religious Oaths from wicked Principles, being Enemies to the Advancement of Religion; and such as keep off and scruple, from Tenderness of Conscience, fearing to engage, until their Way be cleared; 'Tis no Part of a bad Character, to fear an Oath, *Ecc. 9. 2.* I had good and

and certain Accounts of Christian Forbearance, and Tenderness used in these Cases, with Relation to our *Covenants*, by some of the brightest Lights in these Times; But, whatever has been of that Matter, I undertake not the Defence of all the Managements: Sinful Men may not pretend to be unblemished in the best of Causes.

3d, It were a most unwarrantable Stretch, and a murdering Delusion, for one to conclude his gracious Estate, from his going into a religious Oath, for the carrying on of Reformation. Howsoever important the Duty be, when rightly qualified; yet 'tis somewhat else, and quite of another Nature, that constitutes a real Christian; as might be declared, were it needful. They may with great Alacrity, the one Day, cry, *Hosanna*, to the Son of *David*, who will be as Buly afterward in redoubling their Cries, *Crucify him, Crucify him*, Mat. 21. throughout, and 27. 22. *Psal.* 78. 34, 35, 36.

4th, It sufficeth not, to give just Access to sealing Ordinances, without any further Inquiry or Trial, that the Person hath taken a religious Oath as aforesaid, in regard he may be destitute of the necessary Qualities essential to a true Believer. I charitably presume, our worthy *Ancestors* were guided to due Caution herein.

5th, It carrieth no Prejudice to our *Covenants*, that therein we swear to maintain our Civil Liberties: The Church and Common-wealth are not thereby confounded by an unwarrantable Mixture; In regard such Liberties are also a Part of the Trust given to Communities; and a swearing Faithfulness thereunto, is justly esteemed a Part of Religion.

6th, The great Matter then and Hinge, upon which all turns, is, The Vowing and Swearing in Faith, not entertaining Prospects from or for Self, but having the Eye upon God in Christ only; as 'tis well express'd in the *Covenants* themselves; yet hereby the Duty is not Confined to Believers only. As to the

Fifth and Last, *viz.* To detect the hainous Sinfulness of dealing falsely in the great and weighty Matter of *Covenants*: I offer a few Remarks, without affecting any Method,

Method, (1.) As it was with the Lord's People of old, so it hath been and is with us, One main Spring of all our Defections is, our Trusting to an Arm of Flesh, *Jer. 17. 5, 6. Israel was full of Self-confidence; Often did they repeat their Promises to do all that the Lord required, Exod. 19. 8. and 24. 3. Deut. 5. 27. Josh. 24. 21.* But alas! there was not such a Heart in them: This, as to the Generality, was an empty Flourish; *Their Hearts were not right with him; and hence, they were not stedfast in his Covenant.* This was their Bane; and it is ours, *Psal. 78. 37.* (2.) The Hainousness of our Covenant-breaking will appear further from our Church-History. We went out from *Poperly*; and our Reformers undertook their great Atchievements, not by humane Politicks, but from a powerful and efficacious Work of Grace upon their Spirits, and the Hearts of many who joined them. The several Parts of that Reformation in *Doctrine, Worship and Government*, were again and again considered, having been often by Fasting and Prayer laid before the Lord for Light and Conduct: And specially our *Presbyterial* Government was brought under the Cognizance of several *General Assemblies*, and therein examined, to adjust it according to the Word; Time was given, during the Intervals, unto every One concerned, to consider and try each Part: They were also earnestly desired, and full Freedom was allowed unto them, to propose their Exceptions, or Objections, in open *Assembly* or otherwise: When, after these excellent and unexceptionable Methods, Persons of all Ranks bound themselves by Oath, in the Lord's Strength, to be faithful to so great a Trust, and helpful to one another therein; 'Tis strange the Practice should be quarrell'd. The Command is sweet and clear, *Rev. 3. 11. Hold fast that which thou hast, that no Man take thy Crown.* And the Exhortation, *2 John 8. Look to your selves, that we lose not these Things which we have wrought.* Compare *Rev. 2. 25.* In Trusts among Men, Oaths are found necessary; and shall they be exceptionable only in the Trust we have from the Lord? (3.) The happy State of Matters, as to the Concerns of
Christ's

Christ's Kingdom, in our Covenant Times, challengeth special Consideration in its own Place, and aggravateth our Breaches thereof. The Ordinances, both of Doctrine and Government, were then in their Prime; Open Wickedness was repressed, how soon it set up its Head; and Satan's Kingdom brought to a low Pass, thro' a plentiful Ingathering of the People to *Shiloh*; Many were converted, and others confirmed. A Dispensation of the Gospel was most engaging, as beautified with the Lustre, and sweetned by the Relish of Heaven; We were then *fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners*, Cant. 6. 4—10. Thus our gracious Lord condescended to append his Seal to his own Work, as of old his Glory filled the Tabernacle and Temple, when finished, according to the Pattern he had shewed, *Exod.* 40. from the 34. and *1 Kings* 8. 10, 11. and throughout. (4.) It ought to be pondered, That the Obligation of these *Covenants* was the Cause of Confession stated in this Church during a long Tract of cruel Persecution; many of the Lord's precious Servants and Saints were plundered, harrassed, and put to Death, upon the Account of owning and adhering to them, during that Time of suffering for the Covenants and Cause of God. As the Dispensing of Ordinances was most remarkably blessed, tho' under the Cross; so our Confessors and Martyrs were signally countenanced in their bearing Testimony thereunto, and owning the Obligation of our Covenants with their last Breath, and sealing the same with their Blood. It is dangerous Presumption for any to speak disrespectfully of them, or their dying Testimony, *Rom.* 10. 10. *Mat.* 10. 32. *Mark* 8. 38. *Psal.* 116: 15.

To conclude, I only add, That the Lord is righteous in whatsoever Strokes he hath inflicted or may further lay upon us, considering how deeply these Lands are involved into the dreadful complex Sin of Covenant-breaking: This would open a large Field, and lead into a sad History of the Defections of the Churches in these Lands, and of our Mocher-Church in particular; but I enter not upon that extensive and melancholly Subject.

See,

See, amongst other Passages, *Deut.* 29. from the 21. and onward, *Rom.* 1. 31.

If this little Essay be quarrelled, Whoever may contest what is therein advanced, let him keep close to the true State of the Controversy, and instruct, That the Ordinances of Christ's Doctrine, Worship, and Government, are neither a Trust committed to the Church, nor was it lawful for them to swear Faithfulness thereunto; which I am confident cannot be done: And otherwise I see no Cause to take Things extraneous under Consideration. Touching the Matter of these Covenants, *viz.* the Doctrine, Worship and Government, sworn unto in them; There are so many Volumes for Vindication thereof extant and unanswered, that I shall not, on this Occasion, meddle with Controversies on these HEADS.

F I N I S.

To fill up this Page, the Printer has insert the following

Advertisement.

IF due Encouragement be given, there is a Design to publish, by Subscription, *A Collection of very valuable Papers, consisting of Letters, Warnings, Declarations, and Exhortations, with respect to the Reformation of Religion, in Scotland, England and Ireland; and particularly from the Year 1618 to the Year 1660.* It is therefore expected and desired, that all such as have any Papers relating to that Period, would be pleased to communicate the same to the Undertakers, in order to their being gathered together, and preserved in Volumes, one or more, for a Testimony to the Covenanted Work of Reformation, that the same may not be lost, but transmitted to Posterity.

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