

**A DISCOURSE  
OF THE COVENANTS  
THAT GOD MADE WITH MEN  
BEFORE THE LAW**

**NEHEMIAH COXE**

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# A Discourse of the Covenants

That God made with men before the Law.

In which

The *Covenant of Circumcision* is more largely handled,  
and the Invalidity of the Plea for Paedobaptism  
taken from there, is revealed.

By

**NEHEMIAH COXE.**

*Search the Scriptures, Joh 5.39.*

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## The Preface to the Reader.

The usefulness of all divine truth revealed in the holy Scriptures, with the great importance of what particularly concerns those *federal transactions* <sup>1</sup> which are the subject of the ensuing *treatise*, will not leave me without an apology for an essay towards the discovery of the mind of God in them.

As for that part of the discourse which is most controversial, concerning the *Covenant of Circumcision*, I have been further engaged in it on the occasion of Mr. *Whiston's Treatises about Baptism* — especially his last, entitled *Infant Baptism plainly proved*.<sup>2</sup> For, observing that the main hinge of the controversy about the *right subjects of baptism* turns on *Genesis 17*, I concluded the only way to clear this great point, must be to make a diligent search for that account which the *Scripture* gives us of the *nature and ends* of the covenant recorded there. I have declined handling these things in a polemical way. And therefore I have not undertaken to return a particular answer to everything that has been asserted in opposition to my sentiments. I hope that the judicious Reader may observe such a regard to what has been urged against those principles which I proceed upon, that they will excuse me from the charge of *crudely re-asserting* those things that have already been answered or refuted. This is done without giving any *new enforcement* to them, or endeavoring to remove the ground and occasion of those mistakes which I suppose in others.

I refer myself to the holy Scriptures for the trial of what is written, and sincerely desire that nothing may pass for Truth, except upon their testimony. If I sometimes walk in an untrodden path, it is not from any affectation of novelty, but in pursuance of that light which they afford me. And possibly seeing that those things which at first may seem *new*, are for the most part deduced from a *plain record of matters of fact*, they may, on second thoughts, gain an assent to their truth sooner than opinions arising from more foolish speculation.

That notion (which is often supposed in this discourse) *that the Old Covenant and the New differ in substance, and not in the manner of their administration alone*, does indeed require a larger and more particular handling to free it from those prejudices and difficulties that have been cast upon it by many worthy persons, who are other-

mined. Accordingly, I designed to have given a further account of it in a discourse about the covenant made with *Israel* in the wilderness, and the state of the Church under the Law. But when I had finished this, and also provided some materials for what was to follow, I found my labor for clearing and asserting that point, happily prevented by the distribution of Dr. *Owen's* 3d Vol. *On the Hebrews*. There it is largely discoursed; and the objections that seem to lie against it, are fully answered (especially in the *Exposition of the 8th Chapter*). I now refer my Reader to that for satisfaction about it. There he will find it corresponds to what might be expected from so great and learned a person.

That the publication of this little tract has been so long delayed, was partly occasioned by those perplexities which the restless plots of the Papists, and their bold attempts to overwhelm us with the worst of miseries, have caused. I thought they would scarcely give leisure for the consideration of what might be offered in this kind. And it was partly delayed by my own aversion to anything that looks like promoting any controversy with those who love the Lord Jesus, and sincerely espouse the Protestant interest, though they differ from me in principle and practice in some controverted point. There is nothing that my soul more longs for on earth, than to see an entire and hearty *union* of all who fear God, and *hold the Head*, however differing in their sentiments about some things of *lesser moment*. And together with these things, a sense of insufficiency to perform my undertaking with that advantage to truth as is to be desired, had its share. However, after I weighed all circumstances, I am satisfied that no man is provoked by me, by any indecent reflections, nor is any occasion given to uncharitable and unchristian contention. With the hope that what is offered here may inform some, and give others occasion for more accurate thoughts in a further disquisition of the truths pointed at, these things prevailed with me at length to cast my mite into the Public Treasury.

I will add only this, that on the whole, my aim has been *to speak the truth in love*; and to take my notions from the Scriptures, not grafting any preconceived opinions of my own upon them. Where the evidence of truth appears, let it not be refused just because it is offered in a plain dress, and presented under the disadvantage of a rude and unpolished style. But rather, consider the *reason* of what is



said. And with the noble *Bereans*, search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so or not. And the Lord give you understanding in all things.

N. C.

## CHAP. 1. Covenant-Relation to God in General.

### §1. *A general introduction to the following discourse.*

The great interest of man's present peace, and eternal happiness, is most nearly concerned in religion. And all true religion, since the fall of man, must be taught by divine revelation, which God, <sup>3</sup> *by diverse parts, and in a diverse manner*, has given to his Church. He caused this light to gradually increase, until the whole mystery of His grace was perfectly revealed in and by Jesus Christ. In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>Col 2:3</sup> And that God to whom all his works were known from the beginning, has in all ages disposed and ordered the revelation of his Will to men. In this are His transactions with them, and all the works of his holy providence towards them, with a respect to the fulness of time, <sup>4</sup> and the gathering of all things to a Head in Christ Jesus. So that, in all our search after the mind of God in the holy Scriptures, we are to manage our inquiries *with a respect to Christ*. And therefore, the best interpreter of the Old Testament, is the holy Spirit speaking to us in the New, because *there* we have the clearest light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining on us, in the face of Jesus Christ — by unveiling those counsels of love and grace that were hidden from former ages and generations. Nevertheless, the greater light of the New Testament in no way abates the usefulness of the Old. Rather, it obliges us even more to a humble and diligent study of it. And that is (as on many other accounts, so this also) because the Mystery of the Gospel cannot be thoroughly apprehended by us, without some good understanding of the economy of the Law; and yes, also of the state of things *before the Law*. The mutual respect and dependence of the Old and New Testaments is such that neither can be understood apart from or without the other; nor can an entire system of truth, as it is in Jesus, be collected except from both.

It must therefore be acknowledged that it is of great use and concern to us, to be well-acquainted with those transactions of God with men, and his dispensations towards them, that are recorded in the sacred history of the first ages of the world, and the Church of God in it. And in this inquiry, I will at present engage myself only so far as those times reach, which preceded *Moses'* giving of the Law, and no further. And in the performance of this (to avoid tediousness in

repeating what has been handled at large, and fully cleared by others) I will for the most part confine myself to brief observations on the records of these things, as left to us in the holy Scriptures. And I will more largely insist only on such passages as I conceive not to have been so fully spoken to by others, or at least not handled in that method and order which seems to me most suited to the nature of the things treated, and so are most apt to convey a clear notion of them to our minds.

## **§2. God initiates a covenant with Men.**

And so far as those transactions of God with men, which we meet with in this inquiry, are of a *federal nature*, it is requisite in the first place, that something be said about *Covenant-Relation to God in general*.

The original words by which *a covenant* is signified — *making, striking, or entering into one* — have been fully explained by many,<sup>5</sup> with their various uses, and their application to particular cases and occasions. And therefore, bypassing that, it will be enough for our present purpose, to mind you of the following:

That a covenant is to be considered either simply *as proposed by God*, or else as Man enters into it by *restipulation*. For,

1. Whatever is transacted in a federal way between God and men, God has the first hand in it. In another case, Christ said to his disciples, that they had not chosen him, but he had chosen them. So we may say, Man has not at any time entered into covenant with God, but God has entered into covenant with Man — seeing that it only belongs to his sovereign majesty, and it is the fruit of his infinite goodness to propose it. In the same way, it is of his wisdom to choose and order the terms of a *Covenant-Relation* between Himself and his creatures. And therefore, the covenant that he has made with men, is frequently said in Scripture to be the *Lord's Covenant*, as in *Psa 25.14; Isa 56.4, 6*, and other places. However,
2. *Covenant-Relation to God*, and having an interest in Him, does not immediately result from the *proposal* of a covenant, and its *terms* of *Covenant-Relation to man*. But it is by *restipulation* that Man actually enters into covenant with God, and becomes an interested party in the covenant. It is mutual consent of the parties

in covenant, that states and completes a Covenant-Relation. This is called *proclaiming the Lord to be their God*, by consent to the terms of a covenant proposed to them, *Deu 26.16-18*; *subscribing with the hand to the Lord*, *Isa 44.5*; and *taking hold of his covenant*, *Isa 56.4, 6*. The formal notion of a *covenant entered into or made*, includes *mutual engagement*. Yet,

3. There can be no covenant of *mutual benefits* between God and men, as there may be between one man and another. For all Creatures necessarily depend on, and have both their being and well-being from the bounty of their Creator. There is nothing that they have not received from Him. And therefore the most perfect of them can render nothing to him, except what is due by the Law of their Creation. None can be profitable to God, though one who is righteous may be profitable both to himself and his neighbor.<sup>6</sup> And therefore, none can oblige God, or make him their debtor, unless He condescends to oblige himself by covenant or promise.

### ***§3. The general notion of a covenant as proposed by God.***

The general notion of any covenant of God with men, considered on the part of God, or as proposed by Him, may be conceived of thus:

That it is a declaration of His sovereign pleasure concerning the benefits that He will bestow on them, the communion they will have with Him, and the way and means by which this will be enjoyed by them.<sup>7</sup>

1. For a better understanding of what I intend by this *general description*, I will briefly propose some *particulars* that are either included in it, or are the immediate and necessary consequents of it. *Namely*, it implies a free and sovereign act of the Divine Will, exerted in condescending love and goodness. It is not from any necessity of nature that God enters into covenant with men, but of His own good pleasure. Such a privilege and nearness to God as is included in Covenant-Interest, cannot immediately result from the relation which they have to God as creatures — not even as *reasonable* creatures, though upright and in a perfect state. For the Lord does not owe to Man the good promised in any covenant that He makes with him, antecedently. But his first right in it, is freely given to him by the promise of the covenant.

2. The notion of a *covenant* adds *assurance* to that of a *promise*, because it implies *a special bond of favor and friendship* which belongs to federal-interest and relation. For a covenant is the foundation of a special relation between the parties that are concerned in it. The *kind* and benefit of this *relation* is determined by the covenant itself — its nature, promises, and ends.

3. The immediate and direct end of God's entering into covenant with Man at any time (so far as concerns Man himself) is therefore *the advancing and bettering of his state*. God never made a covenant with Man, in which his Goodness to him was not abundantly manifest. Indeed, such is His infinite bounty, that he has proposed no lower end to his Covenant-Transactions with men, than bringing them into a blessed state in the eternal fruition of Himself. And therefore, when one covenant (through the weakness of Man in his lapsed State) has been found weak and unprofitable as to this great end of a covenant — because it was insufficient to accomplish it — God finds fault, abolishes it, and introduces another. In that New Covenant, full provision is made for the perfect salvation of those who have an interest in it, *Heb 8.7-8*.

4. The kindness and condescending Love of God in entering into covenant with man, strengthens that bond of love and obedience to God, that he is under by the Law of his Creation, by adding a new obligation to it. And therefore, the sin of Man in breaking covenant with God rises higher, and is accompanied with greater aggravations than the bare transgression of a law, if no such Covenant-Relation had been added to it. And therefore,

5. The revelation of the counsel of God's Will in a covenant proposed to man, is so far from excluding a restipulation on his part, that it renders it a necessary duty upon him. It is not in this case as it is in federal transactions between equals, where one is at liberty to refuse the covenant offered by the other Party. But the sense of our infinite distance from God as creatures, and the dependence we necessarily have upon him, and the duty we owe to him by the unalterable Law of our Creation (as well as our own advantage and profit by it), obliges us with holy fear and thankfulness, to accept both the Benefits he offers to us, and the Terms on which they are offered in his covenant — and to diligently

perform what we are commanded and directed to by Him, for the ends proposed in it. But yet,

6. This restipulation (and consequently the *way* and *manner* of obtaining, and also the *right* in which we claim Covenant-Blessings) must of necessity *vary* according to the different nature and terms of those covenants that God at any time makes with men. If the covenant is *of Works*, Restipulation must be by *doing* the things required in it, even by fulfilling its condition in *perfect obedience to its law*. And suitable to that, the reward is *of debt* (do not understand it of debt absolutely, but of a *debt by compact*) according to the terms of such a covenant. But if it is a covenant of free and sovereign grace, then the restipulation required is a *humble receiving*, or *heartly believing* of those gratuitous promises on which the covenant is established. Accordingly, the *reward* or covenant blessing is immediately and eminently of *grace*.

7. Therefore *the Good* and *Glory* of any covenant that God makes with men, whether considered absolutely, or in comparison with another covenant, is chiefly to be measured by its promises and terms. If one covenant is established on *better promises* (*i.e.* either promising a more excellent good, or a more excellent way) than another, it is denominated from there. And for that reason, it is to be esteemed a *better covenant* than the other, *Heb 8.6*.

**§4. God has always dealt with men about their future state by way of covenant.**

And together with these things, it may not be untimely in this place, to further observe that the holy and wise God has always dealt with the children of men in *a way of covenant*. The display of infinite goodness has always accompanied the discovery of his infinite glory in his dealing with men. And therefore, he has not acted towards them to the utmost right of his sovereignty and dominion over them. Had he so done, there would never have been any *reward of future blessedness* assigned and made due to their obedience, as there has been by covenant. Nor would they have been brought into any nearer relation to God, than that which resulted from their Creation by him. But the great God has not so kept his distance from man, that he has not condescended to *come to terms* with him. And as He has required obedience in some things beyond the immediate dictates of the Law of Nature by *positive institutions*, so He has also been

pleased to oblige Himself beyond the debt of a Creator, by the promise of a bountiful reward. And from this it follows, that as all the Worship and Obedience that God has required of, and accepted from the Children of men, has been upon *Covenant-Terms*; so their ability, or moral capacity, of walking well-pleasing before him, has also been *given* to them, or *wrought* in them, pursuant to the ends of their Covenant-Relation. And therefore, there must be the inseparable adjunct not of the *bare proposal* of a covenant to them, but of that Covenant-Interest in which they have been stated. And the consequence of this is,

1. That once persons have fallen under the guilt of a *breach of covenant*, they are by their own default *utterly disabled* from yielding any acceptable obedience to God on the terms of that covenant which they have violated, and their interest in that Covenant-Relation is forfeited and lost by them. They remain under the penal sanction of the covenant, but are utterly despoiled of strength to answer<sup>8</sup> the ends of that covenant, and have wholly lost their right to its reward.
2. If they are *without strength* with respect to the condition and end of that covenant which they once had an interest in, and the *principles suited to it*, then they are *much more* so while they remain in their lapsed state with respect to the terms of *another covenant*, that is more excellent, mysterious, and wholly *supernatural* as to its doctrine and terms. And therefore,
3. Spiritual strength and ability to please God can in no way be restored to them, except by a *new Covenant-Interest*, and that *new creation* which is its adjunct.<sup>9</sup>

**§5. His covenant always transacted with some head or representative.**

This also is worthy to be noted by us,

That those covenants which God has made — in which either mankind in general, or some select number of men in particular have been concerned — it has pleased Him to first transact with some *public person, head, or representative* for all others who should be concerned in them. It was this way in the *Covenant of Creation* which God made with *Adam* in his upright state, and with all



mankind *in him*. And the same is to be observed in the *Noahic Covenant*; and also in the covenants made with *Abraham*, considered either as the father of believers, or of the *Israelite* nation. In the interest of a *spiritual relation* to Him, believers claim the blessings of the Covenant of Grace that was made with him. And in the interest of a *natural relation* to him, his offspring according to the flesh claimed the rights and privileges of that Covenant of Peculiarity <sup>10</sup> which was first made with him as the Head of that separate people. But more eminently, the Covenant of Grace is established in Christ as the Head of it. All its promises were first given to him, and in him they are all *Yes*, and *Amen*.<sup>11</sup> It is by union to Him that believers obtain a New Covenant interest; and from Him they derive *new life*, grace, and strength, to answer the ends of the New Covenant.

#### ***§6. Some directions to rightly understand Covenant-Transactions.***

Now, as it is evident from what has already been said, that all *federal transactions* of God with men flow only from his *good pleasure*, and the *counsel of his Will*; so upon that ground it is certainly to be concluded that our knowledge and understanding of them must wholly depend upon *divine revelation*. None can pretend acquaintance with the *secret of God*, except as He has pleased to *reveal* it in his Word. This light must guide all our inquiries after it; and our sentiments about things of this nature must be strictly governed *by this rule*, seeing that the nature of them is such that it transcends the common principles of reason or natural light. They owe their origin to the *free acts* of the Divine Will and wisdom, which are unaccountable till revealed by God himself. And therefore, it becomes us to captivate all our thoughts of them to the obedience of faith, knowing that *learning*, and *strength of parts* (though of excellent use in their place), if not guided by *Scripture-light* in these inquiries, can only form an *ingenious error*, and lose a man in the labyrinth of his own imagination and uncertain guesses. Seeing that the single advantage of those assistances (in this case trusted to, and stretched beyond their line) can reach no further than to enable him to err with reason, <sup>12</sup> and so to wander from truth in a path seemingly smoother, though no less dangerous than others light upon.

And therefore, in these things lies the spring of *most mistakes* and corruptions of doctrine and practice in matters of religion. Men easily find out and agree in the true dictates of the Law of Nature. But in things pertaining to the covenants of God, how various are their sentiments! Indeed, many great, learned, and *good men* have been divided in their judgments about some things of great importance to the faith and edification of the Church, though not absolutely necessary to *her being*. *Some one error* admitted about the nature of God's federal transactions with men, strangely perplexes the whole system or body of divinity, and entangles our interpretation of innumerable texts of Scripture. And by this means, jars and contentions have been perpetuated in the Church, to the great grief and hindrance of all, the offence of the weak, and the greater scandal of the blind world. And all this has been much occasioned through the lack of a due and humble attention to that revelation of truth which God has given us in the holy Scriptures, and endeavoring to collect the mind of God from there without *pre-judgment* (which is a greater occasion of these mistakes than men are generally aware of), and carefully avoiding the *undue mixture* or confusion of *natural* things, with those that are purely of a *federal* nature.

Because *the covenant* of God is His *secret*, and he alone can *make us know it* — and yet our Faith and Practice, Comfort and Holiness, are closely concerned in a good acquaintance with it — we need no other motive for a diligent and humble search of the Scriptures, than for the right informing of our judgment about it. Nor do we need any other caution not to attribute too much to our own wisdom or abilities, but to manage all our inquiries with *earnest prayer* to God for that Holy *Spirit of light and truth*, who alone can lead us into all this truth, and bring us to a clear acquaintance with the mind of God concerning it.

## CHAP. 2. God's Transactions with Adam.

### §1. *The importance of this inquiry.*

§1. In the former chapter, I briefly touched on some things of a more general nature. I thought it needful to premise with those, to handle those particulars which are to follow. And now my work is to consider the *first state of man*. An account of this is to be taken from the state of *Adam*, in whom the world of mankind was epitomized, and in God's transactions with him. We are all most closely concerned in the relation he had to God, with the *event* and *issue* of it. For the right understanding of these things is not only necessary for, but it lies in the very foundation of all *useful knowledge* of ourselves, and of the mind of God in all the revelations He has made in the following ages — revelations of His will and counsel to the children of men, either before or in the Law of *Moses*, or by the word of the Gospel. The ignorance of what was in them is apparently the reason for the blindness and miserable mistakes of the wisest heathen philosophers in a thousand other things of greatest importance. If a man misses the right account of this, then he is certainly bewildered in all later searches for that truth which it most concerns him to know. And therefore it behooves us to observe with all diligence, what the Holy Ghost has left on record for our instruction in this matter: The discourse of this may be referred to these three Heads.

1. The condition of *Adam* before he sinned.
2. His sin, and the immediate consequents of it. And,
3. How God dealt with him in his fallen state.

I will discourse only very briefly about each of these.

### §2. *The original state of man.*

FIRST, concerning the condition of Man before his Fall, we may observe these things:

1. That God made him a reasonable creature, and indued him with *original righteousness*, which was a perfection necessary to enable him to answer the end of his creation. And eminently in this respect, Adam is said to be created *in the image of God*, Gen 1.26-27. and *made upright*, Ecc 7.29. This *uprightness* or *rectitude of nature*

consisted in the perfect *harmony* of his Soul with that Law of God which he was made under and subjected to. This law was,

(1) An *eternal law*, and invariable rule of righteousness, by which those things that are agreeable to the holiness and rectitude of the divine nature were *required*; and whatever is contrary to it was *prohibited*. To *Adam*, this law was *internal* and *subjective* only, being communicated to him along with his reasonable Nature, <sup>13</sup> and written in his heart. So that, he needed no *external* revelation to perfect his knowledge of it. And therefore in the history of his creation, there is no other account given of it except what it is comprised in this (which you have repeated), that he was made *in the Image of God*. Or the Apostle teaches us that it consists in *Righteousness and true Holiness*, Eph 4.24. The sum of this law was afterwards given in ten commands on Mount *Sinai*; and yet more briefly by Christ, who reduces it to two great commands respecting our duty both to God, and to our Neighbor, *Mat* 22.37-40. And this, as a law and rule of righteousness, is in its own nature immutable and invariable, as is the nature and will of God himself, whose holiness is stamped on it, and represented by it.

(2) It pleased the [sovereign] majesty of heaven to *add* this *precept* into the eternal Law, in which it charged Man not to [eat] of the fruit of *one tree* in the midst of the Garden of *Eden*. This tree was called, *the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, Gen 2.16-17; 3.3. [Eating] this fruit was not an *evil* thing *in itself*, but it was *made evil* by divine prohibition. And therefore it was necessary that the Will of God concerning this, should be *expressly* signified and declared to man. For otherwise, by the Light of Nature he would not have been directed to [abstain] more from the fruit of this tree, than of any other tree in the Garden. Nor indeed would he have been under any bond of duty to it. But once the command was given, this positive law <sup>14</sup> had its foundations [firmly] laid in the Law of Nature, it being an invisible [attribute] of it.

It is a most righteous and reasonable thing that Man should obey God, and that the will of the *creature* should ever be subject to the will of the *Creator*.

And therefore, the heart of an upright man could not but naturally accept and submit to the will of God, by any means made known to

him. And there can be no transgression of a positive precept, without the *violation* of that eternal law that is written in his heart.

SECONDLY, This Law was guarded by a *sanction*, threatening death for transgressing it, *Gen* 2.17. This commination <sup>15</sup> is delivered in terms denoting the *utmost misery* that can befall a reasonable creature, and the *highest certainty* of its befalling him in case of his transgression. *In the day you eat of it* (says the Lord) *in dying you shall die*. And this sanction belonged not only to the positive precept to which it was expressly annexed, but also to the *Law of Nature*, the demerit of the transgression of this Law is known to Man by the same light as the Law itself is known to him. And this is made good by the experience of mankind, even in their fallen state, who not only find some remaining notions in themselves of the difference between good and evil, and some sense of their duty to embrace the one and eschew the other, but who also have *a conscience about the punishment* due to the transgression of these dictates of their reason. And these notions are inborn in them, and therefore to be observed as well by those who don't have the light of a *written law* to guide them, as those who do, *Rom* 1.32; 2.15.<sup>16</sup> And if it is this way with fallen man, then much more as the Law itself and also its sanction, was perfectly and distinctly known to *Adam* in his upright State. His conscience was pure, and his mind irradiated with a clear Light, as being perfectly free from those dark fumes of sensual lust with which the reason and judgment of his lapsed offspring are darkened and perverted.

THIRDLY, *Adam* was not only under a *curse of death* in case of disobedience, but he also had the promise of an *eternal reward* on condition of his perfect obedience to these laws. If he had fulfilled the condition, the reward would have been due him by virtue of this *compact* that it pleased God to condescend to for encouraging Man's obedience, and the manifestation of His own bounty and goodness.

### **§3. *Man had a promise of reward.***

Now, that such a *promise of reward* was given to *Adam*, and indeed implied in the *commination* of death in case of disobedience, may be concluded from the following.

1. From the *state and capacity* in which God set him, which was a *state of trial* in a way to eternal happiness, under a Law of Works

and an *exercise of obedience*. We cannot conceive of this, except as to some *reward* and *highest end* proposed to him, and in this way attainable by him.

2. From the natural [state] of men, which is to expect the reward of [eternal] *blessedness* for their obedience to the Law of God, and to stand before Him on [the ground] of a Covenant of Works. This must necessarily [establish a] relation to God in such a covenant at [first,] to which the promise of such a [blessedness] belonged. And the knowledge of these Covenant-Terms [was] communicated to him, together with the Law of his Creation.

3. From the *sacramental use* of that tree in the midst of the Garden of *Eden*, which was called *the Tree of Life*. This is because it was instituted by God for a sign and pledge of *that eternal Life* which *Adam* would have obtained by his own personal and perfect obedience to the Law of God, if he had continued in it. And that this Tree was appointed by God for such a use and end, is collected from the following:

(1) From the allusion that Christ makes to this in the New Testament, Rev 2.7. where he promises an *eternal reward* to whoever overcomes. In there [it says], *I will give him [to eat] of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God*: The reason for this is taken from God's appointment of this tree to be an assurance of [eternal] life to *Adam* on the terms and condition of a Covenant of Works. And the analogy of that reward which Christ gives to his faithful ones on the terms of another covenant, consists in the *general nature* of an *eternal reward* promised, even if there is not an *identity*, or perfect agreement in the *degree* or particular *kind of it*: I won't pretend to exactly determine the *mode* or degree of that blessedness which was set before *Adam* by the covenant made with him — whether it was a *confirmation* in his present state (which was very happy) or a *translation* to a better state when the course of his obedience in this one had run out. However, it seems reasonable to conclude that it was in some respects short of that glory we are called to by Jesus Christ. But they both agree in the notion of an *eternal*, and in its kind, perfect *happiness*. And therefore, the one is expressed by those terms that relate to a former assurance of the other.

(2) From the method of God's dealing with *Adam* in reference to this tree, after he had sinned against him. And the reason for it is assigned by God himself: *Lest he put out his hand, and also take of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever*. You may read an account of the whole in *Genesis*, from 3.22 to the end. We are not to suppose that *Adam* could indeed have obtained eternal life by eating of the fruit of that tree after he had sinned against God; rather, the whole scheme of that discourse is *ironical*. And as I take the foregoing words <sup>17</sup> *Behold the man has become like one of us*, to be a holy upbraiding of the folly of Man in aspiring to such a state by the breach of God's Law, and upon the credit of the Devil's suggestion. So I take these words to also intimate a *further delusion* that fallen Man was in danger of, by entertaining an opinion (that vain Man is ready to nourish in himself on any pretense) of his having a capacity to yet recover his forfeited happiness *this way*, or by any other *work of his own*. However, they teach us what was the *use* and *end* that this tree was at first designed for; and also that *Adam* was not ignorant of it. Though now he was to be taught the utter impossibility of obtaining life by a broken covenant, by guarding and prohibiting all access to that Tree, *by the cherubin's flaming sword that turned every way to keep the way to the Tree of Life*.

(3) This also must not be forgotten: that as *Moses's* Law in some way *included* the Covenant of Creation, and served as a *memorial* of it (on which account all mankind was concerned in its curse) it not only had the sanction of a *curse* awfully denounced against the disobedient, but also a promise of *the reward of life* to the obedient. Now, as the Law of *Moses* was the same as to the moral precept with the Law of Creation, so the reward in this respect proposed, was not a *new reward*, but the *same reward* that had been due to *Adam* by compact, in case of his perfect obedience.

#### ***§4. The sanction of the Law is most expressly mentioned by the curse.***

From what has been said (I conceive) it is manifest that *Adam* was *set in his way* but not actually brought *to his eternal rest*, in that state in which he was created. He was capable of, and made for, a greater degree of happiness than he immediately enjoyed. That was set before him as the reward for his obedience by that covenant in



which he was to walk with God. And of this *reward* thus set before him, these things are further to be observed:

1. That although the Law of his Creation was attended both with a promise of reward, and a threatening of punishment, yet the *reason for both* is not the *same, nor alike necessary*. For the Reward is of mere sovereign bounty and goodness, and therefore might have been either less or more, as it pleased God — or not proposed at all — and yet no injury done. But the punishment threatened is a *debt to Justice*; and it results immediately from the nature of sin with reference to God, and without the intervention of any compact. It is due to the transgression of a divine law as such, and therefore it is still due to every transgression of it, even by those who are already cut off from hope of reward by former breach of the covenant. And as it may not be more than the offence deserves without injury to man, so neither may it be *less*, without a diminution of the glory of Justice, by the strict rule by which it is always measured. Therefore, that death which was threatened in the curse is, in a strict and proper sense, the *wages of sin*, Rom 6.23.

2. In the history of this transaction, as left on record by the Holy Ghost for our instruction, we have a more particular and express mention made of the curse threatened, than of the reward promised. And so there is a more distinct notion of *that* conveyed to our minds than of *this* — although we have reason to think that both were known to *Adam* with equal clearness. And this may be, because it more concerns us to be thoroughly humbled under a sense of the present misery of mankind in their lapsed state, than to curiously inquire after the particular mode or degree of that blessedness which was once proposed, but can never be obtained by us, in the interest of that covenant which first gave Man a right to it.

### **§5. *The consequent of Adam being a public person.***

In this transaction of God with *Adam*, he is not to be considered in a private capacity, or as one concerned for himself alone; but God treated with him as the *common Root and Representative* of all mankind that were to spring from him according to the ordinary course of Nature. And we were then reckoned to be in him both as a natural, and *Federal Root*; and therefore all mankind stood in his standing, and they all sinned in his fall and fell in him. <sup>18</sup> For *by the*

*disobedience of one, many were made sinners*, Rom 5.19. And in this respect he is said to be the *type*, and Christ the [antitype], or Adam was *the figure of Him who was to come*. Because as Adam's sin is imputed to all who were in him, so judgment has come upon all unto condemnation, who were represented by him. So also the obedience of Christ is imputed to all who are in Him, and the free gift redounds on them unto justification of life, by virtue of their union to, and communion with him.

**§6. *The transaction with Adam was of a federal nature.***

From these things, it is evident that God dealt with *Adam* not only upon terms of a *law*, but in a way of *covenant*, and that this transaction with him was of a *federal nature*. And although it is not expressly called a *covenant* in Scripture, yet it has the express nature of a covenant. And there is no reason for [niceties] about terms, where the *thing itself* is sufficiently revealed to us. There is no express mention of a Covenant of Grace, before *Abraham's* time. And yet the thing is certain and clearly revealed in Scripture, that all who were saved before his time, were interested in such a covenant, and saved only by the grace of it.

The evidence of *Adam's* Covenant-Relation to God, may briefly be summed up this way:

1. It is probable, in that God set him, not only under the necessary Law of his Creation, but added to it a positive law which, in all his later dealings with men, we may observe to be an adjunct of a covenant transaction.
2. But then, it is certainly concluded from that promise of *reward*, and the assurance of it that was given to *Adam* — which he could never have obtained, except by God's condescending to deal with him on terms of a covenant.
3. It could only be on account of such a covenant, that his posterity should be as concerned as they were in his standing or falling. Let the first be denied, and the latter is altogether unaccountable. For if Adam alone had been under a law to God, his sin would have remained on himself, and could not have redounded on the whole world of mankind, as now it does by a just imputation, any more than the sin of any particular person can now be imputed to another

man who isn't actually guilty of it — at least, the sins of immediate parents cannot be imputed to their children.

And in this lies the *mystery* of the first transaction of God with man, and of his relation to God based upon it. This did not result immediately from the Law of his Creation, but from *the disposition of a covenant* according to the *free, sovereign, and wise counsel of God's Will*. And therefore, *the Law of Creation* is easily understood by men, and there is little controversy about it among those who are not degenerate from all principles of reason and humanity. Yet *the Covenant of Creation*, the interest of Adam's posterity in it with himself, and the guilt of original sin redounding upon them by it, is not owned by mankind generally, nor can it be understood except by the light of divine revelation, Nor is the heart of Man humbled to a due acknowledgment of it by a clear and deep conviction, except by a work of the Holy Ghost. And while men measure this counsel of God by their own narrow and dark reason, and refuse to submit their sentiments about it, to the revelation of his sovereign pleasure, his unaccountable will and Wisdom, they must necessarily fall into grievous mistakes, and fill the world with fruitless contentions through their *darkening of counsel, by words without knowledge*.<sup>19</sup>

#### ***§7. The general nature of this Covenant.***

This covenant that God made with *Adam*, and all mankind in him, as to its terms and conditions, (we see) was *a Covenant of Works*; with respect to immediate privilege and relation, it was *a Covenant of Friendship*; and with regard to the reward promised, it was a Covenant of *rich Bounty and Goodness*. But it did not include, nor intimate, the *least iota of pardoning mercy*. While its law was perfectly observed, it raised Man within a degree of the blessed angels. But the breach of that law inevitably brought him under that curse which sank him to the society of apostate devils, and left him under a misery like theirs.

2. Under this covenant, Man was left to the *freedom of his own will*. It was in his own power and choice either to obey and be eternally happy, or to sin and so expose himself to eternal misery. He was not so confirmed in grace, that he could not sin and die, but he was indued with that power and rectitude of nature, that he might *not* have sinned, nor ever died. Though he did not have an inability to

sin, and so an inability to die; yet he had an ability *not* to sin, and so an ability *not* to die. <sup>20</sup> He was a *perfect* though *mutable* creature, and had all possible advantage of *moral* influence <sup>21</sup> to make him constant in his obedience. He could not be without a clear conviction of the greatest obligation to it, both in point of duty, and also gratitude towards his Creator and Covenant-God. He had present happiness and future hope in the way of his duty; and fair warning of the misery that sin would bring upon him, in the denouncing <sup>22</sup> of that curse which was the *sanction* of the Law given to him. And yet, when the time of trial comes, all this does not prevail against the temptation; but his *mutability* becomes the *origin* of that *original sin* by which he, and in him the world of mankind, were ruined and made miserable.

### ***§8. The sin of our first parents.***

Therefore, the next thing to be inquired into is *the sin* of our first Parents, and upon that, their *state and condition*.

As to the first, their transgression was actually completed by the eating of the fruit of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, concerning which the Lord had commanded them that they should not eat, *Gen* 3.6. And with respect to this, let it be observed,

1. That it was by *the breach of a positive law* that mankind was lost: This was the door through which sin and all its consequent miseries invaded, and by their entrance ruined this lower world.
2. In that Man fell by the transgression of this positive precept, his *breach of covenant* with God was that much more conspicuous, because this precept didn't belong immediately and necessarily to the *Law of his Creation*, but was superadded to it as a special term and condition of his *Covenant-Relation*.
3. The breach of this positive law supposes and necessarily infers a violation of the eternal Law of his Creation. This transgression was a total apostasy from God, and all conceivable wickedness was included in it, even *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, 1Joh 2.16. Yes, all the villainies that to this day have been, or ever will be perpetrated in the world, are the genuine fruit of it. And upon a strict search, its aggravations will be found to be unaccountable.

### **§9. *The state and condition of fallen Man.***

The state and condition of fallen Man is [next] to be inquired into; and that was most miserable and dreadful. For having broken covenant with God in this manner, by a wicked and willful transgression of His holy Law,

1. He thereby utterly forfeited and lost all *Covenant-Interest in God*. He could no longer claim a right in, or hope for, that reward which was promised on condition of his perfect obedience to the law of that covenant which God had made with him. Rather, he immediately fell under guilt, being bound over to punishment by the sentence of his own conscience, under the just wrath of the Almighty. And therefore he dreaded nothing more than the approach of God to him, *Gen 3.8-10*.

2. By this sin, he not only forfeited his right and present relation to God, but moreover, he was thereby rendered *incapable* of true happiness. For he was now apostatized from a Covenant of Friendship, to a State of Enmity against God, and alienation from him — which is the necessary adjunct of wickedness. He fell under the *dominion* of sin; and that image of God in which he was created was, in a way, wholly defaced. He *sinned and fell short of the Glory of God*, *Rom 3.23*. And now, instead of that original righteousness with which he was beautified at first, there was nothing to be found in him but abominable filthiness, and horrid deformity. His mind was covered over, indeed possessed with hellish darkness. Hatred of God reigned in his heart. And his affections were no longer subject to right reason, but became vile, and rebellious. And in this state, it is evident that he must be utterly incapable of communion with God, and of the fruition <sup>23</sup> of Him in whom alone, the true happiness of a reasonable creature consists.

3. The Curse of the Law in its utmost rigor and primary intent, was *immediately* and *only* due to him; and no less than its utmost execution was to be expected by him every moment — and that was *death*, even the worst of deaths — *eternal death* — which is an *everlasting punishment of soul and body*, under the wrathful vengeance of a provoked Deity.

Now, that this was the primary intent of the threatening, might be evinced by many reasons, but at present I will content myself with

the mention of only two.

(1) This punishment will be inflicted on many of the ungodly posterity of *Adam* who have been guilty of no other transgression than that of the light and law of Nature. Such were those wicked heathens that *Paul* speaks of in *Rom* 1.20f., and 2.6-16. Though they never had the written Law, or knew of any repeated promulgation of it (and therefore we may conclude they were much more unlikely to be acquainted with the *New Covenant* and its terms), yet being a law unto themselves, they were liable to this punishment for the transgression of this Law. Now, this punishment must be the fruit of that curse which is the sanction of that Law which they were under, and which was transgressed by them. This was the Law of Creation, the very same Law that *Adam* was made under. And if the Law is the same, then the same penalty was incurred by the transgression of it. And if *they* are liable to eternal death for the transgression of this Law, there is no rational doubt that *Adam* was so liable.

(2) If the *just demerit and wages of sin* was contained in the threatening (as no doubt it was), it could be no less than *an eternal punishment* that was threatened. For if that is not the desert of *every* sin, then it cannot be due for *any* sin. For the Reason why the punishment of any sin is *eternal*, is that the penalty inflicted on the sinner may be *adequate* to the offence. The punishment has an *infinity* in its *eternity*, because the fault is *infinitely aggravated*; and that can only be in regard to its *object*. Nothing can be an infinite aggravation of sin, unless it is committed against a God of infinite greatness, glory, and goodness. And this aggravation attends *every* sin, as it is sin against God. And though other circumstances may increase the provocation, and so intend the degree of the sinner's pain, none but this can reach *infinity*: The punishment therefore due to *Adam* for sin against God, could be none other, and no less than eternal death, which is that intended in the sanction of the Law given to him.

4. The whole creation of this visible world became liable to destruction with fallen man, as an inheritance forfeited by his treason against the Supreme Majesty. By the sin of Man, the frame of earth and the heavens, made for his service and delight, was loosed; their foundations were so shaken, that it would have issued in utter



ruin, had not Christ interposed and *upheld its pillars*.<sup>24</sup> And if the curse had been immediately executed in its rigor, with these desolations following upon it, *there* would have been a *hell ready-prepared* for man. For suppose, I pray you, that all the lights of heaven were put out; that the whole order, symmetry, and beauty of the creation were destroyed, and all were reduced to a *chaos* of confusion and horrid darkness about man; and the burning wrath of God were kindled on him, now cast into the jaws of eternal despair, tormented by a worm that never dies. I say, *think of this*, and you will hardly be able to conceive of a state more dreadful and dismal than this one, that Man stood at the very brink of.

5. In this condition, Man was altogether *helpless and without strength*, being utterly disabled to stand before God upon terms of a Covenant of Works, and as incapable to bring himself upon other terms with God. For he was not able to move one step towards reconciliation with God, or ransoming himself out of these miseries: The door of repentance was not opened to him by the Covenant of Creation — or if it had been, there was now neither power nor will in him to enter in there. He was utterly disabled from obeying God acceptably upon *any* terms, until he was made a new creature. And therefore, it was not only impossible that *this now broken covenant*, should be renewed with him, or any of his posterity, for the same ends and in the same manner as it was at first made with upright man — but moreover, that *any covenant* should ever be *immediately stricken* with him or them, in which fallen Man might be the first and immediate covenanter with God for himself, as *Adam* was in his state of integrity.

### **§10. The mercy of God to fallen man.**

Thus miserable (even more than we have expressed, or *can* express) was the state of fallen man. Let us now see how the boundless mercy of God was revealed to him, when he was thus lost and miserably ruined by his own sin. And to better understand what is to follow, I will premise two things which are necessary to be kept in our eye.

1. The infinitely wise and gracious God, who from eternity foresaw the fall of man, also had from eternity a gracious purpose in Himself, according to the counsel of his own will, to redeem and save a remnant of lost mankind from their lapsed and fallen state; <sup>25</sup> and by



his all-powerful grace through the merits of Christ, to recover them from misery, to the inheritance of a kingdom and glory far greater than that set before *Adam* in his integrity. And these eternal counsels that were hidden with himself, were transacted by way of *covenant between the Father and the Son*, even a Covenant of Redemption now revealed in the Scriptures of truth. <sup>26</sup> And to this covenant belong all the promises of the Father to the Mediator, and the restipulatory engagements of the Redeemer, about the salvation of sinners, and the way and method of its accomplishment. With respect to these counsels, the Son of God is said to be the Father's delight, and also himself to have his delights in the habitable world, when the Head of the dust of it was formed, *Pro* 8.22-31. <sup>27</sup> In this context, the mutual acquiescence of both the Father and the Son in this admirable contrivance of infinite grace and wisdom, is not obscurely set forth.

2. In pursuance of this Covenant of Redemption, and the Suretyship of Christ taken in upon the fall of man, the government of the world was actually put into the hands of the Son of God — the designed Mediator, who interposed himself for the prevention of its present and utter ruin. And by him all future transactions were managed for the good of Man, and all revelations of grace and mercy were made to the children of men *in Him*, and *by Him*. And all things in heaven and earth were brought into an order, subservient to the ends of the *New Creation*, and the redemption of lost Man, to be accomplished in the fulness of time by the Son of God incarnate. Fallen Man could have no more to do with God, nor God with him in a way of kindness, except in a Mediator.

### ***§11. The Promise of Redemption by blood sacrifice.***

And it was from this design of love and mercy, that when the Lord God came to fallen Man in the Garden, in the cool of the day, and found him filled with horror and shame in the conscience of his own guilt, He did not execute the rigor of the law upon him. Rather, He held a treaty with him, which issued in a revelation of grace, by which a door of hope was opened to him, in laying a *new foundation* for his acceptance with God, and walking in a way well pleasing before Him.

1. For a sentence had been passed on the serpent, which principally concerned the *Devil*, whose instrument the serpent had been in tempting man, and who probably was made to abide in his possession of the serpent, till he had received this doom, *Gen* 3.5. There was couched in it a blessed promise of redemption and salvation to man, which was to be wrought by the Son of God, made of a woman, and so he would be *her Seed*. Man was to receive by faith this salvation thus promised, and to hope in it. For in this *implied promise* was laid the first foundation of the Church after the fall of man, which was to be raised up out of the ruins of the Devil's kingdom by the destruction of his work, by Jesus Christ, 1Joh 3.8.

2. In this commination of the serpent, there is not only implied a promise of raising up a Savior from the seed of the woman, and sending him into the World for breaking the serpent's head — that is, the perfect conquest of Satan, and the utter ruining of his Kingdom — but also of propagating and preserving a Church in the world, who would be heirs of that salvation. And they would maintain a spiritual war with Satan and his Kingdom, which on their part would end in perfect conquest and victory. The God of Peace would bruise Satan under their feet, while he is nibbling at their heel, and making them more than conquerors through Him who loved them. For the seed of the woman is to be understood collectively of Christ and his members, just as the seed of the serpent includes all wicked men — though it has a principal respect to Christ *personally*, who alone has obtained the victory over the infernal power, and destroyed the works of the Devil. But although this was done *by himself* alone, yet was it not *for himself* only, but for his Body, the Church, of which every true believer is a member, and will certainly obtain victory through faith in his name. And against this Church, the gates of hell can never prevail, but there will ever be a Church in the world, so long as the world continues. And there ever was a Church since the first promise, though maligned and persecuted by the Devil and wicked men, as it appears early in the instance of *Cain* and *Abel* (*Genesis* 4 Cf. 1Joh 3.12). And something of this nature is intimated in the name of *Seth*, and the reason given by *Eve* for imposing that name, *Gen* 4.25.

3. Upon this, there was an immediate *restraint and modification of the curse* in the sentence pronounced upon *Adam* and *Eve*, *Gen* 3.16-

19. Even so, they and their offspring were necessarily subjected to many evils and miseries while they lived, and dissolution by a temporal death at last. Yet they were not immediately laid under a sentence of *eternal death*, which was the punishment they had deserved. And concerning this sentence, we may further observe:

(1) That the promise of breaking the serpent's head, which was revealed to our first parents, did not give them deliverance from *all misery*, but only an exemption from *eternal death*. But notwithstanding this promise, and all that Christ has now done for the full accomplishment of it, it is the will of God that all men, believers as well as others, will be exercised with miseries in this world, and remain subject to temporal death, or dissolution of the body into dust.

(2) The *corruptibility* of man — all the miseries he is subject to while he lives, and temporal death at last — are the fruits of sin, and of the curse due to it, because they are natural evils, or punishments. Yet they are not the fruit or result of the *curse only*, nor the full wages of sin. As they are *evil*, they flow from the curse; but being *temporal only*, their evil is *limited*, and thus *modified* by mercy, or at least compassionate goodness. The imposition of temporal death indeed proves that sin is in the world. But this *limitation* of death also proves that mercy is reserved for some; and that those who do not obtain mercy must be brought to a later reckoning, because the fruit of their doings has not been fully repaid to them in this world.

(3) And thus, none of these evils are incapable of a change as to their penal nature, together with the change of that man's state upon whom they come. For though they fall like so many drops of wrath that bode a dreadful storm coming upon the wicked, <sup>28</sup> yet they are all sanctified to a believer, and turned into real blessings. The utmost execution of the curse is not capable of such a change; for eternal punishment can never be turned into a blessing upon anyone.

Supposing (as there is reason to do) that God not only promised a redeemer to Adam *before* He pronounced this sentence, but also gave Adam *faith* in that promise, the pronouncement came

immediately upon him as a *fatherly chastisement*, and not as a fruit of unpacified *anger*.

It is also true, on the other side, that the goodness and forbearance of God, through the wickedness of man, is turned into a *judgment* on the ungodly and impenitent, who abuse the Day of His Patience, to *treasuring up wrath against the Day of Wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, Rom 2.5. So that, both temporal mercies and temporal evils are wholly subservient to the design of God's glory, in the future and eternal state of man. And we may conclude there would have been no such thing as *temporal death*, if there had not been a *Day of Patience*.

4. It is more than probable that at the same time, or immediately after, God instituted those bloody sacrifices that were offered to Him from then on, and accepted by Him when offered in faith. This was for the further instruction of Man in the general notion of the way of his redemption by the Promised Seed, and for the help and confirmation of his faith in the promise. Yes, even the coats of skins which the Lord made, and with which he clothed *Adam* and *Eve*, then confounded with the shame of their own nakedness, seem to be designed by God not only for a natural, but also a *mystical use*. They were for their instruction concerning that imputed righteousness in which they must now stand before Him, and without which they could find no acceptance with Him. Especially if these coats were made of the skins of those beasts that *Adam* was then directed to offer in sacrifice to God (as some conjecture they were), we can hardly imagine less to be intended by it. For no doubt, with the institution of sacrifices, something of the *use and end of them* was revealed to *Adam*.

5. This also must be noted, that although the Covenant of Grace was thus far revealed to *Adam* as we have heard, yet we see in all this no formal and express Covenant-Transaction with him. Much less was the Covenant of Grace established with him as a *public person* or representative in any kind. But as he obtained an interest for himself alone, in the grace of God thus revealed, *by his own faith*, so must those of his posterity who are saved by it. Therefore, although the corruption of fallen *Adam*, and the guilt of his fall, are derived from him to all his offspring — because they were *in him* as a public person and federal root when he fell — yet they cannot derive from

him any interest in his *renewed* state, or in the grace or holiness of it. For with respect to that, God dealt with him only as a *private person*. And the good of the promise now given out, it was no more *entrusted* with him, than with his posterity, or any of them in particular.

**§12. *The state and condition of Adam's posterity after the fall.***

The state and condition that the world of *Adam's* posterity are now in, is as follows.

1. They are all born in original sin, in the image of the first *Adam* fallen, and so they are *under a broken covenant*, being by nature children of wrath, unholy, and without strength.
2. Yet are they necessarily under the obligation of a law to obey, worship, and serve their Creator, though they have no *Covenant-Interest* in Him. For it is impossible, and it implies a contradiction, that reasonable creatures should be brought forth into the world, and not be subject to the Law of their Creator, or that eternal death should not be due to their breach of that Law. The *Law* of Creation binds, when the *Covenant* of Creation is broken. Though the transgression of Man has forfeited his interest in the Covenant, yet it cannot dissolve the obligation of the Law.
3. Yet, the world is set under a *general reprieve*, and the full execution of the deserved curse is delayed until the day of Judgment; until which time the children of men are under a dispensation of goodness, and sparing mercy. And so they are in a remote capacity or possibility of obtaining salvation by Christ, where it pleases God to send the Gospel, the dispensation of which is made effectual for the salvation of *all the elect*, who are thereby gathered into the kingdom of Christ.
4. The Lord Christ has undertaken in the close of his Mediatorial Kingdom, when all his sheep are brought into his fold, and for whose sake alone the Day of his Patience is lengthened out to the world, to raise all mankind again in an incorruptible state, prepared for that eternal duration to which they were designed in their first creation. And then he will glorify all those with himself for whom he has satisfied the Justice of God, borne the curse of the Law, and worked out everlasting righteousness — those who have also been called by His grace to participate in these benefits through faith. Others he will

deliver up by a righteous sentence, to the full execution of that curse upon them in its utmost rigor, which was suspended till then, for the ends said before.

### CHAP. 3. God's Covenant with Noah.

#### **§1. *The Children of God are brought into a new relation.***

The first dawning of the blessed light of God's grace to poor sinners being broken up in that promise intimated in *Gen* 3.15, the redeemed of the Lord were from that time brought into a *New-Relation* to God in and by Christ, the promised Seed, through faith in him as revealed in that promise. And upon this, their obedience and religious service was stated and accepted by God, upon a *new foundation*, namely, that of pardoning mercy, and forgiveness through the Redeemer, *Psa* 130.4. Their obedience and service were no longer based upon terms of personal and perfect obedience, or the *doing of a law*; but upon terms of *faith*, or *believing a gratuitous promise*. This wholly changed the order of their acceptance with God. For by the Covenant of Creation, the *work of obedience* was to maintain the relation, and secure the acceptance of the *person* with God. But by the Covenant of Grace and Redemption, the *relation and previous acceptance of the person in Christ*, was the reason for the good acceptance of all their sincere, though imperfect *obedience*, which now sprang from faith. And hence it is said in *Heb* 11.4, *God had respect to Abel and his offering* — first to the *person*, and then to his *work*. And this order, and way of salvation, as to its general nature, ever was, and must be, the same and invariable in all ages, and under all different dispensations of God towards his Church.

#### **§2. *The Word of God is the Rule of Faith and Obedience.***

And as holy men then lived by faith, so consequently they had the object of faith with them, *namely, the revelation of God's counsel by his word*. Though the Word was not *written* till *Moses's* time, yet the Church was never without God's oracles. In those days, they were made known to it by those ways and means that the infinite wisdom, and goodness of God chose. This we have seen in the first promise, and in the institution of sacrifices, which could not have been offered in faith, as *Abel's* was, if God had not commanded and appointed them. Indeed, it also appears that God had given them some particular directions as to which beasts they might offer in sacrifice, and which not. For in *Noah's* time the distinction between *clean and unclean* beasts, is mentioned as a thing well known before. See *Gen* 7.2-3; 8.20. To this we may add that at least various names in *Seth's*



line were imposed by a spirit of prophecy; *Enoch* was a prophet; and *Noah* a preacher of righteousness. All of this infers a revelation of the mind of God and of His counsels, were then made to the Church, *distinct* from the *Light and Law of Nature*, and *transcending* all its dictates. Although it must be granted, this Light did not shine upon them with the same clearness as it did in later ages.

### **§3. *Enoch's Translation by faith.***

Moreover, we have the extraordinary dispensation of God's providence towards *Enoch, who by faith walked with God*, and then was *translated* to the heavenly inheritance without being made subject to the common lot of mankind in dissolution by temporal death. This was not only a singular favor to himself, but also an eminent revelation to the rest of the believers of that age, that the right of adoption, and the claim of *an inheritance in light* by faith, was restored to them in the promised Seed. Therefore it greatly tended to encourage their faith and hope in the expectation of a glorious state for soul and body, to be enjoyed in a blessed immortality and eternal life hereafter. They had an earnest of that in the immediate enjoyment of *one* member of that Body to which they were *all* united. Cf. *Gen* 5.24; *Heb* 11.5.<sup>29</sup>

And the very time in which this was done, casts some further light upon the mystical import of it. *Enoch* was the *seventh from Adam*; and this *septenary* number is famous in Scripture, for its mystical signification of that perfect rest or *Sabbatism* that Christ would bring his Church to. And therefore in *Matthew*, the genealogy of Christ is counted by *septenary generations*: Again, the translation of *Enoch* happened soon after the death of *Adam* (the first whose *natural death* is mentioned in Scripture). *Enoch* in the seventh generation was translated, so that he would not see death. As they had seen the fruit of the curse exemplified in *Adam's* death, so they saw *that* life which the promise gives, exemplified in *Enoch's* translation. Before he was translated, he *walked with God*, or as the Apostle gives it, *had this testimony, that he pleased God*. And indeed, the Hebrew phrase used *Gen* 5.22 not only signifies integrity and eminent holiness in a private capacity, but (as the learned *Ainsworth* notes on the place <sup>30</sup>) it is also often used for *a pleasing administration of office before God*, in which respect he was a special figure of Christ; and his

translation is a figure of Christ's entering into heaven, as a forerunner for us.

Three hundred years the Church had enjoyed his ministry; and seven Patriarchs were left alive as witnesses of his translation; so that the whole number of the sons of God had the benefit and comfort of instruction by it. He prophesied of the destruction of wicked men, and summed up his prophecy in the name he gave to his son *Methuselah*, which may be interpreted, *They die by a dart*; or *he dies, and then is the dart* (i.e., the dart of divine vengeance in punishing the ungodly), or *he dies and then it is sent*. This was almost 1000 years before the Flood, but it was exactly fulfilled in the issue. For *Methuselah* died but about one month before the Flood came. This prophecy is more fully set down by *Jude* 14-15 <sup>31</sup> (which may be taken as a divine paraphrase of this prophetic name; like *Daniel's* interpretation of the writing on the wall), and applied analogically to the sinners of his time. For this first judgment was a type of future judgments on wicked men, especially of the destruction of the Jewish state by the fire of God's wrath for their rejecting of Christ. And as each of these was a prelude of the *general judgment* of the world, so the threatening of this first Judgment to the ungodly then living, was a denouncing of judgment against all ungodly sinners in future times also.

#### ***§4. The ordinary propagation of the Church in those times.***

In these ages, the Church was generally propagated in that line through which the blood of *the promised Seed* ran. Yet we don't find any such partition-wall set up between one family and another. But any who would, might freely associate themselves and join with the true worshippers of God. <sup>32</sup> Indeed, it is possible that even some of the line and race of cursed *Cain* might do so; just as, on the other hand, it is more than probable that others of the children of *Adam*, besides *Cain*, revolted with him from all true religion and holiness, and joined issue in an open contempt of God, and rebellion against Him. However, the nature and necessity of the thing in itself — in reference to religious worship, and that obedience due to God in it — obliged his servants to keep themselves distinct and separate from the rest of the world. And while they did so, the general defection of mankind was prevented. But towards the end of the old world, all things declined, and grew worse and worse, *Gen* 6.5, 12, 13. The

violence and corruption of mankind abounded, and even the sons of God were taken with the bait of sensual delights. Those who had formerly kept a pure and distinct communion for the solemn worshipping of God by *calling upon his Name*, and therefore also had his Name *called upon them*, Gen 6.4, being denominated *the sons of God* — now lost the sense of religion, and broke the bounds of their just separation, and mingled themselves with *the daughters of men*, Gen 6.2, 4.

These were the women of *Cain's* offspring (or of confederacy with his seed), by whose beauty they were entangled while they regarded gratifying their lust, more than the true ends of marriage. And being thus entangled, they were also drawn into a partnership with them in their abominations. So much so, that when the time of the Flood came, the pure worship of God was maintained in the family of *Noah* alone, who *found grace in the sight of God*; Gen 6.1-11. And he was preserved in the Ark, so that by him and his sons, the desolate earth might be replenished with inhabitants again, after *the foundation of the wicked had been destroyed with a flood*, Job 22.16.

### **§5. *The nature of the Ark as a type.***

**Now**, in the dealings of God with *Noah* there are some things that call for our diligent attention. These carry on to a further degree of light, the revelation of grace and redemption by Christ, and so they further the establishment of the Church in its expectation.

*Noah*, being warned by God, built the *Ark* by His special direction, to save himself and his house, which were *eight Souls*, 1Pet 3.20. This not only afforded him and them a temporal deliverance from the deluge of waters, by which God in his wrath then swept away a disobedient world; but moreover, by its *typical respect*, it was useful for their further instruction about the redemption of Man from the floods of divine vengeance to be poured out hereafter, in eternal wrath upon the world of unbelievers. For the following is to be observed concerning the state of the Church before Christ came in the flesh. That as the Gospel was preached to them by types and dark shadows, so this kind of instruction was afforded them, not only by the *stated ordinances* of ceremonious worship, but also by many *extraordinary works of providence*. These were so ordered by divine wisdom, that they might bear a typical respect to, and be an apt

representation of, spiritual things. This may be observed in many instances in the history of *Abraham*, and of his offspring, the Children of *Israel*: On this account, the manna they ate in the wilderness is called *spiritual food*; the water which they drank from the rock, *spiritual drink*; and *the rock, Christ*, 1Cor 10.3-4. And yet we read of no special ordination, or appointment of these things for such an end, except what they had from *the order and voice* of Providence, together with the peculiar circumstances of the people concerned in them. And *Noah's Ark* comes under this consideration, which either was a type of Christ, (like the Ark in the Jewish sanctuary), or of the Church considered as guarded with his salvation, which in the end comes near to the same thing.

And this type is rendered livelier by the *form of structure* which God commanded; and also the unusual use of one term in the direction given for securing the preservation of those who were to enter into the Ark.

1. The *form* in which the Ark was built, in the proportion of its dimensions comes nearest to that of the body of a man; for it was 300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height. So that, in its figure, it was shaped like *a coffin*; and the resemblance of a burial in entering into it, and of a resurrection in coming out of it. In this respect, the Apostle *Peter* makes baptism out to be the antitype to the Ark, 1Eph 3.19-20. Thus the Ark was an *extraordinary sacrament*, or prefiguration of the Church's redemption and salvation, by the death and resurrection of Christ; and of her union and communion with Him who died and rose again, so as to enjoy all the benefits of His death and resurrection.

2. In the directions given for building the Ark, *Noah* is commanded to *cover it with pitch both within and without*, Gen 6.14. The words in the *Hebrew* are *caphartà baccophèr*: The first sense of the *verb* [בָּכַר] is *to cover*; and from there, by a metaphor, it signifies *to expiate*, or *make atonement* — because as covered things are hidden from sight, so expiated sin is blotted out, and is no more remembered against the sinner. And the noun “pitch,” namely *cophèr*, is never used in the same sense in all the Bible; for the *Hebrews* have other words that properly signify the kind of stuff now made use of (e.g., see *Exo* 2.3). But in the Law, it is often used for the *covering of*, or *propitiation for sin*: So that these terms seem to be

especially adapted by the holy Ghost, to the typical respect of the Ark, which was to prefigure the salvation of the Church through the expiation of Sin, and atonement made by the death of Christ. In the merit of his blood is her only defense against the swelling waters of divine wrath, and the curse of the Law, under which the whole world of unbelievers must inevitably perish.

Now, we have no reason to think that these things could then be apprehended so distinctly and clearly, as we now see them by the light of the New Testament. Yet have we good ground to believe that some *general knowledge* of them was conveyed to the minds of the faithful in the time of this *type*, and by *means of it*: This informs us how *Noah became an heir of the righteousness of faith* by building the Ark, and entering into it, *Heb 11.7*. For there was not only a proof of his obedience in this, by which the truth of his faith was manifested, but moreover, his faith reached, and in some degree apprehended, the mystical use of the *Ark* which he was building. And while his hands were busied in the external work of it, and his life secured by his abode in it, his faith was exercised about that spiritual and eternal salvation that was shadowed and typically represented by it.

### **§6. The Covenant of God with Noah.**

Upon the entrance of *Noah* into the Ark, and also at his coming out from there, we find mention made of God's *establishing His covenant with him* (see *Gen 6.18; 9.11*). This is the first place and occasion of the *explicit mention* of a *covenant* in the Scriptures; and therefore we are obliged to a more serious inquiry after the true nature and import of this covenant. We will collect some observations on it, according to how things are presented in the order of their narration by *Moses*. Only let this be premised:

That although God's establishing of a covenant with *Noah*, is mentioned at two distant times in the texts referred to before, yet they are not two different covenants that are mentioned, but in substance, they are one and the same covenant. Its benefits are first expressed more generally, and afterwards more particularly.

In *Gen 6. 18*. God thus speaks to *Noah*: *But with you will I establish my covenant, and you shall come into the Ark*, etc. God's making of a covenant, is the *establishment* of it, because his promise is a full

and sufficient assurance that He will perform to the end, whatever is engaged for in it: The benefit immediately promised is the preservation of *Noah*, and all who were with him in the Ark. And the restipulation required of him, was a believing resignation of himself to God, in an obedient use of those means of safety which He had ordained.

At first view, this seems to import no more than an outward and temporal favor. But if diligently looked into, we will discern a great deal more in it. For,

1. In this benefit of *Noah's* Covenant, there was not only a *temporal salvation* secured to him and his house, but moreover, his *eternal salvation*. Indeed, the salvation of the *whole Church* was included in it, and wholly depended on it, seeing that *the promised Seed* who would break the serpent's head was not yet *brought forth*. And therefore, if all mankind had *now* been destroyed, then that *first great promise* (which was a revelation of the sum of the Covenant of Redemption) would have failed. And so the whole covenant to which it belonged would have been *evacuated* and made of no effect. And with respect to this also, as well as the certainty of it in itself, the promise given here to *Noah* in a *federal* way, is aptly said to be *an establishing of God's covenant with Noah*. For this covenant was made with him *pursuant to* that gracious design of man's redemption revealed before. And as it was never suspended on the *worthiness* of Man, so God assures *Noah* by covenant, that its accomplishment would never be prevented by Man's *wickedness*.

2. Add to this, the typical respect of the *Ark*, and you will discern that under this covenant was implied and darkly shadowed, the covenant of eternal salvation by Christ — even as the promise of the heavenly inheritance to believers, was afterwards couched in the promise of *Canaan* to *Abraham* and his seed.

### ***§7. God's federal transaction with Noah.***

What passed after *Noah* had come out of the Ark, is recorded in *Genesis* 8 from v. 20 to the end of the chapter, and in chapter 9. In this history you may observe:

1. That before there was any further transaction of God with *Noah*, a *sacrifice* was offered to the Lord by him, in which the Lord *smelled a sweet savor*, or a *savor of rest*, Gen 8.21. This phrase, *smelling a*

*sweet Savor*, signifies the acceptance of his offering; and this *savor* arose from the typical respect of this offering to the sacrifice of Christ (*Cf. Eph 5.2*), and the faith of the one who sacrificed, which was directed through it, to the same object. And this is to inform us that all which follows was transacted in the interest of this sacrifice, <sup>33</sup> and it is in some way to be referred to the ends of it. From this passage you may look back to *Gen 5.29*, <sup>34</sup> and you will find the reason for *Lamech's* giving the name *Noah* to his son.

2. The blessings of *Noah's* Covenant are first conceived in a gracious purpose of God's heart, *And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse*, etc. And these blessings are afterwards put into the promises of the covenant in which God engages himself to bestow them; *Gen 9.8-9*, etc. And this is reckoned equivalent to an oath: *Isa 54.9, I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth*.

3. The particular benefits and blessings given to mankind by this covenant were, (1) fruitfulness for replenishing the earth; (2) dominion over the creatures, and the free use of them for food; (3) assurance that the judgment they had now escaped, would not be *repeated* — notwithstanding that later generations were likely to prove as wicked as those that had gone before them, for the same root and spring of corruption remained in them, *Gen 8.21*.<sup>35</sup> And the *rainbow* was appointed to be the *visible sign* and token of this covenant, *Gen 9.12-17*.

I will content myself to have thus briefly pointed at these things. We have to further note,

1. That the dispensation of goodness and forbearance which the world was set under by the *first promise*, was now ratified by a solemn *covenant*. In that covenant was also ensured the successive generation of mankind for the production of the promised Seed, *considered both personally and collectively*.<sup>36</sup> And this assurance raised the faith of the Church one degree higher than it had attained before.

2. This covenant also had its mystical use to the faithful, as shadowing the Covenant of Grace by Christ, and the ratification of this in the blood of His sacrifice. By this we are saved from the curse,



and restored to a sanctified right in creature-comforts, and the hope of eternal life. And the *sovereignty* of God's goodness, with the *absoluteness* of his promise in this covenant, are instanced as a singular encouragement to the faith of the Church in reference to the promise of that grace that reigns in the New Covenant, *Isa* 54.9. <sup>37</sup> And the token of this covenant is made the emblem of the steadfastness and eternal memorial of the other, *Rev* 4.3. <sup>38</sup> So that, in the typical respect of this covenant, the light of divine grace and mercy dawned upon the Church with some more clearness than formerly.

3. This covenant is said to be made with *Noah* and his sons, and *their seed after them*, and that is for *perpetual generations*. The terms are parallel with those we meet with in the 17th *chapter* in the covenant made with *Abraham* for *his seed in their generations*. And yet here, two things are evident:

(1) That remote generations to the end of the world, are as much concerned in this covenant as their immediate offspring with whom it was first made; and they have equal claim with them, to its blessings, without any consideration being had of their immediate parents. And

(2) That although the grace of the New Covenant was *mystically held forth* in this covenant with *Noah*, which was thus stricken with him for *all his posterity*, yet the grace and blessings of it were not by this means *entailed upon all mankind*.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, they all have an interest in that covenant which *signified*, and some ways *included* spiritual blessings. But those blessings do not pertain to *all* who have the *signs of them*. They remain the *peculiar right* of those who by faith receive them, *Who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*, *Joh* 1.13.

### **§8. Regard to the Messiah in Shem's Blessing.**

In the part following this history (*Gen* 9.25 forward), we may observe,

1. That the curse of *Ham* upon his son *Canaan*, prepared the way to the blessing of *Shem* in his posterity by *Abraham*. For by the execution of this curse the *Canaanites* were afterwards disinherited, and *Israel* was planted in their place. And in this prophetic curse on

*Canaan*, and the blessing on *Shem*, you may read what is later noted by *Moses*, in *Deu* 32.8. <sup>40</sup> It is also worthy of our notice, that *the Seal of Israel's* covenant, by virtue of which they inherited the land of *Canaan*, kept alive the *remembrance of Ham's wickedness*. <sup>41</sup> It was a perpetual *warning* to them, not to degenerate into his steps. He was condemned to servitude for *looking upon the nakedness of his father*; and they were *circumcised in the foreskin of their flesh*.

2. In the blessing of *Shem*, special regard is had to the *Messiah*, whose *bringing forth* into the world, was now *limited* to the line of *Shem*. And therefore, *in his blessing* is the spring of *Japhet's* blessing also. *Shem* is the first of whom it is expressly said that *the Lord was his God*. And by *the Lord God of Shem*, is intended Christ, *who is over all, God blessed forever* (Rom 9.5). His name is *celebrated* here by *Noah*, as the only hope and salvation of the Church.

3. The blessing of *Japhet* in the interest of *Shem's* blessing, not only signifies his *personal interest* in the *Messiah*, who was to come of *Shem*, but also the *calling of the Gentiles* of his posterity, to be joint heirs with the Jews in the blessings of the New Covenant. Indeed, his *dwelling in the tents of Shem*, intimates moreover the *succession* of the Gentile Church to the Church of the Jews, who were to be disinherited of all Covenant-Interest for their rejecting of the *Messiah*. In that passage, *God shall persuade Japhet*, there is an allusion to his name. <sup>42</sup> And the calling of the Gentile Church is prophesied in similar terms, *Hos* 2.14-15. <sup>43</sup>

### ***§9. Babel and the confusion of tongues.***

Some time after these things, *namely*, about the fourth generation, we find that according to the blessing of God upon *Noah* and his sons, *Gen* 9.1, there was a very great increase of men in the world. And as they increased, they evidently drew upon themselves the same charge that was laid upon the Old World — *namely*, that the *imagination of their heart was evil from their youth*. For in the days of *Peleg* <sup>44</sup> there was a very general conspiracy, and rebellion against God, managed by the children of men *at Babel*; in pursuance of which they began to build a tower there, *Gen* 11.1-9. And it is very probable that *Nimrod*, that mighty hunter, was one chief doer in the business. For *a defection from the true religion, and tyrannous*

*oppression, usually go had in hand.* But their rebellious enterprise was interrupted by the *confusion of languages* that God brought upon them. <sup>45</sup> And upon this, the Hebrew tongue which before was universal, remained in its purity only with the family of *Heber* (i.e., Eber, from whom it also had its particular denomination), and others of the Patriarchs and holy men then living, who had not joined themselves with these workers of iniquity in their cursed design. And on this occasion, *Heber* has a special honor put upon him, as you may conclude from *Gen 10.21*, where *Shem* in a specific manner, is said to be *the father of all the children of Heber*. And *Abraham* with his posterity, the heirs of *Shem's* blessing, are from him denominated *Hebrews*.

***§10. The evils in confusion of language removed by gift of tongues.***

Now, by this confusion of languages the children of men fell under a *greater evil* than we may possibly be aware of at first thought. For it not only frustrated their present design, and rendered the means of their civil converse difficult for the future, and made the attainment of all knowledge in natural things, full of labor and travel — but which is far more:

1. It was virtually a kind of *excommunication* from the Church then in being, for those with whom the *Hebrew* tongue remained. So that from this time, their tongue was unintelligible to most of the remaining world.
2. In the later dispensation of God towards the *Hebrews*, this diversity of their language from that of the rest of the world, was as the addition of a *natural fortification* to that *wall of separation*, by which the nations were excluded from the privileges of the Church, and left destitute of that blessing (which of all others was the greatest *Israel* had, *Rom 3.1-2.*) of the *oracles of God*, which were committed to them in the Hebrew Tongue. And therefore, for many ages they remained *strangers to the covenant of promise* (*Eph 2.12*), living in the darkest cloud of ignorance and idolatry. And so they were *without hope and without God in the world*. And this dismal effect of the present judgment, remained on them generally until the *times of restitution and refreshing*, even the *last days*. At that time, God would persuade *Japhet* and bring him into the tents of *Shem*. And

then a door was opened for the breaking forth of light to the Gentiles *by the gift of tongues at Jerusalem*. By this, the Apostles and Prophets of the New Testament were enabled to preach the Gospel to all nations in their own tongue. And thus the *salvation of God in Zion* became a *Light to the Gentiles*, whose darkness was originally brought upon them by the *confusion of tongues at Babel*.

3. Nor did the judgment of God upon this evil generation stop here. For their days were also *shortened*, and cut off in anger for their sin, and that was to *the half* of them. For you may observe in the genealogy in *Genesis 11*, that none born after the Flood attained the years of those who lived before it. So most manifestly, the ordinary age of Man was again shortened from the time of this defection at *Babel*, to the extent that none of the generations after *Heber* attained to more than about *half* the number of *his* years.

## **CHAP. 4. The Covenant of Grace, as revealed to Abraham.**

### **§1. God honors Abraham by his Covenant-Transactions.**

The next *signal advance* that was made in the revelation of God's grace to men, was in *Abraham's* time, and by the *federal* transactions of God with him. By these he was brought into such a *relation* to God, and the whole Church, that it was in some respects peculiar to himself, and was never the lot of any other of the children of men, either before or since his time. In respect to this, *Abraham* may be considered as a type of Christ, who is eminently *the head and prince* of the new covenant. And because of that special grace and favor that the Lord bestowed upon him in his transactions with him, he is styled *the friend of God*. And the covenant is said to be *mercy to Abraham, and truth to Jacob*, *Mic 7.20*. This intimates that the *beginning* of it with *Abraham* was of mere grace and mercy; though once it was made with him, the *truth and faithfulness* of God was engaged to make it good to its *succeeding heirs*. It was not that the Covenant of Grace as made with *Abraham* was the same for substance, that had been more darkly revealed in the ages before, but it pleased God to transact it with him as He had not done with any before him. It may be noted also that *Abraham* is the first man in the world, to whom God is said to have *appeared or been seen* (Act 7.2 with Gen 12).

### **§2. Abraham's seeming incapacity for a Covenant-Relation.**

This *Abraham* was of the posterity of *Shem*, descended from him in the *tenth generation*, and chosen by God from among all his numerous offspring to be in an especial manner *the heir of Shem's blessing* (the genealogy of Genesis 11). Yet we are not to imagine that *Abraham* and his Family were the *only people* that God had in the world in his days. For although there was then a very great defection of the world from God and his true worship, yet was it not *universal* as in *Noah's* time. But there were many alive who truly feared God, and were accepted with Him besides *Abraham* and those immediately depending on him. For even *Shem* lived till *Abraham* was 150 years old; and *Arphaxad* lived till he was 88, which was 13 years after that covenant mentioned in *Genesis 12* was confirmed with him. *Salah* lived until *Abraham* was 118 years of age, which was

about 19 years after the Covenant of Circumcision was given to him. And *Heber* lived after his death, even until *Jacob* was about 19 years old (for he lived the longest of all who were born after the Flood). And there is no doubt that these *Patriarchs* with their houses, and others joining with them, and under their conduct, worshipped and served the true God. Yet it pleased the Lord to single out *Abraham*, call him to His foot, and make him a *Head* of all future covenants with men. And this, notwithstanding that a bar lay in his way at the time of his calling, as to his entering into any such relation. It was impossible for this bar to be removed, except by omnipotent grace and power. And that was on both a *moral and physical* account.

1. On a *Moral Account*: *Abraham* was not a person eminent for holiness and religion. When God called him to inherit *Shem's* blessing, he was not better or more deserving than any of the rest of his posterity. Rather, he was swimming down the stream of a wicked world, being degenerated from the religion and piety of his *ancestors*, to false worship and idolatry, *Jos* 24.2-3. Therefore, it is not without reason that the prophet *Ezekiel*, 16.3, upbraids the people of *Israel* with this, that *their father was an Amorite, and their mother a Hittite* — not *properly* but *metaphorically* so called — because even they had been involved in the guilt of *the same apostasy* from God as these nations, before the Lord graciously *called* them out of it.

2. On a *Natural Account*: For *Sarai*, the wife of *Abraham* was barren, and noted to be so before God called him, *Gen* 11.30. And yet the blessing of *Shem* must have been lost, the hope of the Church perished, and all Covenant-Transactions with *Abraham* proved of *no effect*, if he did not have *seed*. For by virtue of God's covenant to be established with him, the *Messiah* (concerning the flesh) was to come from him. And yet all this was no impediment or obstruction in His way, *who quickens the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they were*, *Rom* 4.17.

### **§3. *Abraham as both Father of Believers and Root of Israel.***

There is one more thing to be premised in the consideration of God's Covenant-Transactions with *Abraham* in particular, which is most clearly stated in the New Testament. *Namely*,

That with respect to Israel, *Abraham* is to be considered in a double capacity — both as the *father* of all true *believers*, and as the *father* and root of the *Israelite nation*; and it was for both these *seeds* that God entered into covenant with him. Yet, these *seeds* being formally distinguished from one another, their Covenant-Interest must of necessity be *diverse*, and fall under a distinct consideration. The blessings appropriate to either, must be conveyed in a way that is agreeable to their peculiar and respective Covenant-Interest. These things may not be confounded without a manifest hazard to the most important articles in the Christian religion. And yet, such is the *mutual respect* of all God's Covenant-Transactions with *Abraham*, and such was to be God's dispensation towards the Church for some ages following, that it required a *present intermixture* of the promises, and an involvement of spiritual blessings in the shade of temporal ones, and of a spiritual Seed in the shade of a natural one. I suppose this is more evident than to allow a denial. And the Scripture does not speak of another relation of *Abraham* in the covenants made with him. Nor can we prove by this, that any of the covenants given to him, were transacted with him simply under the notion, or in *the relation of, an ordinary believing parent, or the head of a particular household*.

And therefore, to better understand these things, it is necessary that with due attention both to the *history* of the *Old Testament*, and the *light of the New*, we humbly inquire concerning,

1. The Covenant of Grace as made with *Abraham*.
2. The covenant made with him for his natural offspring; and
3. Their mutual respect, and dependence on one another.

#### **§4. *The Covenant of Grace revealed to Abraham.***

To begin with the first, God revealed the Covenant of Grace to *Abraham*, and also the general nature of that covenant, and the Seed concerned in it. We have this plainly declared in the account which the Holy Ghost gives of it in *Gal* 3.6-9, 16-17, which I will transcribe here at large:

- v. 6. *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*



- v. 7. *Know therefore that those who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*
- v. 8. *And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel to Abraham (saying) In you, all nations shall be blessed.*
- v. 9. *So then, those who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.*
- v. 16. *Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made: he does not say, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to your Seed, who is Christ.*
- v. 17. *And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, the Law which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect.*

These words contain the whole of what I intend in this discourse. As to my present purpose, I will briefly collect their sum in some observations about them.

### ***§5. The time of this Covenant-Transaction.***

FIRST, we have asserted in such full terms in this *context*, that the Gospel was preached to *Abraham*, and the Covenant of Grace revealed to him, that none can rationally doubt it. And moreover in *ver. 17* we have *the time* of God's establishing this covenant with him exactly noted: It was (says the Text) *430 years before the giving of the Law*; Gal 3.17 (*namely, on Mount Sinai*). Now, the Law was given a very short time after the children of *Israel* came out of *Egypt*. The computation of these years is made from the giving of the *first promise* to *Abraham*, which we have recorded in *Gen 12.2-3*, to that very night in which the children of *Israel* were brought out of their *Egyptian* bondage. This will be evident to whoever diligently compares the *chronology* of those times with the express testimony of *Moses*, Exo 12.41: *And it came to pass at the end of the 430 years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the Land of Egypt*. From the time of the first promise to the end of *Israel's* sojourning in *Egypt* was 430 years, though their abode in *Egypt* was not nearly so long. And from this we collect,

1. That in the transaction of God with *Abraham*, recorded in *Genesis* 12, He solemnly confirmed his covenant with him (although *Moses* does not expressly mention the term *covenant* until another occasion is offered, *Gen* 15.18). For the Apostle asserts that the *promise mentioned there, was the covenant confirmed by God in Christ to Abraham* (*Gal* 3.17).

2. The Mercy of *Israel's* redemption out of *Egypt* was in some respect to be referred to this covenant as the spring of it (though it was not immediately and in its own nature a new Covenant-Blessing to all who partook in it). And all the dealings of God with them as a select and peculiar people in covenant with Himself, were in *subservience* to the great ends of *this covenant with Abraham*. And therefore, none of them may be interpreted to the prejudice or *disannulling* of those promises in which the Gospel was preached to *Abraham*.

3. By the computation of *Moses* (*Exodus* 12), it appears that the promise we are speaking of was given to *Abraham* on the 15th day of the month *Abib* (the first month according to the religious account of the Jews) on which day *Israel*, a typical Church, obtained a typical redemption, in the interest of a typical Passover. And on that same day, Christ — our true Passover — was sacrificed for us on the cross. He obtained eternal redemption, and by confirming the Covenant of Grace with his own blood, he passed all its promises into an *unalterable testament*. <sup>46</sup>

#### **§6. *Abraham is made the Father of the Faithful by it.***

SECONDLY, the *sum* and substance of all spiritual and eternal blessings was *included* in the covenant and *promise* given to *Abraham* in these words, *Gen* 12.2, *I will bless you, and you shall be a blessing*. The grace and blessings of the New Covenant were given and ensured to *Abraham* for *himself*. And moreover, this *honor* was conferred on him: that he should be a *head* of Covenant-Blessings, as the *father* of all true *believers*. No less is intended in those words, *You shall be a blessing*. They indeed suppose that *he* should be *blessed*. But the promise does not terminate in *himself*; for it also *conveys blessedness* to many others through a relation to him as *his children*. This is yet more fully expressed in what follows: *In you all nations shall be blessed*. This general promise does not intend that

every individual person in every nation should at any time be blessed in *Abraham*, but that his blessing should not be confined to *any one nation* excluding others. And it intends that *all* who were blessed in *every nation*, should be blessed by virtue of the covenant now made with *Abraham*, and in a *relation* to him as their *father*. This was *the Gospel preached to Abraham*; and a promise of the *justification of the heathen through faith*, Gal 3.8. And in the interest of this blessing of *Abraham*, being *his seed*, they *receive the promise of the Spirit*, v. 14. And this promise of a believing seed which would with himself inherit the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, was further confirmed to *Abraham* a considerable time after this. *Genesis 15* Cf. *Rom 4.3, 18*.

### **§7. This Covenant is confirmed by God in Christ.**

THIRDLY, this covenant was made with *Abraham* in and through *Jesus Christ*. It is not *Abraham* but *Christ* that is *the first Head* of it. In and by Him, all its promises are ratified, as he was the *Surety of the covenant*, Heb 7.22. *In Him they are all Yes and Amen*, 2Cor 1.20. From Him all the grace of the covenant is derived to poor sinners through *faith* in his name. The Apostle asserts this most clearly in Gal 3.17, and argues it from the form of the promises made to *Abraham*, v. 16. *To Abraham and his Seed were the promises made; he does not say to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to your Seed, who is Christ*.

The scope of the Apostle's discourse will teach us that those promises are meant which relate to the justification and salvation of poor sinners; even those which include that grace by which the Gentiles are called to inherit eternal life. Some principally refer this to *Gen 17.7*.<sup>47</sup> And it will readily be granted that some of those promises that *ultimately* respect the *spiritual seed* and *spiritual blessings*, are sometimes given to *Abraham* under *the covert* of those terms that have an immediate respect to his *natural seed* and *temporal blessings*, and are made types of the other. And when they are so, the promise still runs *to his Seed*, in the singular number; <sup>48</sup> which the holy Ghost may here teach us to be on set purpose to gather our thoughts to *Christ* alone, as the *spring and root* of *Abraham's blessing* when we consider the *mystical* import of such promises. But this being allowed — that the Apostle has the form of that promise in

his eye — we cannot conclude from there that the promise is made to *Abraham's* seed, both natural and mystical, in one and the same tenor. Rather, only this much will fairly follow from it: that the Apostle argues from the *carnal* seed as typical, to the *spiritual* Seed as typified by it. And arguing thus, makes special use of the *terms* in which the promise is made, as purposely *fitted to its typical respect*, or mystical sense. So the prohibition of breaking a bone of the Paschal Lamb, which was *a type* of Christ, is applied by *John* to Christ himself who was *typified* by it, *Joh* 19.36 Cf. *Exo* 12.46.

However (I conceive), the Apostle has a direct and special eye to that promise of *Gen* 22.18, <sup>49</sup> *In your Seed all the families of the earth will be blessed*. This runs directly parallel both in terms and sense with the *promise* given to *Abraham* in *Gen* 12.3, which was pleaded by the Apostle earlier, in *Gal* 3.8. This promise was given out in the repetition and confirmation of the covenant made with him before, on the occasion of *Abraham's* having offered up *Isaac*, by which the death and sacrifice of Christ Jesus was prefigured in a most lively manner. And it clearly holds out thus much — that as all nations would be blessed in a relation to *Abraham* as his children, that blessing should be derived to them (1) through an *interest in Christ*, his promised Seed, and (2) by the efficacy of His *mediation* in the interest of *that sacrifice and offering of a sweet smelling savor* (*Eph* 5.2) that he would make to God in the fulness of time. If it is objected that the promise there is made *of*, or *concerning*, *Abraham's* seed, and not made *to* his Seed, let it be minded that all the promises made **of** this Seed (Christ) in one respect, may be said to be made **to** this Seed in another respect. This is because these promises are originally established in the everlasting *Covenant of Redemption* between the Father and Him.<sup>50</sup>

Some interpret this text in *Galatians* to be of the *mystical Christ*, because of the order of the words. The promise is made *first* to *Abraham* and *then* to his seed; and therefore (they say) it is such a seed as comes to have a right in the promise. *Secondly*, it is made to *Abraham and his children*, and also because the Apostle's scope is to prove that the Gentiles are *justified by faith*, as *Abraham* was. But I would rather apply the promises to Christ as *personally* considered. For *the Seed* to whom the promise is made, is the same *in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed*, *Gen* 22.18. Now, even though all

believers being the Seed of *Abraham*, are blessed with faithful *Abraham*, yet they are not *that Seed in whom* all nations are blessed, but *the nations* who are blessed in *this Seed*: And in the very next verse, the covenant is said to be established by God *in* or *unto Christ*,<sup>51</sup> who is the *same Seed* spoken of in the preceding verse. Now, the covenant is confirmed in Christ personally, not in Christ mystically. Hence *Paraeus* concludes it is to be understood *individually*, of the one Christ from whom every spiritual blessing flows to the faithful.<sup>52</sup> But this is also to be observed: that Christ is given as *a covenant of the people*, Isa 42.6. And therefore the covenant is established *in him*, and *with him*, for all believers who by union with him, become that *one Seed of Abraham* to whom *the blessing* of his covenant belongs. And so in this sense, it as strongly concludes for justification by faith alone in Christ, as in the other.

And for the order of the words, it need not seem strange that *Abraham* is mentioned first, and then Christ his Seed. For besides, the first says *in you*, chiefly intending the promises; and after that is given, *in your Seed all nations shall be blessed* (which is the order the Apostle observes). This is also to be considered: that *Abraham* was really the *father of Christ according to the flesh*, and appointed to be so by covenant, as *David* was also. And yet Christ is not only the *Offspring*, but also *the Root* of both *Abraham* and *David*. And although the mercies of the covenant are called *the sure mercies of David* (Isa 55.3), because of the covenant which God made with him, yet in one respect they are all *originally* from Christ, though in another respect, they are *mediately* by Christ. This is because they flow from a covenant first made with *David*, which was to be later ratified and fulfilled in Christ, *the Son of David*.<sup>53</sup> And perhaps it is on the account of the covenants made with *Abraham* and *David* concerning this matter, that they are so *particularly* mentioned in the *genealogy* of Christ, *Mat* 1.1, as recorded by that evangelist.

#### **§8. Abraham as a Root of Covenant-Blessings.**

FOURTHLY, This covenant was made with *Abraham* as a root of Covenant-Blessings, and *common parent* to all true believers. Indeed *Abraham* himself obtained the grace of this covenant by Christ his Seed. And so he came into it second-hand with respect to the Son of God, who is *the Prince of the covenant*; but with respect to us, the

covenant was first given to *Abraham*, and we are brought into it in the interest of our relation to him as children, which also is by faith in Jesus Christ. God put this special honor on *Abraham* by *the manner* of His entering into covenant with him, that from then on, no people would be taken into *covenant* with Himself, except as *Abraham's Seed*. This is evident as to *Israel after the flesh* in the Old Testament, that their Covenant-Interest was derived from *Abraham*. And it appears as plainly concerning the spiritual seed and *Israel of God* in the New Testament, that *Abraham* is their *father*, Romans 4. And all true believers are blessed in him, as his seed (*Gal* 3.8, 29; Cf. *Gen* 12.3). For by that promise in *Genesis*, *Abraham* was *ordained* and constituted by God, to be the *father of the faithful*, as touched on before. And this is why their enjoyment of paradise is called resting in *Abraham's bosom*, *Luk* 16.22 — because as they have their entrance into a *state of grace*, so they are also brought into the *Kingdom of Glory*, and made to possess heaven as his children. They are also said to *sit down with Abraham in the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Mat* 8.11.

### ***§9. An eternal settlement of salvation by faith in Christ.***

FIFTHLY, the last thing I will note is the eternal settlement of *the way of salvation* according to the tenor of the covenant, which is *by faith in Christ*: This is a covenant that conveys the grace of life to poor sinners by a free and gracious promise. It allows no other *restipulation* in order to gain a Covenant-Interest except *believing*. [It] is *of faith* because it is *of grace*, *Rom* 4.16. And *this way* is the *only way of Life*; There is but *one covenant* of spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus, founded in the eternal decree and counsel of God's love and grace, which is now revealed to *Abraham*. And there is but *one Seed*, which is of true believers in union with Christ, promised to Him as the heirs of this covenant, and the grace given by it. Thus, *the way* of their justification and acceptance with God is *determined*, not by a *natural descent* from *Abraham*, or any *external privilege* appendant to it, but *by walking in the footsteps of Abraham's faith*, *Rom* 4.13. He is made the exemplar of justification to all in future ages, for whose perpetual instruction this is recorded: *that he believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*. Therefore, the tenor of the promise now given to *Abraham* could never be *altered*, nor in any way *evacuated*, nor superseded by any



future dispensation that the Church was brought under. But whatever *law or covenant* was afterwards given to them, it must of necessity lie in an order of *subservience* to this one, and be directed towards [ushering] in the perfection of that dispensation of grace which was unalterably fixed by it, *Gal 3.17*. It was *the everlasting Gospel* that was now preached to *Abraham*, which was afterwards to break forth with the fullest glory and luster in the *days of the Messiah*, when the Lord *performed his mercy to Abraham, and remembered his holy Covenant*, *Luk 1.72, etc.*

### ***§10. This Covenant precedes the Covenant of Circumcision.***

I will now close this chapter with some *corollaries* deduced from the things already cleared; and then proceed in the method propounded before:

1. This Covenant of Grace of which we have been speaking, and which the Holy Ghost in the New Testament has so remarkably pointed out [to] us, is one by which *Abraham* was made the father of the faithful. Accordingly, all believers were to be considered as a *seed* that God would give to him. It was confirmed and ratified by a sure promise to *Abraham* a considerable time *before the Covenant of Circumcision* was given to him — about *twenty-five years* before. The covenant then had no *outward sign* or seal annexed to it. Indeed, what has been affirmed of late, *that the Covenant of Grace* always *had an outward sign or seal added to it*, is so wide a mistake, that the contrary may be affirmed. That although the efficacy of its grace reached believers in all ages, yet it was not filled with ordinances of worship — *proper and peculiar to itself* — until the times of reformation.<sup>54</sup> Nor did it have till then any outward sign or token *immediately* belonging to it. For if it had been so, this *sign* or token, like the *covenant* itself, would have remained *without change*, and not have vanished away with the other *shadows* of the Mosaic economy.

2. The promise made to *Abraham* *gives to him the Seed*, as well as *the blessing* of that Seed. Believers are the *children of promise* (*Gal 4.28*), typified by *Isaac* afterwards being begotten to God of His own will, by the efficacy and grace of His free promise, and by the virtue of it. Indeed, the *Seed* is first supposed in the promise, and then *the blessing* of that Seed is promised; and being *of grace*, it is made *sure*



to all of them, Rom 4.16. As the *blessing* is spiritual, so is the *Seed*. Nor can it be extended further than to *that Seed* which is its *promised subject*.

3. The *sum of all Gospel blessings* being comprised in *this promise*, it will follow from this, that the proper heirs of this blessing of *Abraham* have a right, not only in some of *the promises* of the *New Covenant*, but in *all* of them. And that is not in a limited sense, as if suspended on uncertain conditions; but in a *full sense*, as secured by the infinite grace, wisdom, power, and faithfulness of God. Accordingly, in time they are made good to them all.

This will be more manifest if we consider that all the blessings of this covenant redound to believers by means of their *union and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ*. He is both the *Head* and *Root* of the New Covenant, and the Fountain from which all its blessings are derived to us. As they were *entirely purchased by Him*, so they are *entirely applied* to all who are *in Him*, and to no others.

Therefore, *limiting* a new Covenant-Interest to the grant of an *external and temporary privilege only*, I conceive to be utterly inconsistent with the *promises of the covenant itself* — even such promises as these: *Isa* 54.13; 59.21; *Jer* 31.33-34; *Eze* 36.26-27; Cf. *Hebrews* 8, and many others of like import. <sup>55</sup>

Nor will these texts allow *another notion* recently insisted on to commend *paedobaptism*. Namely,

That all the infant seed of believers during their infancy, have a certain and *definite interest* in the Covenant of Grace by virtue of which they are completely justified before God from the guilt of original sin, both *originans*, and *originatum*. <sup>56</sup> And yet when they come to years of discretion, they may (indeed they must) by their *actual* closing with, or refusing the terms of the covenant, either obtain the continuation and confirmation of their Covenant-Interest, or be utterly and finally cut off from it, and so perish eternally in their ignorance of God, and rebellion against him.

As the promises of the covenant will allow no such *partial interest* in it, so neither can this opinion consist with the *Analogy* of Faith <sup>57</sup> in other respects. For either the *stain* of original sin in these infants is purged, and the *dominion* of concupiscence in them is destroyed

when their guilt is *pardoned*, or it is not. If it is, then the case of these infants in point of *perseverance*, is the same as that of adult persons who are under grace by their actual faith. And then *a final apostasy* from the grace of the New Covenant must be allowed as possible to befall the one, as well as the other — notwithstanding all the provisions of the covenant, and the engagement of God in it, to make the promise *sure to all the seed*. But this the author will not admit.

If he says their *guilt is pardoned* but their *natures are not renewed*, nor is the power of original corruption destroyed so that *sin will not have dominion over them* — it will be replied then, that notwithstanding their supposed pardon, they remain an *unclean thing*; and so they are incapable of admission into the Kingdom of Glory. But the truth is, none are at any time justified before God, except those Christ has *loved and washed from their sins in his blood*, Rev 1.5. And none are *washed by him*, except those who are *in him*, as the *second Adam*. It is by union to him as the Root of the New Covenant, that *the free gift comes upon them to the justification of life*.<sup>58</sup> And none can have union to him, except by the *indwelling of his holy Spirit*. And wherever the Spirit of God applies the blood of Christ for the *remission of sins*, he also does it for *purging the conscience from dead works to serve the living God*. As certainly as any derive a *New Covenant right* from Christ for *pardon*, they also receive a *vital influence* from him for the *renovation* of their natures, and conforming their souls to His own *image*. And therefore, to assert that the grace of Christ is applied to some for the *remission of sins only*, or that the guilt of any sin can be *pardoned* for any person, and yet *that sin* retains its *dominion over him*, is (so far as I can discern) both unscriptural, and incoherent with *the doctrine that is according to godliness*.

4. TO CONCLUDE. It is plain that a believer's claim to the blessings of the New Covenant is in the interest of *Abraham's Seed*, and by virtue of the promises given to him relating to such a Seed, and not as *coordinate with him* in Covenant-Interest. By this covenant, they are not each made the father of a blessed seed, as *Abraham* was the father of the faithful. Nor can they claim the promise for themselves and their seed according to the tenor of *Abraham's Covenant*, and as he might claim it. Rather, they must rest in a relation to him as

children, and so receive his blessing; that is, the blessing promised to him *for his seed*. And that is by their *own* faith, and for themselves *alone*. Believers, because they are *Abraham's* seed, are blessed with faithful *Abraham*: And, *If we are Christ's, then we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*, Gal 3.29.

## CHAP. 5. The Covenant of Circumcision (1).

### ***§1. Covenant of Circumcision summed up the promises to Abraham.***

The method laid down before, leads us in the next place to inquire about the promises given to *Abraham* for his natural offspring, and the assurance of those promises, which it pleased God to give him by Covenant-Transactions. And here (as formerly) I will diligently review the history that *Moses* wrote of these things by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and compare the promises made, with the records of their accomplishment in other parts of Holy Writ. I will endeavor to collect from both, the true import and extent of them, with the proper nature and ends of that covenant to which they belong in a peculiar manner. I will premise only this to the whole,

That all these promises were not made to *Abraham* at one time, nor was the covenant of them perfected by one transaction. But they were given out by several parts and degrees, until at last the whole *charter* of privileges and blessings granted to the natural offspring of *Abraham* was fairly drawn, and the covenant of them sealed by circumcision. This will immediately appear in the historical account we will have of these things. And some regard to this may also be remarked in the progression of *Stephen's* discourse, when he gives a recapitulation of them. *Act* 7.5-8.

### ***§2. The promise also made of Abraham's carnal seed.***

In *Gen* 12.2 we find that when the God of Glory first appeared to *Abraham*, and called him out from his own country, from his kindred and from his father's house, besides the promise of spiritual blessings that was given to him both for himself and his spiritual seed, he also had the promise of numerous offspring which would naturally descend from him. No less can be intended in the words, *I will make of you a great nation*, than this: you will be the father of a great nation which will spring and issue from your loins. Such is the plain sense of like words said to *Moses*, *Num* 14.12. And *Abraham* embraced this promise with the rest, by *faith*. For to an eye of reason, there was no present likelihood of its accomplishment, seeing that at this time he had no child (for want of which he also complains for a considerable time after this, *Gen* 15.2-3.); and his wife *Sarai* was barren, Yet esteeming God faithful and able to make good his

word that had given him these promises, Abraham embraced them. And upon the call of God, <sup>59</sup> he forsook all that before was dear to him, and went out, *not knowing to where he went*; Heb 11.8. For it does not appear that the land of *Canaan* was mentioned to him at his first calling; rather, an absolute resignation of himself to divine goodness and conduct was required of him. He knew no more than this, that he must travel from his own to another country, which was to a land that God would show to him, though as yet he didn't know what or where it was. And therefore, though we read in *Gen* 11.32 that, *He went from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the Land of Canaan*, I conceive those words are to be taken as a historical anticipation, and not a relation of what fell within *Abraham's* knowledge and intention when he first undertook his Journey. <sup>60</sup> His migration <sup>61</sup> was, in the counsel of God, determined to the land of *Canaan*. And he was brought there by a divine conduct, though he did not himself know the place designed — at least, not till he came nearer to it, *namely*, to *Haran*. There the Lord gave him a second call, after the death of *Terah*, to proceed on his journey to the land of *Canaan*.<sup>62</sup>

### **§3. *Abraham builds an altar.***

When *Abraham* came into the land of *Canaan*, to the place of *Shechem*, on the plain of *Moreh* (the progeny of cursed *Canaan* then being the inhabitants of the country) the Lord appeared to him again, and gave him a full and express promise of that land (which for pleasantness and fertility was the glory of all lands <sup>63</sup>) for an inheritance to his seed. And there he first built *an altar* to the Lord, that by worshipping Him he might testify his gratitude for the promise so freely given to him, and also receive a ratification of it in the blood of his accepted sacrifice. Soon after this, a famine drives *Abraham* into *Egypt*. There *Sarai's* chastity was endangered by the *Egyptian* King. But the Lord's rebuke of him delivered his servant from that affliction, <sup>64</sup> and by His good providence, *Abraham* was again brought back in peace to the land of *Canaan*. All this time *Lot* was with him, the son of *Abraham's* brother. But now their substance being increased, some contention arose between their servants. *Abraham*, to take up the present controversy and prevent a repeat, makes a proposal for their parting from one another, which

was accepted by *Lot*, *Genesis* 13. After *Lot* was separated from *Abraham*, the Lord again renews and confirms the promise of the Land of *Canaan* to him, and of the great increase of his seed who would possess it. He gives a special command to *Abraham* to *walk through the length and the breadth of it*, to survey it, and by faith to take possession of it, while as yet he was a stranger and had no inheritance in it — no, not so much as to set his foot on, *Act* 7.5.

#### **§4. Making good the promise of the land of Canaan.**

In the promise thus renewed, there are two things that require some further explanation.

FIRST, the conveyance of this inheritance is directly made first to *Abraham* himself, and then to his seed; *All the land which you see, I will give it to you, and to your seed*, *Gen* 13.15. Now it is evident, *Abraham* had no possession in it all his days, save that of a burying-place which he later purchased for his money, paid to its full value, *Genesis* 23. And it was a similar case with *Isaac* and *Jacob*, who were the heirs of this promise together with *Abraham*, *Heb* 11.9. A question therefore arises, How was this promise made good to *Abraham*?

In answer to this (waiving for the present the typical respect of the promised land, and *Abraham's* inheritance of the spiritual and heavenly blessings signified by it) observe:

1. That as to those words, *to you and to your seed*, the latter may be taken as an interpretation of the former. And then the sense is, *to you, that is, to your seed*. The Hebrew particle used here is undoubtedly to be taken in this sense in some other places,<sup>65</sup> and is to be interpreted not as a copulative *and*, but as an explicative *even*, or *that is*. See *1Chr* 21.12, where it is so rendered. The same interpretation must be given of it in *2Sam* 17.12: *Of him and* (rather, *that is*) *of all the men who are with him, there will not be left so much as one*. Now, this rendering removes all appearance of difficulty from the text.

2. A man may have a right to possess a thing (*jus ad rem*) who does not have a right of ownership (*jus in re*). All right is not presently actionable. But a man may have a right to an inheritance by promise or otherwise, without the *right of present possession*, which he may



not enter upon till a long time after. Or perhaps it is not himself, but his posterity who are to be possessed of it by that *right* which is at present made over to him. Nor does the annexing of such terms render the promise vain or fruitless to the one who first receives it. For the assurance that the good promised will, in its time, certainly redound upon his offspring, is a present comfort to himself, just as it is also an honor for him to be made capable of transmitting such a right to them in this way. And therefore, it was a pleasing thought to old *Jacob* when he lay dying, that *God would surely visit his children and bring them up out of Egypt to inherit the promised land; Gen 48.5, 20-21*, even though he went to his fathers without sight of its accomplishment. And it was also a special favor to *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, that by *Jacob's* blessing each of them obtained a right in *Canaan* that was equal with the brethren of their father. And yet they themselves did not enjoy the temporal good of that blessing, but their posterity after them did. And indeed, that is properly said to be given to parents which is given to their posterity on the account of that promise which they have received, <sup>66</sup> and which makes them the heads of that Covenant-Blessing which descends upon their offspring. And it is put beyond doubt that the Fathers embraced the promise in this sense, by the express limitation of the time of its accomplishment, given in *Gen 15.13, 16*.

SECONDLY, the other difficulty arises from the extent of the promise in point of time. For here God promises to give this land to *Abraham* and to his Seed *forever*; and again in *Gen 17.8*, *for an everlasting possession*. Whereas it is evident they have now, for many ages, been disinherited of it. But the solution of this doubt will be easy for whoever consults the use of these terms in other texts, and the necessary restriction of their sense when applied to the state or concernments of *Abraham's* seed in the land of *Canaan*. For the priesthood of *Levi* is called *an everlasting priesthood*, Num 25.13; and the gates of the temple are *everlasting doors*, Psa 24.6. And in this same sense, *Canaan* is said to be *an everlasting inheritance*. No more is intended than the continuance of these for a long time, *namely*, throughout the Old Testament economy, until the days of the *Messiah* commonly spoken of by the Jews under the notion of *the world to come* — in which a new state of things was to be expected,



and when their old covenant right and privilege was to expire, having its proper end and design now fully accomplished.

### ***§5. The promise renewed and enlarged.***

In *Genesis* 15, we have an account of another solemn transaction of God with *Abraham*, in which (besides other things included and intermixed) the promises previously given to *Abraham*, concerning his carnal seed and their inheritance, are renewed and further explained in diverse particulars. And *Abraham*, now being more stricken in years than when he first received the promise, and as yet having no son — even though his eternal happiness as well as other blessings depended on the seed that would be given to him — he was now brought to a greater trial of his faith than formerly. And the present acting of it being rendered more illustrious by the difficulties it overcame, the Holy Ghost is pleased in this place to give an express testimony to it, *verse 6, He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness.* <sup>67</sup> And this is the first time that either *believing* or the *imputation of righteousness* is mentioned in the Scripture in express terms. <sup>68</sup> Not that both these weren't true of *Abraham* before, even from the first giving out of the promise to him *Genesis* 12. He then believed in the Lord, *and He accounted it to him for righteousness.* But as his faith was now manifested in a higher degree, so it pleased God from this time to leave on record a more particular *eulogy* <sup>69</sup> of it than formerly. And as a further token of favor, immediately upon this follows that *explication* and *enlargement* of the promise to his natural offspring who were mentioned before. I will pass over many things, and only note here the few that follow, as directed to my present purpose.

1. The Lord informs *Abraham* of the affliction that would befall his posterity, and the seeming *death* of the promise before they were brought into the inheritance of the land of *Canaan*. He also particularly limits the time of it. They would be afflicted *four hundred years*, the account of which (I suppose) must take its rise from the mocking of *Isaac*, the heir of the promise, by *Ishmael* the son of *Hagar* the *Egyptian*. From that to the deliverance of *Israel* from their bondage in *Egypt*, is exactly four hundred years. <sup>70</sup>

2. The Lord gives *Abraham* an assurance that in the appointed time He will redeem them from their servitude, and that will be by signal

judgments on their oppressors, and by so great a favor to them, that it would suddenly change their condition from want and penury, to the enjoyment of great riches and substance, *Gen* 15.14. As for *Abraham* himself, he would go to his fathers in peace, and be buried in a good old age. And in the fourth generation, the blessing of this promise would certainly come upon his posterity, *verses* 15, 16. The exact accomplishment of all this you may read about in the book of *Exodus* — all the wonders recorded there, being the birth of these promises. <sup>71</sup> For it was not the goodness of the people, but the stability of the promise, that all those things are to be ascribed to.

3. A reason is given for referring the accomplishment of the promise to this time. It was because the nations whose land they were to possess were not yet *ripe for judgment*; and the measure of their iniquity must be filled up before the curse of *Canaan* was fully executed upon them. Thus we see that although the children of *Canaan* bore his curse many generations after him, yet this curse did not descend upon them without a full measure of their own sin. Just as there is no doubt that *Canaan's* partnership with *Ham* in his wickedness, first brought the curse of his father upon himself. But to return,

4. These things are expressly said to have been transacted in a way of *covenant* with *Abraham*. Also, the bounds of *Israel's* inheritance are set, and those nations are marked out by name, <sup>72</sup> that were to be dispossessed and destroyed by them.

### ***§6. The Seed of Abraham intended in the promises.***

Before we pass on further in the history of God's transactions with *Abraham* respecting his natural offspring, let it be observed:

1. That as this seed was afterwards raised up to *Abraham* by virtue of a promise, so the first grant of the land of *Canaan* to them for an inheritance, was also by a gratuitous promise. And that promise passed into the form of a covenant with *Abraham* long before the giving of the Law as a condition of their inheritance in it — even before the institution of circumcision. And the origin of their claim being from a *free promise*, the severity of that Law which they afterwards came under, was so far restrained by it that (notwithstanding their manifold breach of covenant with God, and thereby their forfeiture of all *legal claim* of their rights and privileges

in the land of *Canaan*) they were never utterly cut off from that good land. Nor did they cease to be a peculiar people to God until the *end* (the purpose) of their being *made so*, was fully answered. That promise expired with the accomplishment of its design. And that was in the introduction of the *Israel* of God to the full enjoyment of those spiritual blessings which were the substance of what was but darkly shadowed by their temporal enjoyments. This will be of great use in our reflections on the typical state of that people, which I will not enlarge on now.

2. Up to here, it is not *expressly* signified that *Sarai* will be the mother of this seed. And therefore in the delay of the promise, *Abraham* and *Sarai* (not knowing but it might be fulfilled that way) agreed about *Abraham's* going in to *Hagar*, the handmaid of *Sarai*, that they might obtain children by her, *Genesis* 16. It will be granted, on good grounds, that they might have had other apprehensions of the promise before (as it appears by comparing *Genesis* 15 with *Romans* 4); and that this proceeded from some vacillation and weakness of faith in them. Yet it was not such that it *directly* crossed and called into question the promises given before. Nor does anything appear to the contrary, except *Abraham* considered *Ishmael heir of the promise*, until the Lord appeared to him again (*Gen* 17), <sup>73</sup> and fully completed His covenant with him about his natural offspring.

3. Much less was there any intimation given yet, of a *distinction* to be made in point of privilege or Covenant-Right, between the children that might in one way or another be brought forth to *Abraham*: But the claim of such children (supposing, as it later proved, that there might be many) seemed to be equal, until it is further clarified (*Gen* 17). Nor was there any distinguishing character yet appointed for his seed, as a foundation for their rising up into such a *Church-State*, such that the solemn institutions of divine service would be appropriate to them. And none were accounted members of the visible Church but themselves, and those who became *proselytes* to them. Though it is true, all that was mentioned before, was disposed in order for this — being directed towards such an end in the wise counsel of God. For known to Him are all his works, from the beginning. And therefore the *former promises* are still recollected and taken in, in the *later transactions* about this people.

4. The promises previously given to *Abraham* for his natural offspring, as much concern those in *remote generations*, as those *immediately descended* from him; indeed, in some respects they were more fully made good to *them* than the other. For it was not until the *fourth generation* that God *was known to them by his name JEHOVAH*, Exodus 6, in the actual accomplishing of His word. The *Fathers* had only His *all-sufficiency* engaged for the *later fulfilling* of the promise in its proper season. It was not *Abraham's immediate*, but his *mediate seed*, who became numerous *as the dust of the earth*, and took possession of the land flowing with milk and honey.

### **§7. Why it is called the Covenant of Circumcision.**

We will now pass on to *Genesis 17*. What is more largely recorded there, we have briefly pointed at by *Stephen* in his general review of the History of *Israel*. Act 7.8, *And he gave him the Covenant of Circumcision; And so Abraham begat Isaac etc.* By the *Covenant of Circumcision*, we are to understand that covenant of which circumcision was *the sign or token*; or that covenant in which a *restipulation* was required by observing *this rite or ordinance*, as in *Gen 17.9-11*.

It is observable that in this transaction of God with *Abraham*, we first meet with an *express injunction of obedience to a command* (and that of *positive right*) as the *condition* of Covenant-Interest. And the whole is ushered in with this Prologue, *Gen 17.1, I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be perfect*. In these words, first the *all-sufficiency* of God is revealed for the *ensurance* of the promises; and then a *strict and entire obedience* to His precepts is required in order to inherit the good things that were to be given by this covenant. In *this mode* of transacting it, the Lord was pleased to draw the first lines of that form of Covenant-Relation in which the natural seed of *Abraham* were fully instated by the *Law of Moses*. This was a *Covenant of Works*, and its conditions or terms were, *Do this and live*. For although the Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham* has in all respects (in point of time, as well as excellence) the *precedence* to the covenant made with his carnal seed in *Isaac's* line. Yet in the wise counsel of God, things were so ordered that the *full revelation* of the Covenant of Grace, the *actual* accomplishment of its great promises, and its being *filled up* with ordinances proper

to it, should *succeed* the covenant made with *Israel after the flesh*. And this would take place upon the dissolution of it, when it *grew old and vanished away*. And therefore, the Covenant-Interest of the natural seed was to be perfected by the Law of *Moses*, before the *Gospel preached to Abraham was unveiled*. And accordingly, this chapter leads us on a great step towards the *Sinai Covenant* and its terms.

### ***§8. The promise of the New Covenant repeated.***

This Covenant of Circumcision properly and immediately belongs to the natural seed of *Abraham*, and is ordered as a *foundation of that economy* which they were to be brought under *until the times of reformation*. Yet by way of preface to this, you have in *Gen 17.4-5*, a recapitulation of former transactions, and a renewed confirmation of one great promise of the Covenant of Grace previously given to *Abraham* — namely, *I have made you a father of many nations*. It appears from *Rom 4.17*, that this is principally to be understood of his believing seed, gathered out of all nations indifferently; and that *Abraham* was constituted the *father of the faithful* before this Covenant of Circumcision was made. And it has been proved before, from *Moses's* history, that he did not obtain the grant of this privilege by that covenant. And this is also strongly argued by the Apostle in the former part of that forementioned chapter, *Romans 4*. Nevertheless, there is a very great reason that it should be repeated in this place. And that is on a twofold account:

1. That it might be evident; that *the Covenant of Peculiarity* with the carnal seed, which was first to take place, and that wall of separation which was to be raised up between them and other nations (the cornerstone of which was now to be laid in circumcision) should not *evacuate*, or *entrench upon* the Covenant of Grace, or the *right* and privilege of the spiritual seed stated in it, or of any part of it. Rather, it was *added* and made *subservient* to its great ends: The springs of New Covenant-Mercy, which God had before opened to *all* nations, were not to be shut up again by this covenant. Nor were the heathen excluded from inheriting the blessing of *Abraham* through faith in Jesus Christ, by any privilege or right conferred upon the Jew. <sup>74</sup> And therefore, when the Covenant of Circumcision was given to the carnal seed in order to fully separate them from other nations, it pleased God with that, to revive the remembrance of that promise of



the Covenant of Grace, which would in due time bring forth salvation to the Gentiles. That way there might be no color of reason left for interpreting this covenant to their prejudice, in straitening the grace of the Gospel, which was designed by God only to be a *handmaid* to it.

2. Because things were so ordered by God in this covenant, that as its promises should be *subordinate* to the Great Promise; and so also, spiritual blessings should be mystically implied in them. So *Abraham's* being the father of believers of many nations, was typified in his numerous offspring by *Isaac*; namely, *Israel* after the flesh. And thus, a confirmation and sealing of the one, must include a ratification of the other also. And therefore, at the same time, to assure *Abraham* that he would certainly become the father of a *multitude*, or of *many nations*,<sup>75</sup> his name is changed to *Abraham*. And also, circumcision is instituted for sealing the promises made to his carnal seed. The mutual respect of these different promises, and the order observed in their establishment, was such that circumcision was so far from *everting* the Covenant of Grace in its promise to the Gentiles, that it became to *Abraham*, a *seal of the righteousness of faith*, Rom 4.11. It had this, not from its *next and peculiar end*, or its *proper nature* with respect to all the carnal seed, or others who were to be its *subjects*. But it was from the *disposition of the covenant* to which it was annexed, and the *present circumstances of Abraham*, with whom it was made, and to whom circumcision was now given for a seal of it. But we must further enlarge upon this in speaking to *the mutual respect of God's federal transactions with Abraham*.

At present it will suffice to remind you that there is no way to avoid confusion and entanglements in our conception of these things, except by keeping before our eyes the *distinction in Abraham's seed*, which is either *spiritual* or *carnal*, and in the promises respectively belonging to either one. For this whole Covenant of Circumcision, as given to the carnal Seed, can no more convey spiritual and eternal blessings to them as such, than it can now entitle a believer (even a child of *Abraham*) in their temporal and typical blessings in the land of *Canaan*. Nor can I see any reason to assign to the *carnal* seed, a Covenant-Interest in all typified spiritual blessings, as well as in the temporal blessings that were their types — and yet, not allow the

conveyance of temporal blessings to the *spiritual* seed to hold good, seeing that (as some conceive) both are directly included in the same covenant; and the promise of both was sealed with the same seal.

But the truth is, notwithstanding *the respect* that this covenant has to the Covenant of Grace, it yet remains *distinct* from it. It can give no more than *external and typical blessings to a typical seed*. The stating of their rights and privileges in *subservience* to, and with a *typical respect* to, the dispensation of grace to the elect in the New Covenant, is the proper end and design of this transaction in *Genesis* 17. This will more fully appear in the particular account of the promises given there.

### ***§9. The first intimation of a distinction of tribes in Israel.***

The sum of those promises is set before us in *Gen* 17.6-8. In the 6th verse, the promise of numerous offspring is repeated in such terms that, if they do not enlarge, they at least import a further explication of what was promised before in *Gen* 13.16: *And I will make your seed like the dust of the earth*, etc. For here the promise runs this way: *I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you; and Kings shall come out of you*. These words, in their first and literal sense, had their accomplishment in the natural offspring of *Abraham*, and are particularly intended of his seed by *Isaac*. For though it is true that other nations besides *Israel* sprang from *Abraham*, yet the context will evince that what is meant here, is that seed with which the Covenant of Circumcision would be established; and that was with the seed of *Abraham* by *Isaac* only.

Therefore, to see the fulfilling of this promise, we must look to the *twelve tribes* of *Israel* that were like so many *distinct peoples and nations* with respect to their power and number. Though, with respect to religion and government, they were united in one polity; and so they were but one people. *Jacob* has an eye to this promise in his blessing of the sons of *Joseph*, *Gen* 48.19, where he says that *Manasseh* (the father of one of the tribes of *Israel*) *will be a People, and will become great*. That is, his seed will be numerous and strong, and make up *one people, or one of the nations* that God had promised would come from *Abraham*. And yet *Ephraim*, his younger brother, must have the preeminence, in being the father of another distinct people or tribe that would be stronger than *Manasseh*, and



more numerous, in that his seed would become *the fullness of nations* (so it is in the *Hebrew*), i.e. a very great nation and people.

That *distinction of tribes* which was later observed among the *Israelites*, seems to be first pointed at in these words, *I will make nations of you*. The words following, *namely, Kings shall come out of you*, not only signify the eminence of *Abraham's* seed in general, but they more particularly respect their forming under a distinct polity and government of their own. Or as *Ezekiel* says, 16.13, *prospering into a kingdom*, and living under the rule and conduct of judges and princes raised up from among themselves. They were so from *Moses' time* (who was *King in Jeshurum when the heads of the people and the tribes gathered themselves together*, Deu 33.5), by whose ministry God settled their state and government by laws peculiar to themselves, and fulfilled the covenant of their fathers in this. This branch of the promise contains more than was expressly given to *Abraham* before.

#### **§10. The word *Everlasting* applied to this Covenant.**

In the following words of *Gen* 17.7, we have the *assurance* of this, and also of the ensuing promises which God gives to *Abraham* by passing them into a solemn covenant. And consequently, we have an *interposition of Himself*, and an engagement of all the perfections and properties of his divine nature, to be exerted for making them good. Thus you read; *And I will establish my covenant between me and you; and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you, and to your seed after you*. To this is added the promise of their inheritance, ver. 8, *And I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be your God*.

The difficulty arising from those terms in the promise which give to *Abraham* the right of inheritance of *Canaan* in the first place, has been already considered and cleared; also, how *the land of Canaan* may be said to be an *everlasting possession*; and in the same sense, how *this covenant* is said to be *everlasting*. *Israel* could not be finally cut off from the promised inheritance until the covenant itself, by which it was given to them, expired. Therefore, as the duration of the inheritance and of *Israel's* right in it was *everlasting*, so was the

duration of this covenant. This was not absolutely, but with such a limitation as the nature of the things spoken of necessarily requires, and as is usual in those Scriptures that speak of things pertaining to the Jewish State. Therefore, there is no more reason to conclude from this term, that the Covenant of Circumcision was directly and properly a covenant of spiritual and eternal blessings, than there is to affirm that the land of *Canaan* and the good things of it, were a spiritual and eternal inheritance.

**§11. *The Church-State of Israel according to the flesh.***

However, from the strict connection of this 7th *verse* with the 6th, and the assurance given here that *God will establish his covenant with the seed of Abraham, to be their God*, it is evident that the number of Abraham's carnal seed, and the *grandeur of their Civil-State*, is not all that is promised in this covenant, nor yet is it the principal blessing bestowed on them in the covenant. Rather, it is *their forming into a Church-State*, with the establishment of the ordinances of public worship among them, in which they would walk in a Covenant-Relation to God as his peculiar people. (This is still to be understood of the *old covenant*, in which they had their peculiar right and privilege.) No less can be intended by this: *I will be a God to them in their generations*. And this is also made more evident by the subsequent account given of this transaction with respect to *Isaac* and *Ishmael*; Gen 17.18-21.

When the Lord had promised *Abraham* a son by *Sarah*, whose name should be called *Isaac*, *Abraham* thus prays for *Ishmael*: *O that Ishmael might live before you!* The *Chaldee* paraphrases it, *might live and worship before you*: No doubt his prayer was that *Ishmael* might also be an heir of the blessing of this covenant. But that was not granted to him; for the Lord would have *his covenant seed called in Isaac only*. God would establish his covenant with him, having appointed and chosen him alone to be its Heir, who was to be a child of promise, and son of the freewoman. And yet for *Ishmael* (in special favor to *Abraham*, whose seed he was) this much is obtained: that he would be made fruitful and multiplied exceedingly. Twelve princes, or heads of great families would spring from him (which imports some analogy to the twelve tribes of *Israel* after the flesh, whose old Covenant-State was typified in *Ishmael*), and God would make him a *great nation*: And yet all this lay short of the blessing of

*Abraham's* natural offspring by *Isaac*; from which *Ishmael* was *now excluded*. It is therefore plain that the *privilege* of the *Ecclesiastical*, as well as the *flourishing* of the *Civil state* of *Israel*, arose out of the Covenant of Circumcision.

The same may be observed about *Esau* afterwards, whom the Lord rejected before he was born. He was excluded from the privilege and blessing of this covenant, which descended upon *Jacob only*. And yet *Esau* was also the father of a great nation, and of many kings, and had the inheritance of many outward blessings assigned to him, *Gen* 27.39.

We therefore conclude that, notwithstanding, the carnal seed of *Abraham* could not, as such, claim a right in the spiritual and eternal blessings of the New Covenant, because of their interest in the Covenant of Circumcision. Yet their *privileges* and *advantages* in their Church-State, though immediately consisting in outward and typical things, were of far greater value and use than any mere worldly or earthly blessing. For these gave them choice means of the knowledge of God, and set them *nearer to Him* than any other nation in the world.

## CHAP. 6. The Covenant of Circumcision (2).

### **§1. *The general design of this chapter.***

Those passages in *Genesis* that were last discoursed about, give me an occasion to enlarge on some things. Because they are deduced from the texts already considered in part, further clearing and strengthening them will not only confirm what has been already hinted, but also contribute very much to the right understanding of the *nature* and *end* of this Covenant of Circumcision that I am treating — and also to a removal of the grounds of many *mistaken deductions* from it, by those who would determine from there the *right subjects of baptism*.

What I intend, is summed up in these two propositions:

1. The *mediate and remote seed* of that line to which the promises of the Covenant of Circumcision belonged, were as fully included and interested in them, as the *immediate seed*.
2. From the first establishing of this covenant, some of the *immediate seed of Abraham* were *excluded* from an interest in it.

### **§2. *All of Abraham's seed included in the Covenant of Circumcision.***

I will begin with the first. The truth of it appears sufficiently in the *express terms* of the promises now given to *Abraham*, which run to him and to *his seed after him in their generations*. And the covenant itself is said to be an *everlasting covenant*, which they are strictly commanded to keep *in their generations*, Gen 17.7, 9, 13. These terms are used, because it was a covenant in force for the benefit of *more remote*, as well as *nearer generations*. Its *promises* included and its *law* equally bound both, during the whole state of the *Mosaic economy*. The *right* of the remotest generation was as much derived from *Abraham* and the covenant made with him, as that of his immediate seed; and it did not at all depend on the *faithfulness of their immediate parents*. And therefore, the immediate seed of those *Israelites* who fell in the wilderness under the displeasure of God, inherited the land of *Canaan* by virtue of this covenant with *Abraham*. Otherwise, they could never have enjoyed it by virtue of their *immediate parents' steadfastness* in that covenant.

### **§3. *Confirmation from Ezekiel 16.20-21.***

I suppose it cannot be denied that *gross idolatry* was a manifest and full breach of this covenant on the part of the *idolater*. And yet, when the *Israelites* in *Ezekiel's* time became guilty of the vilest idolatries, the Lord still claimed an interest in their children by virtue of this covenant. Eze 16.20-21, *Moreover you have taken your sons and your daughters, whom you have born to me, and these you have sacrificed to them, to be devoured. Were your whoredoms a small matter, that you have slain my children*, etc. The children of an apostatized *Israelite* were God's as well as those of his faithful servants. This could not have been so, if their Covenant-Interest had been suspended on the good bearing of their immediate parents.

And this agrees with the story we have of *Mattathias*, proceeding in the reformation of the Church in his day.<sup>76</sup> Finding that many had denied their God, and forsaken his true worship in that time of persecution (according to the Law of *Moses*), he executed justice on as many of the apostates as he could lay hands on, by slaying them (as *Josephus* witnesses). But the children he found who had been left uncircumcised in this time of apostasy, he took and circumcised them: The words of the Author in 1Mac 2.46 are, "And whatever uncircumcised children they found within the coast of Israel, they forcibly circumcised."<sup>77</sup>

I know this has no further strength than that of a *human testimony*, but it speaks fully of what the sense was in those times, concerning the Covenant-Interest of children. *Namely*, the apostasy of their *immediate parents* could not prejudice it, so as to render them incapable of circumcision. This strongly reasons that their Covenant-Right derived from *Abraham*, and was not suspended on *their parents*. *Mattathias*, who did this, was not only a man zealous for the Law, but may also be presumed to have understood it better than many others, seeing that he was a Priest.

#### **§4. The current of sacred history.**

Not only the passages insisted on before, but the whole current of Scripture where these things are mentioned, runs very smoothly this way. But especially that phrase touched on before (*your seed in their generations*) will permit no other sense. It is by no means capable of being restrained to the immediate seed. Even as a similar expression in Gen 9.12<sup>78</sup> secured *Noah's* children from drowning by the waters

of a universal deluge, to the end of the world, so this promise gave a Covenant-Interest to the seed of *Abraham*, till the times of reformation.

We do not exclude the immediate seed, *namely Isaac*; but the promise passes on much further. It is to be fulfilled in a *seed multiplied exceedingly*, and formed into a *Kingdom*. This was not fulfilled until *Isaac* and his immediate offspring also, were laid in the dust.

Moreover, the inheritance promised in the *land of Canaan*, is given to *this seed* for an *everlasting possession*. This was fulfilled in their *successive inheriting* of it from generation to generation. Therefore, the seed intended was such that it would be propagated through many generations, the last of which is as directly spoken of here, as the first. Circumcision is to be observed by them (on account of the promise and command now given) *for an everlasting covenant*. The relation of the carnal seed to God in an external, typical covenant; the inheritance of *Canaan* by virtue of this; and the seal of circumcision — are all of one date, and all expired together.

#### ***§5. The Church-State of Israel built on this Covenant.***

That these things may be better understood, we must further observe, that this Covenant of Circumcision was the foundation on which the Church-State of *Israel* after the flesh was built.

I don't say that their Church-State was *exactly* and *completely formed* by this ordinance *alone*. But I intend this: that in the Covenant of Circumcision were contained the *first rudiments* of *that in the wilderness*, the latter filling up and completing the former. Indeed, it was made with them *in pursuance of it*, and for the full accomplishment of the promises now made to *Abraham*. Therefore, the privilege of the carnal seed of *Abraham* by virtue of the Covenant of Circumcision, can rise no higher than the advantage and privilege of a Jew, by virtue of the covenant in the wilderness.

#### ***§6. Circumcision is the entrance and boundary of Jewish Communion.***

To confirm this, I will offer these things:

FIRST, circumcision was the *entrance into*, and *boundary of communion* in the Jewish Church. And it was made so by the express

command of God himself, who straitly enjoined that whoever broke the covenant by the neglect of circumcision, would be *cut off from his people*, Gen 17.14. And as it was a *gate of privilege* to them, so was it no less a *bond of duty*. It not only obliged them to obey the will of God so far as it was now made known to *Abraham*, but also to observe all those laws and ordinances that were later delivered to them by *Moses*, when so delivered. For the circumcised person was a *debtor to keep the whole Law*, Gal 5.3. And this obligation resulted from its *proper use and end* in its *primitive institution*. For we do not read of its appointment to any *new end* by *Moses*, nor of any *use* it was assigned to *de novo* (anew), which it did not have (at least virtually) from its *first appointment*: It was from first to last, a *visible character* upon this people as separated to God from other Nations; and as such, they boasted of it: And therefore it may be concluded to belong to that covenant from which sprang all their rights and privileges as such a people. And where *the sign* was not *varied*, there was no essential variation or *change* in the *covenant* itself.

### **§7. *How Levi paid Tithes in Abraham.***

SECONDLY, in the New Testament, all the advantage and privilege of *Israel* after the flesh is expressly referred to the Covenant of Circumcision. For so the Holy Ghost speaks by *Paul* in Rom 3.1: *What advantage then does the Jew have? Or what profit is there in circumcision?* You see these phrases, “*the advantage of the Jew*,” and “*the profit of circumcision*,” are set down as *convertible*. They import the same thing; what belongs to the one, belongs to the other. And wherever circumcision is mentioned in the New Testament, it is spoken of as no less belonging to the *Mosaic* economy than to any other part of the Law first given by him (though the first institution was not of *Moses*, but of the Fathers). And boasting in circumcision is esteemed to be boasting in the flesh, as much as boasting in any other Old Testament privilege of the Jew (see *Philippians* 3). From all this, we may safely conclude that the *Covenant of Circumcision* was of the *same kind* as the *Levitical Covenant*, afterwards annexed to it — or rather built upon it — for the full accomplishing of its design.

I might also insist on *Levi’s paying tithes in Abraham*; which could not have been reckoned to him if he had not been *in Abraham* — i.e.,



considered as a head in some Covenant-Transaction in which *Levi* was covenanted for by *Abraham*: Nor could this have been pleaded by the Apostle, as it is in *Heb* 7.9-10, if that covenant in which the *Levitical* priesthood was founded, and to which it belonged, had not originally been made with *Abraham*. But I pass on from this.

**§8. *Israel delivered from Egypt by virtue of this Covenant.***

THIRDLY, The Scriptures everywhere affirm that the Lord brought *Israel* out of *Egypt*, formed their Church-State by establishing the order of his solemn worship among them, and gave them the land of *Canaan* in possession, in *remembrance* of His covenant with *Abraham*, and for fulfilling its promises. For instance, let these places be well weighed: *Exo* 2.24-25; *Deu* 29.10-13; *Neh* 9.7-9, *etc.*, *Psa* 78 Cf. *Psa* 105. And in this, He was known to them by *his name* *JEHOVAH* [I AM], as giving *being* (existence) to His promise in the actual accomplishment of it, for which their Fathers depended on *His all-sufficiency*, *Exo* 6 Cf. *Gen* 17.1. Thus, if we follow the clue of Scripture in our inquiries as to the origin of the Covenant of Peculiarity made with *Israel* after the flesh, it will certainly guide us to that covenant which God made with *Abraham* for his natural offspring, and sealed by circumcision. And yet, in the New Testament that *Covenant of Peculiarity* is always styled *old*, and *carnal*; a covenant from which the *Gospel Covenant* is *distinguished*; and to which *in many respects* it is *opposed*. See *Jer* 31.31-34. and *Heb* 8.8-13.

Nor does any just exception lie against what has been said, from the *enlargement* of the *terms and articles* of this covenant in the *consummation* of it in the wilderness. For that will not in the least infer any substantial difference between *this* covenant and the Covenant of Circumcision, seeing that it is no more than God has done by the Gospel with respect to the New Covenant that was confirmed in Christ to *Abraham*. That which was first summed up in one promise, *In you all nations shall be blessed*, was abundantly enlarged, cleared, and filled up with its own ordinances, and made the entire rule of the Church's obedience when the *fulness of time* came which that promise had respect to. And yet the New Testament is not *another* Gospel differing from that preached to *Abraham*, nor *another* covenant differing from that confirmed before by God in Christ. In like manner, the *filling up* of this Covenant of

Circumcision was reserved to the time of God's performing what He now promised to *Abraham*, without the least change of the nature or design of the covenant itself.

**§9. *Some of the immediate seed excluded.***

We come now to the second proposition, *namely*, that from the first establishment of this covenant, some of the immediate seed of *Abraham* were excluded.

Its promises belonged to *Isaac's line* in their generations, from age to age. But they did not pertain to the immediate seed of *Abraham* by *Hagar* or by *Keturah*. Their extent was restrained by the express caution of God himself, to whom it belonged to set the bounds of this Covenant-Relation and Interest. And that was in the very first making of the Covenant of Circumcision with *Abraham*. Read diligently *Gen 17.19-21. In Isaac shall your seed be called*. It was *Isaac's Seed*, and not *Ishmael's*, that the Lord would set apart for Himself, and would give the land of *Canaan* to, and establish his solemn worship among them, and be a God to them. And yet *Abraham* was as much a believer, and as much in covenant with God (as to his personal interest in the Covenant of Grace) when he begat *Isaac* as when he begat *Ishmael*.

If it is objected that *Ishmael* was at first included and interested in the covenant, but was afterwards rejected and cast out for his profane mocking of *Isaac*, it will be answered:

That supposition is against the express words and letter of the text urged before, and the limitation which God, the Author of the covenant, made of its promises. Before *Ishmael* was circumcised, God declares that He did not give the promises of His covenant to him but to *Isaac*, with whom it would be established. So that, *Ishmael's* being cast out of *Abraham's* family afterwards, in no way implies that he was in covenant till then; but it only implies this much: that then it was made more manifest than ever, that the covenant did not pertain to *Ismael*, and that he must be concluded to be under the exception laid against him before. And the divine confirmation of what *Sarah* then required, is grounded on that revelation of His will that he now made to *Abraham*. This will be evident to anyone who compares *Gen 17* with *Gen 21.12-13: Cast out the bond woman and her son, for in Isaac shall your seed be called*.

And therefore *Abraham* afterwards voluntarily sent his sons by *Keturah* far away from *Isaac*, and from the promised land, *Gen* 25.1-6, even though they were guilty of no such wickedness as *Ishmael* who mocked *Isaac*. But from all appearances they might be very holy and good men, the true Children of *Abraham* by faith according to the tenor of the Covenant of *Grace* — even though they might not be joint-heirs with *Isaac* according to the tenor of the Covenant of *Circumcision*.

### **§10. The instance of *Esau*, Act 7.8.**

It is moreover to be observed that, notwithstanding the covenant seed of *Abraham* was called in *Isaac*, and his immediate children were only two sons, *Esau* and *Jacob*, yet the right of this Covenant-Blessing did not equally descend on them both. But once more, the Lord restrains it by *rejecting Esau* and *choosing Jacob*, and that was before the children had done either good or evil. This was that the purpose of God according to election might stand, and that here He might set before us an awful type of His sovereignty in the later dispensation of the grace of the Gospel. Indeed afterwards, by the profane selling of his birthright, and despising the inheritance, *Esau* rendered himself manifestly unworthy of the blessing. But *before* this, God had declared that *Jacob* and his seed, and not *Esau*, should inherit the promises of this covenant. <sup>79</sup>

It may possibly be from this, that *Isaac* and *Jacob* are so particularly mentioned in *Act* 7.8, because of the *special limitation* of the promises to them; and because they were *the seed* brought forth in *virtue of the promise* given to *Abraham*.

### **§11. Not all have an interest in the Covenant.**

Thus plainly these things lie before us in the history of the Scripture, that they will hardly be called into question if our minds are not *prepossessed* with some particular notion to which they are not suited. But it is earnestly pleaded by some, “That all the immediate seed of *Abraham* were interested in this covenant, and that the first right in its promise belonged to them, because the seal of the covenant was applied to them all in their circumcision. Doing this must be absurd and useless, if they had not been parties in that covenant to which this *seal* belonged.”

To this, I answer:

1. It is in no way fitting that our uncertain conjectures or inferences should be opposed to the express testimony of God himself; or that His wisdom should be called into question on their Account. Now, although God laid his command on *Abraham* to circumcise *Ishmael*, yet at the same time He tells him that His covenant would be established with *Isaac*, excluding *Ishmael*, to whom he will not grant a joint-interest with *Isaac* in this covenant (though *Abraham* interceded for it). But He dismisses his claim, and lays out *Ishmael's* portion by himself, in another inferior blessing.

2. *Abraham* was as strictly bound to circumcise *all the males* in his family — those who were bought with his money from the stranger who was not of his seed; and the children of those bondservants who were born in his House — as he was for his own children, *Gen* 17.12-13. And this obligation remained on the heirs of his covenant in their generations. And yet none of these servants (nor yet *Ishmael*) were made parties in the covenant by this, such that its promises would be sealed to them by circumcision, as their own inheritance. And,

3. To suppose an interest in the covenant, without a right to its promises, is to introduce a mere chimera <sup>80</sup> or fancy, instead of a real Covenant-Interest. Now the promises of this covenant are that God will give to the Seed of *Abraham*, called in *Isaac*, the land of *Canaan* for an everlasting possession; and that He will be a God to them in their generations, and they will be a peculiar people to him. Can we suppose that these promises belonged to *Ishmael* and to the bondservants in *Abraham's* family? Or that they were ever made good to them? If not, then seeing that the performance of these promises was the fulfilling of the covenant on God's part, whose faithfulness is to all generations, we must conclude they never had the grant of them, nor an interest in them. And if the promises of the covenant did not belong to them, then they were not parties in covenant. And if they were not in covenant; then they were not circumcised on account of their own Covenant-Interest, but in obedience to the particular and *positive command* of God.

***§12. Seal applied to all, but not all are subjects of the Covenant.***

It appears therefore, from what has already been said, that circumcision was a seal of the covenant *on all*, but not *to all*, who were circumcised. It was a seal of the covenant *to the children of the covenant*, and it gave them *admission* to all the blessings promised in it. But it did not make their *slaves* free of the commonwealth of *Israel*, nor was it given for their sakes. And if they could not claim the *outward privilege* of an *Israelite* by it, it will hardly be granted that solely on account of their being bought by a Jew (though their master himself, perhaps, had no interest in the Covenant of Grace) they would be made the subjects of a New Covenant-Blessing — and that was whether they knew, or were capable of consenting to the terms of that covenant or not. For that might be the case of many of them, seeing that the Law concerned those who were purchased in their infancy, as well as those of riper years. One as well the other *must be circumcised*, because of the command given to his master. Perhaps this might belong to the typical holiness of the family of an *Israelite*. But whether we can fully understand the reason for it or not, it suffices that the wise God ordained it to be so.

However, this is certain, that it was the *positive command of God*, and not simply *Covenant-Interest*, that was the rule according to which circumcision was administered, and by which both the subjects and circumstances of it were determined. And so must it be in all things of like nature. For in Matters of *positive right*, we can have no warrant for our practice except from a *positive precept*. For things of this kind do not fall within the compass of *common light*, or general principles of natural religion. They have their origin from a *particular, distinct, and independent will of the lawgiver*. And therefore, inferences built on general notions may soon lead us into mistakes about them, if upon such inferences, we *form a rule* for ourselves of a *larger extent* than the *express words of the institution* warrant.

### **§13. Some inferences from the foregoing discourse.**

The propositions that were laid down, being thus far explained and confirmed, I will draw to a close of this chapter with an inference or two grounded on the foregoing discourse.

1. Whoever holds himself obliged *by the command*, and is interested in *the promises* of the Covenant of Circumcision, is *equally*

*concerned in the whole of them, seeing that together they are that covenant.* And therefore (omitting now to speak of the yoke of the Law belonging to it) whoever applies one promise or branch of this covenant to the carnal seed of a believing parent (esteeming every such parent to have an interest in the covenant, that is coordinate with *Abraham's*) should seriously consider *the whole promissory part* of the covenant, in the true import and extent of it. And he should see whether he can make such an *application of it together*, without manifest absurdity.

For (to pass by other things), if I may conclude that my concern in this covenant is such that by one promise of it, I am assured that God has taken my immediate seed into covenant with Himself, then I must on the same ground also conclude that my seed in remote generations will no less be in covenant with Him, seeing that the promise runs to *the seed in their generations*. Yes, and that this seed will be separated from other nations as a *peculiar people* to God, and will have the *land of Canaan for an everlasting possession*; seeing that all these things are included in the Covenant of Circumcision. But since these things cannot be allowed, nor are they pleaded for by anyone I know of, we must conclude that *Abraham* was considered in this covenant, not in the capacity or respect of a *private believing parent*, but of one chosen by God, to be *the father of, and a federal Root to a nation* that for special ends, would be separated to God by a *peculiar covenant*. And when those ends are accomplished, the covenant itself by which they obtained that right and relation, must cease. And the same cannot be pleaded for by any other, without reviving the whole economy that is built on it.

2. The notion of those who assert that this Covenant-Interest is the *basis* of such a federal holiness of believers' children under the New Testament, that it gives them a right to *baptism*, moreover labors under these inconveniences:

(1) They generally straiten the terms of Covenant-Interest (if we consider it as derived from *Isaac's* line) by restraining it to the immediate offspring. It was not so restrained in this covenant, but came just as fully upon remote generations. They also exclude the servants and slaves of Christians, with the children born of them, from that privilege which they suppose they have enjoyed under the

Old Testament, in being sealed with the sign or token of the Covenant of Grace.

(2) But then, on the other hand (according to what has already been proved) they make a believer's interest in this covenant of a larger extent than, in truth, *Abraham's* ever was. For they would have *all* the immediate seed of believers be included in it. Whereas we see, of all the sons of *Abraham* according to the flesh, *only one, Isaac*, was admitted to the inheritance of the blessing, and the promises of this covenant.



## CHAP. 7. The Covenant of Circumcision (3).

### **§1. *The meaning and extent of the Great promise in Gen 17.7-8.***

It will be expedient, in the next place, to more fully search out the true meaning and extent of *that great promise* in the Covenant of Circumcision, which was but briefly touched on before. *Namely, I will establish my covenant—to be a God to you, and to your Seed after you*, Gen 17.7. And again, the promise of *Canaan to Israel* for an everlasting possession, is backed with the same assurance: *and I will be their God*, v. 8. This inquiry is even more necessary, because many conceive that the *entire blessing* of the *New Covenant* is comprehended in these words. seeing that the like promise is given as the summary and assurance of *that covenant* in *Jeremiah 31* and *Hebrews 8*. Upon this, they conclude that it is *the Covenant of Grace* that God is now making with *Abraham*, and which he sealed with circumcision; and that spiritual blessings are directly bequeathed to him by it, both for himself and his seed. Consequently, it was none other than an *interest* in the grace and promise of the *New Covenant* that was *sealed to his infant seed* by circumcision.

This notion militates against various things that have been pointed at before in the account we have given of *this transaction*. But I conceive that on a more thorough disquisition, it will be found without sufficient strength to shake those principles that are already laid down, and must yet be built upon in the progress of our discourse. Therefore, in order to free you from any entanglement by objections raised from this, I will proceed gradually to the solution of the doubt so moved.

### **§2. *Several premises to rightly understand it.***

And, that I may not be misunderstood in what is to follow, I will prepare my way by offering these things to serious thoughts:

1. A considerable time before this transaction recorded in *Genesis 17*, the Covenant of Grace was confirmed by God to *Abraham* in Christ Jesus; and that was not only in his capacity as *a private believer*; but as one bearing the *relation of a father to all believers*: And *this relation* is unique to himself; none can claim a partnership with him in it.

2. In the establishment of this covenant, there was a *Seed promised* to him, who would certainly inherit the spiritual and eternal blessings of it; for *the promise was sure to all the seed*: But this was a *seed of believers* collected out of all nations, and united to Christ by faith, and not *the Children of Abraham* according to *the flesh* — as is manifest in almost every page of the New Testament.

3. It has been moreover proved that God chose *Abraham* to be the root, and father of a typical people, even of a nation, the whole body of which he would take into a *peculiar relation and nearness* to himself; and upon whom He would bestow many great favors and privileges, until *the fulness of time* came for bringing forth *that Seed* to which the promises of the New Covenant eminently pertained.

4. One great end of this separation of *Abraham* and his seed by *Isaac*, from all other families in the earth, was *bringing forth the Messiah* in his line, and the evident accomplishment of *the great and first promise*. This was a privilege that *Abraham* had in the flesh, and his seed derived from him: that they were set apart as a *special channel* through which the promised Seed would be derived and brought forth into the World, *Rom 9.4-5*. And therefore,

5. On this account their privilege, and *Covenant-State* was secured to them, such that they could never be *utterly divested* of it in their generations, until the great end of it was accomplished by the *Messiah's* coming in the flesh.<sup>81</sup> And the nature of the thing itself sufficiently demonstrates that it was to then cease, in that it was now brought to the *limited time and end* appointed to it. And upon this, all the carnal privileges and ordinances of worship suited to that state, necessarily ceased and became useless also.

6. During the time in which *their covenant* retained its *full vigor*, and all their carnal privileges remained good to them *in their utmost extent*, all their advantage *lay short of an interest in the Covenant of Grace*. This they could never claim by virtue of a carnal descent from *Abraham*, as in *Mat 3.9*. For it was not a carnal relation to *Abraham*, but *walking in the steps of his faith*, that alone could interest them in this covenant, and its blessings. The Apostle professedly discourses about this in *Romans 4* and many other places: So then,

**§3. *Israel was a typical Church state, and a spiritual Church.***

7. The *carnal*, and the *spiritual seed*, and also the *covenants* in which their respective *privileges* are stated, were from the beginning, *in their own nature, distinct* from one another. Although, during the *minority of the Church*, under the *Mosaic economy*, these different blessings *ordinarily met* in the same *subjects*. For in that time, the seed of *Abraham* after the flesh comes under a twofold consideration:

(1) The whole body of them is to be considered as a people separated unto God for the ends mentioned before, and formed into a *typical state* by the Law of *Moses*, vested with *carnal privileges*, and having an earthly inheritance. These things were typical of *spiritual blessings* under the Gospel.

(2) A great number of them were made the true and real members of the spiritual Church, and the assembly of the redeemed of the Lord. By faith, they inherited and enjoyed those spiritual blessings of which the outward privilege of the carnal Jew was but a shadow. For that nation was made a *typical Church*; such that they were also the *only true visible Church* that God then had in the world. And therefore, while the wall of separation stood between them and the Gentiles, the oracles of God were committed to them, and his true worship was settled among them. The *covenants of promise* were given to them, and the way of salvation by a Covenant of Grace, through the promised Seed, was made known among them (though but darkly). The blood of God's *special elect* generally ran in their veins. So that, people who were savingly interested in God, and truly holy, were for the most part found among them, while the Gentiles lived *without God in the world*.

Thus I say it was *ordinarily*; for even then, the grace of God might superabound to some few among the Gentiles. And therefore that Church that was *really holiness to the Lord*,<sup>82</sup> and not only *typically*, was found within the compass of *their enclosure*. Thus as *Isaac* was not only a *type* of the *children of promise* in the New Testament, but was also *one of those who* by faith truly inherited the spiritual blessing of *Abraham*; and *Jacob* was not only a *type of the elect seed*, but also a *real part* of it, so the same may be said of all who came later *of the Circumcision, who were not of the Circumcision only, but also walked in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham — which he had, being yet uncircumcised*. They

were in one respect *a type*, and in another, *true members* of the *General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn*. Though one of these *they found as pertaining to the flesh*, the other *they obtained by faith*.

#### ***§4. Israel remained under the Law till Christ came.***

Two things are to be observed about this *Israel in Israel*:

1. That notwithstanding their interest in the promise by faith, they were not freed from the yoke and discipline of *Moses' Law* until Christ came. They were indeed *children*, even the children of *Abraham* on a spiritual account. And by the grace of a free promise, which the Law could not disannul, they were relieved of its rigor as to their spiritual and eternal state. But being *underage children*, the *Pedagogy* they were under, did not *differ at all from that of servants*; nor could they be discharged by *this Schoolmaster* before Christ came, Gal 3.24-25.

2. They were blessed with spiritual blessings, and had an interest in eternal life, *in Circumcision and under the Law*; but none of them obtained this *by Circumcision, or by the Law*: That whole economy that *Israel* after the flesh was under, was *in and by itself insufficient and weak* in order for obtaining the end of eternal happiness, and the justification of a sinner before God. It could not *make those who came to it perfect*, nor make the *carnal seed* heirs of *spiritual blessings*. But *a right to them* was evermore grounded upon a spiritual relation to *Abraham*, and an interest in *that promise* which the Covenant of Circumcision was but a handmaid to. And therefore, those who *rested in* their carnal privileges, and sought eternal happiness from them, perverted their true end, and could never obtain what they followed after.

Lastly, to conclude, the Covenant of Circumcision belonged to the body of the carnal seed, even to the Jewish Church. The foundation of their state is laid there, and their right and privilege is thereby expressly stated, *in their generations*. And therefore, as we readily grant the promise now under consideration, to belong to the seed of *Abraham* after the flesh, so with good reason we affirm that it must be taken in such a sense as we may find verified in that people and nation to whom it belonged. And that will in no way contradict or

interfere with the general design of the Gospel, nor with the plain and indisputable sense of other texts of Scripture.

**§5. *The promise was God's engagement to fulfill the Covenant.***

These things being premised, we will now come closer to the words themselves, and inquire *what that good and blessing is*, which is *ensured* by them *to this seed of Abraham*.

It is evident that this promise, *I will be their God*; with that foregoing promise in *Gen 17.7*, give a *general assurance of some good* to the people in covenant. But it is not to be supposed that they are promises of some *particular good or blessing* that is of a higher nature than is comprehended in *any other promises* of the covenant. For the true import of this general promise is,

“That God has engaged himself, and all the properties of His nature, for the exact fulfilling of all the promises of the covenant now made with them, according to the true tenor, and conditions of the said covenant.” <sup>83</sup>

All the *divine perfections* are laid in as *pledges* that the promises will not fail on God's part, seeing that as the need requires, they will *all be exerted* for the good and advantage of this people in fulfilling the promises given to them. But still, these communications of God *to* them, and actings *for* them, both in respect to the blessings He will bestow, and also the terms and conditions on which they will be bestowed, are limited by the covenant He has made with them, and the nature and extent of its promises.

This will more plainly appear to be the true sense, if we duly weigh *the terms* of the promise inquired into, *I will be their God* — that is, *a God to them*; they will have an interest in all the perfections of My nature.

For, either God is obliged by this promise to communicate himself in the highest degree possible to all those to whom it is made, and to do the utmost for them that may be done without implying a contradiction to His being and the infinite perfections of it — and so, bring them absolutely to the utmost degree of happiness that omnipotent goodness can raise them to — or else the good promised must fall under some particular limitation. If it falls under any

limitation (as certainly it does), then those bounds must be set either by the import of the terms in which the promise is made, as considered absolutely and by themselves, or some other way. The first cannot be affirmed, for *the terms* are general and indeterminate. Therefore it is to be limited in some other way. And that must be *by the particular promises and conditions* of that covenant to which this general promise belongs. And if so, then there is not, nor can there be, any *greater good* promised by it, than what the nature of that covenant allows, and its particular promises give a right in, to those who are concerned parties.

“And these things being so, none can prove from this that there is a grant of spiritual blessings to, nor yet a right in gospel ordinances for, the carnal seed of *Abraham*, or of *any believer* as such, unless he can produce a particular promise which contained such a grant, or gave such a right to them.”

#### **§6. *This promise added both to the Old and New Covenant.***

So then, what is principally intended and fully expressed in this engagement, is no more than the *necessary result of any Covenant-Transaction* of God with men. For once His *truth* is engaged in a promise, *all the properties of his nature* are respectively engaged there for making good that promise. And therefore, such a promise, in its own nature, contains no more than a *general assurance* of *any covenant* that God makes with men. It cannot by itself be the *distinguishing character* of any one covenant, in opposition to or contradistinction from another. Nor does it determine of *what kind* the promised blessings are, or *the way* in which they will be enjoyed.

And this is why you find this promise equally and indifferently annexed both to the *Old Covenant* and *the New*, the *Covenant of Works* and *that of Grace*: The Truth of this will be manifest by a diligent comparison of *Hebrews 8* with *Jeremiah 31*; and this with *Genesis 17*, *Exodus 6.7*, and *Deu 26.17-18*. Therefore, there is no reason to conclude that, because we find this promise in the *Covenant of Grace*, every covenant in which it is found must be of the *same nature*. For the covenant is not *measured by this promise*; but on the contrary, <sup>84</sup> its special import is *limited by the covenant* to which it belongs.

#### **§7. *A brief history of its accomplishment for Israel.***

Thus far I have endeavored to set before you the *genuine sense* and true interpretation of this *great promise* in the Covenant of Circumcision, and to give you *the reasons* by which it is confirmed. And it may add some further light to what has been said, to briefly represent the history of its accomplishment, which I take from the holy Scriptures, as follows.

The Lord abundantly blessed *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and guided them with His eye in all their migrations from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people. And when He broke the whole staff of bread in the land of *Canaan*, and in the adjacent countries, He made provision by a wonderful series of providences, for the sustenance of *Jacob's* family, by sending *Joseph* before them into the Land of *Egypt*. And for their sakes, He raised him to a capacity, not only to secure them from want, but to preserve the lives of thousands more. And when the House of *Jacob* was by this means brought into the Land of *Egypt*, the Lord was with them there. And when the time of the promise drew near, He caused them to increase and multiply exceedingly. And though the *Egyptians* sought by all means to oppress them, and dealt subtly with them, yet by all their artifice and cruelty they could make no earnings from their work. For the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites grew.

And in the midst of their calamitous distress, *Moses* was brought forth, whom the Lord had designed for a deliverer and a savior to them. In order for this. he was preserved in a miraculous manner from all dangers and temptations, from his birth to the time that he was sent about his great work. And in the time when the bondage of *Israel* grew to its extremity, the Lord's eye was still open upon them, and he heard their cry, and remembered his covenant with their fathers, and sent *Moses* and *Aaron* to deliver them. Then *his bow* was *made quite ready*, Hab 3.9. And in a course of miracles — by signs, and wonders, and mighty works, for which his name is celebrated to all generations, in that very day which he had set in the promise to their Fathers — He brought them out of the Land of *Egypt*, and delivered them from the house of their bondage with a high hand. Yes, he divided the Red Sea before them, and led them through the deep as on dry land. But He buried *Pharaoh* and all his host in the same waters that had been like a wall on the right hand



and on the left, while the redeemed of the Lord passed over. He also guided them in the wilderness, and afforded the visible token of HIS presence with them, *in a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night*.

From his right hand there went forth a fiery Law for them, because he loved them, by which He formed both their civil, and ecclesiastical polity. In this they were immediately subjected to Himself, and made a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. And the Lord's tabernacle was pitched in the midst of them, so that there was no nation under heaven that had God so near, as the Lord their God was to them in all that they called upon Him for. Moreover, he gave his good Spirit to instruct them, which was poured upon *Moses, Aaron, and Miriam*, with the seventy elders, and those prophets which from time-to-time God raised up among them. He also fed them with manna from heaven, and gave them water out of the rock to drink. And all the time of their forty years' travel in the wilderness, their feet were not swollen, nor did their garments grow old: He dried up *Jordan* also, and brought them into the Land of *Canaan*, and drove out before them nations that were more in number, and mightier than they. And there he blessed them with the blessings of heaven above, and of the earth beneath. So that nothing *failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken concerning them*, Jos 23.14. But their state was made prosperous and happy, because *the Lord was their God*, Psal 144.15. Notwithstanding all their provocations, He had compassion on them, when in their distresses they cried to Him, and He delivered them. So that, the scepter did not depart from *Judah*, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until *Shiloh* (i.e. Christ) came. You have much of this summed up in *Nehemiah 9, Psalm 105, and Psalm 144, with Acts 7*.

### **§8. The Fleshly Blessings of Israel fall short of the New Covenant.**

In all these respects (with others of a similar nature insisted on before) there was a *glory* on the ministry of the Old Testament, 2Cor 3.7-11. The *Jew* had a *great advantage*, and there was *profit in circumcision*, but *chiefly in that the oracles of God were committed to them*, Rom 3.1; 9.4. Theirs were *the covenants of promise*; and the solemn worship of God was maintained among them. For *salvation was of the Jews*, Joh 4.22. And in these things, *this promise was fulfilled, that the Lord would be a God to them in their generations*.

<sup>85</sup> And yet all this lies short of an actual, personal, and saving interest in the Covenant of Grace, as the Apostle *Paul* argues at large in his *epistle* to the *Romans*, and particularly in *chapters* 9-11. Nor could he have affirmed that committing the oracles of God to them was the *chief profit* or greatest benefit of circumcision, if ever God had appointed that to be *the seal of their interest in the Covenant of Grace*. This is undoubtedly much greater than any *external benefit* or advantage.

But moreover, the Jews had this privilege: that the Son of God was to be made flesh, of the seed of *Abraham*; and to be *manifested* among them, being made *a minister of the circumcision for fulfilling the promises made to the Fathers*, Rom 15.8. So also, the *first tender* of the grace and salvation of the gospel, of right belonged to them. The preaching of repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name was to begin at *Jerusalem*, Luk 24.47. And as this was an argument for God's great favor, so it might be a great encouragement to them to receive the Gospel, and to expect salvation by Christ according to the tender made in it. *Peter* urged it for this end. Act 2.38-39, *Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you and to your Children*, etc. The promise which he particularly refers to, is the one cited before, of the salvation of all who in the day of the Gospel call upon the name of the Lord, and the *pouring out of his Spirit upon all flesh*, etc. see ver. 17, 21.

The promise of the Spirit is also mentioned by *Paul*, as the great blessing of the Gospel, Gal 3.14. The Spirit was then to be poured out on many in its miraculous and extraordinary gifts, and on all true believers in a New Testament measure. Accordingly the Apostle exhorts them to the obedience of the Gospel, that they might obtain the remission of their sins, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This he assures them of, on the Terms proposed. *For* (he says) *the promise is to you, and your children*. You are in no way excluded from the hope of this blessing, even though you have been the betrayers and murderers of Christ himself. But on the contrary, you (as Jews) have a special interest in the promise, so far as that its accomplishment is to be begun among you, and the first offer of its blessing belongs to you.

They could not have an actual interest in the promise of salvation, until they believed and repented. But as explained before, the *promise* was made *to them* while unbelievers. And in a like sense, the Apostle *Paul* says of them that the *covenants* and the *promises* (as well as the *giving of the Law, and Levitical service*) were *theirs*, *Rom 9.4*. Their covenant brought *salvation* to them. But it was receiving it by faith, when so tendered, that gave them a particular interest in it. And the interest of *their children*, or *posterity*, in the *promises*, can reach no further than theirs, from whom it is supposed to be derived. It is the same thing, in effect, that *Peter* urges on the same people, to persuade their obedience to the doctrine of Christ. *Act 3.25-26*, *You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from your iniquities.*

And suitable to this, we find that the apostles in all places, wherever they came with the glad tidings of the Gospel, first applied themselves to the Jews, holding it *necessary that the word of God should first be preached to them*, *Act 13.46-47*.

### **§9. Covenant of Circumcision was not the NT Covenant of Grace.**

These *corollaries follow* from that account which has been given of the *Covenant of Circumcision, its nature and promises*.

1. This was a *Covenant of Grace and Mercy*, having its origin from the mere goodness and undeserved favor of God towards *Israel*, *Deu 7.7-8*. By this, many excellent privileges were given to them, which no other nation under heaven had a right in, except themselves. And these were conferred on them in pursuance of the great design of God's grace in the Covenant of Redemption by Christ. Yet it was not that *Covenant of Grace* which God made with *Abraham* for all his spiritual seed, which was formerly confirmed by God in Christ, and through which *all nations* (that is, true believers in every nation) have been ever since, now are, and shall be, *blessed* with the spiritual and eternal blessing of *Abraham*.

2. It is granted that this covenant ultimately had a respect to spiritual blessings — as it was disposed in the manifold wisdom of God in

*subservience* to the Covenant of Grace, and as it was *added to the promise* until the fulness of time came. Yet it was not *immediately and directly*, a covenant of spiritual blessings, nor could it ever convey to the carnal seed of *Abraham*, as such, a right and interest in them.

3. Notwithstanding the promises made in this Covenant of Circumcision, and the separation of *Israel* to be the peculiar people of God, in pursuance of them, their Church-State was completed by the covenant in the wilderness, when the set time for fulfilling those promises in that respect had fully come. Yet for the present, this covenant did not confine the solemn worship of God (by sacrifices or otherwise) to *Abraham's* family. Nor were *other holy men* then living, under any obligation to *incorporate* themselves into it *by circumcision*, or at all to take on themselves that *sign or seal* of this *Covenant of Peculiarity* that God now made with *Abraham*. Yet without doubt, they would have done this if in its first institution it had been given simply and directly, as a *seal of the Covenant of Grace*. For then, because of their interest in that covenant, both in point of duty and privilege, it would have equally belonged to them as to the seed and family of *Abraham*.

#### ***§10. Patriarchs uncircumcised, yet interested in Covenant of Grace.***

But from the sacred history, it is evident that the command by virtue of which circumcision was administered, extended no further than to *Abraham* and his Family. And therefore we have no ground to conclude that *Lot* (though nearly allied to *Abraham*) was circumcised, seeing that nothing in the command of God, or the first institution of circumcision, obliged him to it, or interested him in it. And yet there is no doubt of his interest in the Covenant of Grace. Nor was *Lot* the only righteous man then living in the world, besides those of *Abraham's* Family. For *of the Patriarchs, Heber, Salah, and Shem* were now living. And as they had their *distinct families* and interests, so there is no question that the pure worship of God was maintained among them. And they promoted the interest of true religion to the utmost of their power while they lived. Indeed, *Melchizedek* was lived about this time. Whether he was named *Shem* before, or another, it doesn't concern us to inquire, much less determine. But *this* is certain: that it was he who was *the Priest of the*

*most high God, and King of Salem*, and in both these respects he was the most eminent type of Jesus Christ who was ever in the world. He was a person greater than *Abraham*, for *Abraham* paid tithes to him, and was blessed by him. Now, considering that he was both King and Priest, there is no doubt that there was *a society of men* who were ruled by him, and for whom he ministered. For a Priest is *ordained for men* in things pertaining to God. And this *society* was at this time, as much *a Church of God* as *Abraham's* family was, and as truly interested in the Covenant of Grace as any others in it. Yet they were not concerned as parties in this Covenant of Circumcision, nor were they to be *signed* by it. And hence, it is manifest that *circumcision* was not at first applied as a *seal of the Covenant of Grace*, nor did an interest in it immediately render a man the proper subject of it.

Again, to suppose that all good men then living, would have been circumcised as *Abraham* was, and their offspring bound to keep this covenant in their generations, as his were, would necessarily frustrate one great (if not the greatest) end of circumcision, and of its covenant. This was separating one family and people from all others in the world, for bringing forth the *Messiah, that promised Seed* — of them and among them — for establishing all the promises made to the Fathers. And moreover, the promise of this covenant touching the inheritance of the land of *Canaan*, could never have been made good to them all. And yet certainly, the sealing of that promise was one thing intended in circumcision.

From the whole, it appears that on the one hand, there was a positive command which made it necessary to circumcise many who never had an interest in the Covenant of Grace; and on the other hand, from the first date of circumcision there were many truly interested in the Covenant of Grace, who were under no obligation to be circumcised. Thus, it is far from the truth, that a *New Covenant-Interest*, and the *Right to Circumcision*, may be inferred from one another.

### **§11. *Infants Church-membership.***

I would have put a close to this chapter here, except that I judge it may be convenient in this place, to briefly touch on that notion of *an infant's church-membership*. This is much spoken about with

reference to those times, the history of which we have already passed through. It is rather more convenient because of the light we may receive from the things already discoursed, to guide us to a right understanding of the true state of the question about it. Many have affirmed *such a thing* to have been done *from the beginning*, and great weight is laid on it in the controversy about the right subjects of baptism. It is judged to afford a sufficient ground for applying the seal of the covenant to the infant seed of believers. For my own part, I don't find occasion given in the Scriptures for any long discourses about it. And I don't desire to be *wise above what is written*. Therefore, I will endeavor in few words, to represent some things grounded on matter of fact records in the Scripture, which I conceive may be sufficient to determine our thoughts as to the issue of our present inquiry about it. And they are these that follow:

**§12. Five proposals: none argue for paedobaptism.**

1. First; the term *Church* in the Scriptures is not (that I find) applied to any *particular society of men* united in one body, in order to maintain the public and solemn worship of God among themselves — not before the children of *Israel* were completely formed into a Church-State by the covenant that God made with them in the wilderness. They are called *the Church in the Wilderness*, Act 7.38. Yet I don't doubt that *all good men* before that time belonged to that *general assembly* and *church* which Christ has redeemed with his blood, and made members of his body. And I grant that we may (using the term in a laxer sense) call any *family* or *society of men* truly worshiping God, *a Church of God*. Nevertheless, if we consider the circumstances relating to the different state of things in those different times, it will appear that *no society* before the Jewish Church was formed, can be called a *Church* in so strict and proper a sense as they might. For no other were so *formed into a Church-State* as they were.

2. Before *Abraham's* time, there was *no institution of an outward sign or seal of any covenant* to be applied either to infants or adult persons. And therefore, there could be no *inauguration* of this kind, nor *solemn right of initiation to Church privilege*, then in use among them. All that can be said of the children born in those families and societies, must result in things of another nature — *namely*, that they were under a more special and gracious providence of God than

others, being members of a family peculiarly interested in it. They also had the benefit of continual prayers for them, and the advantage of early and diligent instruction, being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the lord. And so they were preserved from many snares and temptations that others are liable to, by the discipline they were under. And being provoked to religion by the pious and holy example of those they conversed with, as soon they were capable of it (if they didn't break through all these fences when grown up, and revolt to a wicked and irreligious life) they *actually joined* with that family and society to which they belonged, in the solemn worship of God.

3. If we consider *Church-membership* in such a notion of it as would agree to that time in which *circumcision* was first instituted, then we can by no means conclude that a right to circumcision resulted from it. For certainly the Patriarchs and other good men then living, and their families, were as truly Church-members as *Abraham* and his family; and yet they were not therefore to be circumcised. Rather, the *particular law and positive institution* of this ordinance alone determined the subjects of it.

4. And moreover, it was not *membership in Abraham's family*, singly and simply considered, that brought a person under the law of circumcision, without respect to other *circumstances of time and sex* expressly set down in the institution. For circumcision was to be applied to *the males only*, though the right of *church-membership* belonged to *the females* as well as to them. And it is no satisfactory answer to say the female is not a *subject capable* of circumcision. For if it had pleased God to have made *Church-membership* the *reason and ground* of applying this seal of the covenant, he could easily have appointed *such a sign* as *all members* had been capable of. Besides, how does it appear that the females were utterly incapable of any kind of circumcision? Save that God required no such thing, *Vitriacus* reports that the *Jacobites use circumcision of both sexes*; and so do the *Habassines*.<sup>86</sup> And therefore, the thing in itself is not impossible; that which *has* been done, *may* be done. Moreover, we find the circumcising of the *males* was limited to the eighth day; it might not be done sooner, nor delayed longer. And *the slaves* that were bought with money *must be circumcised*, even though they were not Church-members, nor their children. From all this, it is



manifest that they did not proceed on a notion of *Church-membership*, but were strictly governed by divine institution in the matter of circumcising or not circumcising.

5. TO CONCLUDE. It is granted that the *Jewish infants* were *born members of that Church*. This privilege they had in the flesh. But this evidently belongs to *the national and typical Church-State* of that people, which state is dissolved by the Gospel. And it is so inconsistent with the ministry of it, that the position of the one, necessarily infers the abolition of the other. And therefore, this right and privilege of the Jew which was in the very foundation of their national Church-State, as separated from the Gentiles, cannot be transferred into, because it will not comport with the Gospel dispensation.

Besides, it is evident throughout the whole Gospel, that right of membership in the Jewish Church could never give to anyone, either infant or adult, a like right of membership in the Gospel Church. Nor was anyone ever received into it under that name,<sup>87</sup> because he had such a right according to the state of the Old Covenant. And there is good reason to conclude that the carnal seed of believers can derive no higher privilege from the Covenant of Circumcision, than the carnal Seed of *Abraham* obtained by it. And if it could not bring the one into the Gospel Church, nor give them a right to baptism without an actual compliance with the terms of the Gospel — by repentance and faith — then it can by no means do so for the other, even if we supposed them concerned in it, as indeed they are not.

It remains, therefore, that because circumcision of old was administered according to the positive law, and expresses the will of the Lord, so baptism ought to be now, and not otherwise. Nor can I see any ground to conclude for *paedobaptism*, until such a divine Law can be produced to warrant it, as there was given of old, for circumcising the male infants of the Jews.

## **CHAP. 8. Mutual Respect of the promises made to Abraham.**

### ***§1. The general design of this chapter.***

In the foregoing chapters, I endeavored to treat distinctly the promises given to *Abraham* — first those that belong to his spiritual, and then those which pertain to his carnal seed. These promises (notwithstanding their different nature, and importance) we have found frequently *intmixed in the same transaction* of God with *Abraham*. They presented to us are in the sacred history, *interwoven* the one with the other. And now the order of our discourse leads us to make a more particular inquiry into *that mutual respect of the promises* which might give *occasion for*, and render *necessary*, such an *intmixture* of them.

### ***§2. The intmixture of spiritual promises with temporal blessings.***

The first thing which I will offer to be considered on this head (topic), is that this *order and disposition* of the promises is excellently suited to the *dispensation of those times* in which they were given, and to that *Israelite Church-state* which was to be built upon them not long after. For these things were transacted long before the time appointed for the clear breaking forth of Gospel light into the World, which was not to be expected till Christ came in the flesh. Before his coming, the Law was to take place, and the economy of the Old Covenant was to remain for many generations. Therefore, although the Gospel was preached to *Abraham*, it was not delivered to him with that *plainness and perspicuity* that it has in the New Testament; but for the most part it was shadowed and figured by outward things. And hence, what concerns the state of *Israel* under the *Mosaic* economy is *more expressly and fully* declared to *Abraham*, than what concerns his spiritual seed under the Gospel. And therefore, though this latter is the chief thing intended and aimed at in all divine transactions with *Abraham* (because it is the perfection of all the rest), it is for the most part *mystically enfolded in*, and to be inferred from, *the typical respect* of the other to it. That leaves the glory of Gospel-grace still under that *veil* which accompanied the Old Testament state of the Church. The *full opening* of those promises that immediately belonged to the

Covenant of Grace, were reserved for another state of things in the Church. Heb 11.40, *God having provided some better thing for us, that they should not be made perfect without us.*

A dim light was suited to those times; and it could only be but dim, so long as the promises lay so entangled within one another. The same is to be observed in later times, in the revelation of the mind of God to *Israel* by the prophets. As it appears that the temporal deliverances of *Israel* are to be considered *typical* of the spiritual redemption of the Church, so in the prophetic writings we often meet with sudden and (seemingly) abrupt transitions from the promises of things relating to the present state of *Israel* after the flesh, to the promises and prophecies of those things which are accomplished in the New Testament by the ministry of the Spirit. This is generally delivered in terms suitable to the present dispensation of things, while their typical respect is woefully perverted by the Jews to this day. For they contend that they are *the only people* concerned in them, the ones to whom the blessings belong that were promised and prophesied. They say these are to be fulfilled to them in a way that is agreeable to their former state, and suited to their own carnal lusts and imaginations. By this they harden themselves in their contempt of the grace of God in Christ, and of the spiritual blessings of the Gospel, in which the accomplishment of those prophecies (according to the *true* sense of them) is alone to be sought. And thus Jesus Christ himself became a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to them, because the state of His Kingdom did not suit their carnal minds, nor answer their groundless expectation.

### ***§3. Abraham's Faith in the promise of Isaac's birth.***

It is also to be observed that there is not only a singular *congruity, and fitness* in *this method* of giving forth the promises — regarding the time in which they were made to *Abraham*, and that state of the Church which was next to follow upon these transactions — but in some respect, there is also a *necessity* for it to arise from the *nature of the things promised, and their mutual dependence, one upon the other.*

For, all the promises of a spiritual seed, and of spiritual blessings to be bestowed on that seed (which belong to the Covenant of Grace as revealed to *Abraham*) are *Yes and Amen in Christ Jesus*. And this

*Messiah*, in whom the covenant was confirmed, was to be made of *the seed of Abraham according to the flesh*. And for bringing him forth according to the promise, the seed of *Abraham* by *Isaac* and *Jacob*, was separated to God for a peculiar people, and kept distinct from all other families in the World. And in this respect, the blessing of grace and eternal life given to *Abraham* and his believing seed, was suspended (dependent) on the effect and accomplishment of the promises concerning his natural offspring, and particularly on the promise of *Isaac's* birth. He was to be begotten by *Abraham*, and brought forth by *Sarah*, at such a time when the *nature* of them both was *so weakened by age*, that they were as unlikely — he to beget, and she to conceive a son — as if they were *already dead*, Rom 4.19. And this is why the Apostle lays so great a weight on *Abraham's* faith in this particular: even in the business of his justification before God; for the *object* of justifying faith, *the Messiah to come*, was thus included in the promise of *Isaac's* birth. On this account his parents had the greatest cause for rejoicing at the birth of this son, who takes his name from *laughter* and *rejoicing*, Gen 17.17; 21.6. And to this (in part) may be referred the saying of our Savior, *Abraham rejoiced to see my Day, and he saw it, and was glad*, Joh 8.56. He saw it in the birth of *Isaac*, and afterwards in offering him up, who was a type of Christ, and from whom the Christ was to come. His miraculous birth, in virtue of a promise, when nature could not have effected it, also afforded some portent of,<sup>88</sup> and was a prelude to, the more miraculous birth of Christ, who was conceived and brought forth by a pure virgin (the power of the most High overshadowing her) for fulfilling that promise. *The Seed of the woman shall break the head of the serpent*, Gen 3.15. As *Isaac* was in the type, so Christ more eminently, *sprang up as a root out of a dry ground*, Isa 53.2.

#### **§4. *Abraham's Trial in offering up Isaac.***

Now, from these things we may conclude with ease and great clearness, what *the greatness* of *Abraham's* trial, and the eminency of his faith *in offering up Isaac*, specially consisted in. To part with a son, an obedient son, a grown up son (as *Isaac* now was), yes an *only* son, was indeed *a great trial*. However, *Abraham* was not only required to part with him, but *to sacrifice him*. And for a father to become the executioner of his son — the son of his old age, and the object of his most endeared affections — for him (I say) to be

appointed the priest who must slay this *victim*, adds yet *much more* to the trial. And in *Abraham's* addressing himself to such a service (had there been nothing more in it) without debate, murmuring, or delay, we have an unparalleled instance and example of *piety and obedience*: But alas! There is a concern infinitely greater in this case, than all that has yet been mentioned. *Isaac was the son of the promise*; and it is on *this account* that the Holy Ghost places it: *he who had received the promises, offered up his only begotten Son, of whom it was said, in Isaac shall your Seed be called*, Heb 11.17-18.

*Abraham* had no other Son in whom he might expect the fulfilling of the promise when *Isaac* was lost. And yet, upon the accomplishment of this promise, in bringing forth the *Messiah* in *Isaac's* line, the *eternal salvation* of *Abraham* and of the *whole Church* depended. And therefore he is called *his only begotten* — not because *Abraham* had no other Son, but because he was *the only heir of the promise*. This might have caused the greatest anxiety of mind imaginable in *Abraham*, if he had at all consulted with flesh and blood in the case. But his *faith* overcame this difficulty, and silenced all carnal reasonings about the impossibility of the accomplishment of the promise if this command were obeyed — *calculating that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead*, from where he also *received Isaac in a figure*, Heb 11.19. And the issue (the outcome) made it abundantly manifest that the readiness of *Abraham* to obey in this case, put the promise to no real hazard. For it brought out means of further confirmation of his faith, by the exhibition of *an eminent type* of the redemption of the Church by the death and resurrection of Christ. To this was added *the renewing of God's promises* to him, both for his spiritual and carnal seed, and that was with their *confirmation by the oath* of the great God, Gen 22.16-18.<sup>89</sup>

But now to return to that which concerns our present purpose. From these things we may certainly conclude that *all the promises* made to *Abraham* were ordered by God *to meet in one general issue*. For as the promises concerning the *carnal seed* and their state were subservient to the ends of God's covenant with the *spiritual seed*, so also the promises peculiarly belonging to the spiritual seed were to have their effect and accomplishment *in a Seed that must descend from Abraham according to the flesh*. And therefore, that

*interchange* of the promises which has been brought to your attention, ought not to seem strange in any way.

### ***§5. The Covenant of Peculiarity as a Type of the Covenant of Grace.***

Again, the *typical respect and analogy of the Covenant of Peculiarity to the Covenant of Grace* (as it will be more fully revealed later and accomplished in Christ), affords another occasion and reason for the *interweaving* of those promises which require a distinct application. Some of them belonged immediately to the carnal seed, and others to the spiritual, as arising from the springs and ordered towards the ministry of *two distinct covenants*. That there was a disposition of things in the Old Testament with a *typical respect* to the things that are of a spiritual nature and concern in the New, is so fully and clearly asserted by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures, that it has obtained a general acknowledgment from those who admit their authority; and also that many things in the transactions of God with *Abraham* were of this nature. To largely insist on these things is besides my present design. I will briefly touch on something of this kind, only to better clear the point under consideration.

And first, let it be observed that the body of the *Israelite* nation considered as a *holy people, and the Lord's first-born*, Exo 4.22-23; Jer 2.3, bearing in their flesh the character of circumcision (which put them under an obligation to perform the righteousness of the Law) was not only a seed separated to God for bringing forth the *Messiah*, but was also a *type of mystical Christ*. Namely, a type of that seed and body of which Christ is the Head, and true believers are the members (those who in this relation are considered complete in him). And so it eminently pointed at his being made *under the Law*, Gal 4.4, and by perfectly fulfilling it, becoming *the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes*, Rom 10.4.

This much (I suppose) may be fairly gathered from that saying of the Prophet in Hos. 11.1, <sup>90</sup> *Out of Egypt I have called my Son*, compared with Mat 2.15. where the evangelist applies it to Christ. And probably for this reason, Christ is prophesied of by the name *Israel*, Isa 49.3. Christ was *the Seed* in whom the substance was to be found of that righteousness shadowed in the circumcision of *Israel*. And from Him



it is derived to all true believers for their justification before God, and their *introduction into such a state* in which they should acceptably walk before God, and worship Him in *newness of Spirit*: Thus circumcision not only obliged them to keep the Law (in which respect, it was a *heavy yoke*, Act 15.10), but also (subservient to the promise) it pointed at the *Messiah* who was to come under a legal bond to fulfil all righteousness so that, through faith in his name, such a righteousness might be obtained. This is *witnessed to both by the Law and the Prophets*, Rom 3.21. It is *Christ alone*, in whom the design of circumcision is *fully answered*.

Under the ministry of the Old Testament, no man could enjoy the privileges of the Covenant of Peculiarity without circumcision. None were admitted to walk before God in that covenant, without *this sign* of perfect righteousness and purity according to the Law. So now, none can have entrance into the Kingdom of Grace, nor obtain a right in the spiritual blessings and privileges of the New Covenant, except by an interest in the *righteousness of Christ* through faith, and by coming under the *imputation of His obedience*, in which the Law was fulfilled *for us*. Seeing that this was one end of circumcision (and the most comfortable, if not the chief end), as it served the design of the Covenant of Grace towards the elect, to continue it now, with the same respect which it had in its first institution, would in effect *deny that Christ has come in the flesh*, 1Joh 4.2.

I don't intend by anything I have said, to intimate a denial of the *typical* respect of circumcision *to the sanctification of believers*. Nor is that notion of it weakened in the least; rather, it is strengthened in its proper place. For as the *real holiness* of believers springs from *their union to Christ*, and justification through faith in his name, so I take circumcision, first to look towards that perfect righteousness which we have in Jesus Christ; and then to that sincere (though imperfect) holiness wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ. *For we are the Circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*, Phi 3.3.

#### **§6. Colossians 2.11 proposed and explained.**

And I conceive that if those other texts in the New Testament that look towards the mystical use of circumcision are well weighed, and the scope of their context is duly considered, they will cast a great light on the notion proposed to you. I cannot stay on *all*, but for



instance, let us repair to *Col 2.11: In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.*

The design of the Apostle's discourse in the whole context, is to confirm the souls of the believing *Colossians* in the faith of the Gospel, and particularly in that great article of the Christian religion concerning our *being justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, Rom 3.24. And it was to caution them not to be led away by the *error of the wicked* from the *simplicity of truth* which they had received. *But as they had received Christ Jesus the Lord, so they should walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith*, Col 2.6-7. And (he says) *Beware lest any man cheat you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*; ver. 8. The men who the Apostle brands in these last words, are those who endeavored to subvert the liberty of the Gentile churches, and to entangle them again in the yoke of legal bondage. To do this, they not only asserted the *Levitical Ceremonies* to still continue, and in their own nature, to be acceptable service to God; but also that they were of perpetual use, because of those *philosophical secrets, and mysteries of nature*, which they pretended were wrapped up in them.

They had no ground for this conceit (God having at no time appointed them to such an end) but from the *tradition* of their elders. This is what the Apostle intends by *philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men*. And to prevent their being ensnared with this corrupt doctrine, he informs them how Christ was *the end and substance* of all those shadows, and that all fulness dwells in him, *in whom they were complete*. And therefore, they should not turn back to the Law or its ceremonies, to seek *perfection* from them, seeing that by Christ they were made partakers of that *real* benefit, which was but darkly pointed at, and shadowed by the ceremonies of the Law. For so he adds in this 11th verse, *In whom also you are circumcised*. Mind, they are not said to be circumcised *in themselves*, but *in Christ*; because in him they were completely justified *by the imputation of a perfect righteousness*, which circumcision under the law, as an ordinance of the Old Covenant, obliged men to, and prefigured as subordinate to the promise. Hence

the Apostle affirms that *believers are the Circumcision*, who place their whole trust in Jesus Christ, *Phi 3.3*.

And because they are also described as those who *worship God in the Spirit*, this does not restrain the notion of their circumcision to the righteousness of sanctification, but rather it describes these persons by another fruit and property of that grace by which they are justified, *Cf. Rom 8.4*. In the words following this text in *Colossians*, the circumcision spoken of is said to be *in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*. This primarily intends our justification, and includes sanctification as a necessary concomitant of it. It is by justification that we are completely delivered from *a state of sin, and the mass of corruption (as Joshua was delivered from his filthy garments, Zec 3.4)*. This is by an implantation into, and union with Christ, who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. And therefore, this change of their state is said to be by their *being quickened together with Christ*, v. 13. This quickening is that of *justification*, in which they were raised from that deadly state of guiltiness which they were in while *dead in their sins and the uncircumcision of their flesh*, to a state of life, righteousness, and acceptance with God, *who forgives them all their trespasses*.

Now, this *putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, is by *the circumcision of Christ*. I know expositors generally take the circumcision which is the work of the Spirit of Christ in the soul, to be intended here, as they apply the *whole verse* to our sanctification. But I conceive that, as our justification is primarily intended in the context, so the scope of the Apostle's discourse leads us to rather interpret this to be *that circumcision with which Christ was circumcised* — the *sign* being put for the *thing signified*; namely, the circumcision of Christ, for his perfect obedience and fulfilling of the Law. The first bearing of the yoke of the Law was in circumcision. And by this, the person circumcised was bound to keep the whole Law, otherwise his *circumcision became uncircumcision*, *Rom 2.25*. So then, the circumcision of Christ is a convincing evidence of his being *made under the Law*; and by perfectly fulfilling it, he brought in that everlasting righteousness, through the imputation of which, all who are *in Him* are justified before God. And *this communion* that believers have with Christ in his benefits, through the faith of the operation of God, is held out and signified to them in a vivid

manner in their baptism, in which they are said to be both *buried and risen together with him*; Col 2.12. The immersion of the body into the water bears an analogy to his burial, just as raising it again out of the water does to his resurrection. The Apostle intends this: that even upon first receiving them, their baptism and profession of the Christian religion, taught and obliged them to live on Christ alone, and to join no other thing with him in the foundation of their hope.

These things being so, circumcision was no longer of use, nor did Christians have any concern in it. For having accomplished its utmost end in Jesus Christ, it expired in course, and vanished away with the whole frame of the *Mosaic* economy. The Apostle is so far from intimating that baptism came in place of circumcision, that he discourses about them, as pertaining to *two covenants that are so differenced* from one another, and *so opposed* to one another in their *whole ministry*, that in this last respect, they could by no means consist together.

### ***§7. Abraham's family a type of the future Church State.***

In the next place, it is to be noted that there was a *typical representation* of the future state of the Church (*namely*, in the days of the Gospel) in the present transactions of God with *Abraham*, and with that, *the state of his family*.

The explication of all the particulars belonging to it, would require an enlargement of this discourse beyond its intended bounds. Therefore, as to our present purpose, I will only point at the heads of those things which the Apostle sets before us in *Gal* 4.21 to the end of the chapter.

On reading this context, you will observe that the allegory insisted on by the Apostle is grounded on this historical verity:

1. That *Abraham* had a twofold seed. The one proceeded from him according to the ordinary course and by the strength of nature; the other was brought forth by virtue of a *promise*. The one was *Ishmael* by *Hagar*, a bondwoman, the other was *Isaac* by *Sarah*, a freewoman.
2. The Bondwoman and her son had precedence in time of conception and birth, to the freewoman and her son.

3. In the process of time, the son of the bondwoman, who was *born after the flesh*, persecutes the son of the freewoman, who was *born after the Spirit* (i.e. by virtue of the *promise*). And with that, *the bondwoman and her son are cast out of the family*, and *Isaac* remains there as the only heir of his father's blessing.

The Apostle affirms that these things were disposed by God with a *typical respect* to Gospel-times, and thus he applies them:

*Hagar* was a type of *mount Sinai* and the legal covenant established there; and *Ishmael* was a type of the *carnal seed of Abraham* under that covenant. *Sarah* was a type of the *New-Jerusalem*, or of the Gospel-Church founded on the Covenant of Grace; and *Isaac* was a type of the true members of that Church, who are *born of the Spirit*, being converted by the power of the Holy Ghost for fulfilling the promise of the Father to Jesus Christ the Mediator. And the *ejection* of *Hagar* and *Ishmael* was to foreshow the *abrogation* of the *Sinai-Covenant*, and the *dissolving* of the Jewish Church-State, so that the inheritance of spiritual blessings might be clearly devolved upon the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ.

There are many other things worthy to be observed, which it is not my present work to insist upon. This general view which has been taken of the context, is sufficient to prepare our way to the following observations.

### **§8. Further observations and inferences from this.**

1. First, the Apostle who in *Gal* 3.8, 17 calls the promise recorded in *Genesis 12*, the *Gospel preached to Abraham*, and the *Covenant confirmed by God in Christ* — here expressly calls that Covenant-Transaction to which circumcision belonged, and in which the right and privilege of the natural seed of *Abraham* was stated, *the Law*. And he condemns their desire to be under it, as proceeding from their folly and ignorance, *Gal* 4.21.

2. Notwithstanding all the privileges of *Israel* after the flesh, they remained in a state of bondage under the Law. And their being parties in the *Sinai* Covenant, and the Covenant of Circumcision, and being children of the earthly *Jerusalem* (or members of that Church whose state was founded on the covenants mentioned before) and so interested in all the worship to be performed there — all this, I say, could no more give them interest in, and right to, the spiritual

blessings of *Abraham*, than *Ishmael's* carnal descent from him could either entitle him or his seed in the Covenant of Peculiarity made with *Israel*, and its outward blessings. For although the seed of *Abraham* by *Isaac* were under the dispensation of those blessings that were the shadow and type of the good things of the Gospel, yet their *birthright* and proper claim in the interest of their covenants, fell as far short of Gospel-blessings, as *Ishmael's* did of *their* privileges. For as *Ishmael* (in a literal sense) was born after the flesh, and the son of a *Bondwoman*, so were they, *mystically speaking*. And as *Ishmael* persecuted *Isaac*, so they (being puffed up with a vain confidence in their carnal privilege and prerogative) not only rejected the Gospel themselves, but also *persecuted* the children of the *New Jerusalem*. And therefore, just as *Ishmael* was cast out of *Abraham's* Family, and excluded from any part in the inheritance of the Son of Promise, so they must be excluded from the Kingdom of God, and the inheritance of its blessings.

Thus, in the very beginning of the Covenant-State of *Israel* after the flesh, in this *type*, God set before their eyes *the imperfection of it*, and the sad end they would bring themselves to by resting in it, and thinking too highly of it. <sup>91</sup>

3. However, the *Covenant of Peculiarity* made with *Israel*, and the *dispensation* that God brought them under, pursuant to its ends, was *typical of the Gospel-Covenant* and the state of things in it. In *Isaac* we have a type of the children of God by faith; and as he (in his seed) was the heir of *Canaan*, so they are heirs of Heaven; And as he was persecuted by *Ishmael*, so must they expect trouble in the world, and look to be maligned by all carnal and Pharisaical spirits, who seek to establish their own righteousness, and refuse to submit to the righteousness of God. In a word, the people, their worship, and their inheritance, were all typical. And yet, as *Abraham's* spiritual seed may behold the shadow of their own state and privilege in a *mystical respect*, and the *typical economy* of the Jewish Church, <sup>92</sup> so they might and *ought to* consider themselves to be *but typical* in *their outward state*. While they were figures of the children of promise, they themselves, their state, and their end, *were figured in the son of the bondwoman and his rejection*.

Now, from this we may infer the following:

1. The carnal seed of believers, can obtain no greater privilege by the *Covenant of Circumcision*, than the seed of *Abraham had by Isaac*; and their privilege did not reach to an interest in Gospel-Blessings, or in the New Covenant, unless they obtained that right for themselves by believing. Otherwise they had no more *right in them*, by their natural descent from *Abraham*, than *Ishmael* had in the blessings of their Covenant of Peculiarity, And their interest in typical privileges, must necessarily cease and vanish away, when the things *typified* were *exhibited*.

2. The state of *Israel after the flesh*, being typical, the *Israel of God* among them were taught to look above and beyond their external privileges, to those things that were shadowed by them, as set before their faith in the promises of grace by Christ. And so they were to live upon the grace of that covenant which their outward state, and Covenant of Peculiarity was subservient to. All these things had a *spiritual, and evangelical use* to them. This being their principal end and intent, a fair occasion is ministered for *such an intermixture* of the *typical* promises, with those of *real blessings*, as have now been under our consideration — because the Covenant of Grace and that of Circumcision, have their *mutual respect*, as the *Type does to its Antitype*.

### ***§9. The Key to many prophecies and promises in the Old Testament.***

And these things are not only necessary to the right understanding of those divine transactions with *Abraham*, which we have been treating, but they are also of use for the opening and right application of very many prophecies and promises of the Old Testament; and for avoiding those stumbling blocks (and others like them) by which the blind Jews have fallen, and still fall upon to this day.

The phraseology of the Old Testament will hardly be understood in various places, without due regard to many of those things that we have been treating. *Namely*:

1. During the time of the Law, the true Church was enclosed within the bounds of the commonwealth of *Israel*, which in its *entire body*, was a *typical Church*.

2. The children of God after the Spirit, though like underage children, they were still subject to the Pedagogy of the Law, yet as to their spiritual and eternal State, they walked before God, and found acceptance with Him, on the terms of the Covenant of Grace.

3. The whole economy that this people were under, in its typical respect, subserved the ends of the Covenant of Grace to the elect, who were the true and spiritual worshippers of God. And the greatest and only visible number of them, was to be preserved among that people, until the Gospel Church-State took its place.

4. Yet this spiritual relation to God according to the terms of the New Covenant, which the truly godly then had, was not so clearly held forth under the Old Testament as it is in the times of the New, and by the dispensation of the Gospel. But the things relating to it, were very much wrapped up in dark shadows and figures. And therefore, many times the things and people typified, are spoken of in prophetic Scriptures under the names of those things, and that people, which were only *types* of them. And the promise of the choicest Gospel-blessings, and the most glorious state of the New Testament Church (with respect to *spiritual* glory), are given to the *Israel of old* in those terms that *suit*ed the *present state* of things, and are peculiarly directed to them and their seed. But these promises being given to them as considered in their relation to God, as His only visible Church and covenant-people, are not to be applied to *Israel* after the flesh, as such. Rather, they had their accomplishment in the Church when *Israel* was rejected, and the Gentiles were called to inherit the blessing of *Abraham*.

However, being directly given out to *Israel* and *Jacob*, as the only true Church then in being, and a people in whom the Church which would later be, was typified then, it was only fitting and necessary — especially considering that the spiritual glory of the Gospel, and the calling of the Gentiles, was a mystery not to be unfolded in those times, but kept under a veil — that the terms made use of in those prophecies and promises, should be accommodated to that *economy* under which the Church then was. They must still be interpreted in a sense agreeable to *those times and that dispensation* in which they were to have their full accomplishment. And therefore, seeing that the Church was then continued in a line of natural descent from *Abraham*, being *propagated by generation* as long as the Old



Covenant state of it remained unshaken, the promises made to the Church respecting her *future* glory, peace, and blessedness in the days of the *Messiah*, are given as to *the seed and offspring* of the Church *then in being*. This was needed, even though they really belonged to and were intended for, not a *carnal* offspring, but those who God would continue to own as his Covenant-People and Church — even those who would walk in the steps of *Abraham's* faith, Gentiles as well as Jews.

**§10. Romans 4.11 proposed, and the terms explained.**

All that now remains to be done before I draw this discourse to a period, is to consider how far *the mutual respect of the promises made to Abraham* may guide us towards a right understanding of how *circumcision* became *a seal of the righteousness of faith*, etc., to *Abraham*, which the Apostle affirms it to have been, *Rom 4.11*. In opening that text, the grand objection against that notion of the Covenant of Circumcision which I have insisted on, will be obviated. In order to do this, I will first set down the text and give you a brief exposition of it. Then I will show you how it was verified, and offer something for strengthening and evincing the sense given.

The words of the Text are:

*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith which he had being yet uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are not circumcised, that righteousness may be imputed to them also.*

In the foregoing *verses*, the Apostle is discoursing *about the time* in which *Abraham's* faith was imputed to him for righteousness, and he proves from there the equal right of the uncircumcised Gentile (if a believer) with the circumcised Jew, in the blessings of the Gospel. He does this by means of a spiritual relation to *Abraham*, in that *his faith was reckoned to him for righteousness — not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision* [“being yet uncircumcised”].

*And he received the sign of circumcision, i.e.* circumcision which was a sign. It is a possessive of the species,<sup>93</sup> as when we read *the City of Jerusalem*, for *the City Jerusalem*, and the like. Some Greek copies here read Περιτομήν (*peritomen, circumcision*). This belongs to the

general *use*, *nature*, and *end* of circumcision. It was a *sign*; but moreover, to *Abraham* it was also these:

—A **seal** of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised. A seal is for *confirmation and assurance*; and in this notion of a *seal*, there may be some respect to that visible mark and character which remained in the flesh of the one who was circumcised. For we don't read that any other ordinance (not even baptism) is so called in Scripture. But in the New Testament, the sealing of believers is attributed to the Holy Ghost.

—Of the **righteousness** of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised; that is, of his being righteous before God through believing. This faith he had, and this righteousness was imputed to him (the relative may agree with either antecedent) <sup>94</sup> while he was uncircumcised. There are some words supplied by the translators to fill up the sense in our English phrase, which the learned Dr. *Lightfoot* in his *Hor. Hebraic. on 1Cor 7.19* fills up with another supply that gives a somewhat differing sense of the text. I refer the Reader to that, as not unworthy of his consideration. But I will rest here, satisfied with that sense which our translation affords us. It follows,

—That he might be the **Father** of all who believe, in uncircumcision. <sup>95</sup> The sense is that he might be manifested to be (things in Scripture are often said *to be*, when they are *declared* or *confirmed* by any solemn act) the Father of all believing Gentiles, even if they are not circumcised — in that they too are a part of that spiritual seed promised to him in uncircumcision.

—That righteousness might be **imputed** to them also: take it as before, that it might be *made manifest, and confirmed*, that righteousness is, and will be imputed to them also. See *ver. 23-24*.

### **§11. How circumcision became a Seal of the righteousness of faith.**

Having given this brief explication of the terms used in the text, the next thing to be inquired is, in what are its contents verified? Or how, or in what respect, was circumcision a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *Abraham* had, being yet uncircumcised?

For an answer to this inquiry, observe:

1. That in the prologue to this Covenant of Circumcision, *Genesis 17*, God expressly renewed and confirmed to *Abraham*, the great promise of the Covenant of Grace concerning the justifying of the Gentiles by faith in Christ. They would receive this blessing in the relation of children to *Abraham*; and so he would become the father of many nations. And the Covenant of Circumcision being added to former transactions in which God had confirmed his covenant in Christ with *Abraham*; the use of circumcision (as to him) was not limited to that *Covenant of Peculiarity* to which it immediately belonged, but must necessarily reach further, and include a confirmation of all *preceding transactions*, and the *promises* given in them — especially of what was repeated immediately before its institution. The promises of God to *Abraham* (though of a different nature) did not interfere with one another, but the latter still implied a confirmation and ratification of the former. Therefore, this covenant did not supplant, but confirmed the truth of the Gospel preached to *Abraham* before. It was not added to disannul the promise, but to serve its ends. And therefore, circumcision not only sealed to *Abraham* the promises of typical blessings now given, but it was also a *seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the Father of all who believe, in uncircumcision*.

2. This was so (though more indirectly) on this account also:

*Abraham's* faith (as we have seen before) was greatly concerned in the promise of *Isaac's* birth, and *separating* his seed from other nations, for bringing forth the *Messiah*. And he knew well that the Covenant of Circumcision was made with him in pursuance of the great promises given before. And so the seal of this covenant, became to him a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had before. And it confirmed him in his paternal relation to believers in all nations, which was an honor conferred on him before. It is the revelation of the *subservience of circumcision*, as received by *Abraham*, to the great end and design of the Covenant of Grace (which was confirmed to *Abraham* before he was circumcised) that the Apostle particularly aims at in this place. And he proves that the Covenant of Circumcision is so far from excluding the Gentiles from inheriting the blessing of *Abraham* by faith, that it was to him an

assurance and seal of the promise of so great a privilege to them — and also of his own justification through faith, while uncircumcised.

And moreover, the Covenant of Circumcision not being so complete in itself as to bring the Church to that perfection which in the eternal counsels of God's sovereign grace was intended — and therefore not capable of making anything perfect by itself — must be established as *typical* and *subservient* to the Covenant of Grace. This was done in a temporary dispensation that would usher in, and then give way to the Gospel in the fulness of time. And in respect to this disposition of the covenant now made, the sign by which it was confirmed, became *ultimately* and in its *typical* respect, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *Abraham* had before.

### **§12. The Conclusion of the Treatise.**

It is in no way difficult to conceive that circumcision might have a different respect according to the differing circumstances and capacity of its subject. Indeed, it has already been proved in another instance that it had so. It was a seal of the inheritance of *Canaan* by the children of *Israel*, and it ensured the promise of it to them and their seed. But it gave their bondservants no such right or claim. Even so, it was to *Abraham* a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, etc. But this arose from the peculiar and extraordinary circumstances, and the capacity he was in. For it is not possible to conceive that circumcision should be a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised — that he might be the father of all who believe, in uncircumcision — to one who never had faith, either before or after his circumcision, nor ever had or would have the relation of a father to all believers, as *Abraham* had.

Now, that the Apostle speaks of circumcision here with respect to the peculiar circumstances, and the capacity of *Abraham* who received it, is evident from the scope of his discourse in the context. The argument that he manages, is to prove that circumcision could not give to any an interest in that grace that justifies a sinner before God, nor could the lack of it hinder any from obtaining that interest in the way, and on the terms of the Gospel. For *Abraham* himself did not obtain it by his carnal prerogative, but was justified before he was circumcised; And the whole stress of his argument lies on the supposition of *Abraham's* being a believer, and justified by his faith,

*before* he received circumcision. Remove this, and his discourse concludes nothing of what he intends. And so he infers that *Abraham* received circumcision so that it was to him, *a seal* not simply of the righteousness of faith, nor of the New Covenant, but *of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised*; and also of his *paternal relation* to all believers, though they are not circumcised. For so it follows *that he might be the father of all those who believe*. And it is equally absurd to say that circumcision was a seal to all its subjects of the righteousness of faith which they had while uncircumcised, as to affirm that it was the seal of a paternal relation to all believers, to everyone who received it. Both these must necessarily be resolved into the peculiar circumstances of *Abraham*, the particular relation he had in the covenants made with him [*as a federal head*], and the order of their disposition — and not the nature of circumcision considered simply, and in itself.

Moreover it is observable that immediately after, while continuing his discourse in *Romans 4*, the Apostle refers circumcision to the Law, in contradistinction from the Gospel. For he has told us that *the circumcised Jew* could not obtain *the blessing* of a spiritual relation to *Abraham by virtue of his circumcision*, unless he walked *in the steps of Abraham's faith, which he had while uncircumcised*, ver. 12. He assigns *this* as the reason for it in the 13th verse: *For the promise that he would be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith*. And I cannot see how the conclusion which the Apostle makes concerning the inefficacy of circumcision, is enforced by this reason, if circumcision immediately and in its own nature had not belonged to the Law, but *to the righteousness of faith, or Covenant of Grace, as an ordinary seal of it*.

Again, the interpretation made of this text is further strengthened by the conference of other places in the New Testament, where we find that circumcision is styled an *unsupportable yoke*, Act 15.10; and it is said to lay men under *an obligation to keep the whole Law*, Gal 5.3. And the complete dispensation of grace in the Gospel according to the New Covenant, is constantly insisted on as that which renders circumcision utterly useless to the Gospel-Church, and manifests the inconsistency of retaining the practice of it, with the liberty of their

present state. See for instance *Gal* 5.11, where the Apostle tells them if he *still preached circumcision, then the offence of the cross has ceased*; and he might have lived free from the persecutions he now suffered from the unbelieving Jews. The Apostle's preaching Christ was to assert in that, the shaking and removing of that Old Covenant to which circumcision belonged, and by which the Jews held the right of their peculiar privileges (though now in truth, the continuance of those could no longer have been a real privilege to them). *That* was the ground of the controversy between them, and of their unreasonable opposition to him. For if the controversy had been about *the mode of administering* same covenant, and the *change* only of an *external rite* by bringing *baptism* into the place of *circumcision*, serving the same use and end now that it had before — then the heat of their contests might soon have been allayed (especially considering the latter is far less painful and dangerous than the former). But whoever seriously endeavors to reconcile the Apostle's discourses about circumcision with such a notion of it, will certainly find himself engaged in a very difficult task.

Circumcision was an ordinance of the Old Covenant, and it pertained to the Law, and therefore it directly bound its subjects to legal obedience. But baptism is an ordinance of the Gospel, and (besides other excellent, and most comfortable uses) it directly obliges its subjects to Gospel obedience. And therefore, in this respect it is opposed to, rather than substituted in the place of circumcision. And certainly it is safer to interpret *one text* according to the *general current* of Scripture, and in full *harmony* with it, than to force such a sense *on many texts* which they will in no way allow, to bring them into compliance with *that one notion* which our minds are *prepossessed* with. It is plain that the notion I have insisted on, fully agrees with other places where circumcision is discoursed about according to its immediate and direct use in the Old Covenant: For there can be no contradiction in ascribing a different, and seemingly opposite use and end, to the same thing, if it is done in a different *respect*. What circumcision was *directly and in its immediate use* is one thing; and what it was *as subordinate to a better covenant and promise* that had precedence over it, is another. It is easy to conceive that it might be something *to the Father of the faithful, in its*

*extraordinary institution, that it could not be to the children of the flesh or carnal seed, in its ordinary use.*

### TO CONCLUDE

If circumcision and baptism have the same *use*, and are seals of the same *covenant*, I can hardly imagine how the application of both to the same subjects would at any time be proper. And yet we find those who were circumcised in their infancy, were also baptized on the profession of faith and repentance; and that was *before circumcision was abrogated*. Indeed, according to the opinion that has been argued against, the Jews who believed before Christ had suffered, were at the same time under a command both to circumcise and to baptize their infant seed. But if the principles that this discourse is built upon are well proved by Scripture, as I take them to be, there must be allowed a vast disparity between *circumcision* and *baptism*. *The Old Covenant is not the New*, nor is that which is *abolished*, the same as that which *remains*. And till *these become one*, *baptism and circumcision* will never be found so *far one*, as that the *law* for applying *circumcision* would be a *sufficient warrant* for the administration of *baptism* to infants.

We have now passed through the Covenant-Transactions of God with *Abraham*. After these we find no signal alteration in the state of the Church by any new transactions until the Law was given on Mount *Sinai*. And therefore, I will here put a period to my present discourse, as it was intended only for the covenants that God made with men before the Law.



## Notes

[←1]

*Federal*: one person represents all the members of a given class of persons. Adam is the federal head of all men. In him, all men fell into sin and death (Rom 5.12). Christ is the federal head of all those elected to salvation. In him they all died to sin, and were raised again to newness of life (Rom 6.4). – WHG

[←2]

Joseph Whiston (d. 1690), *Infant-Baptism plainly proved*, London, 1678. Whiston was a Congregationalist. In 1676, Whiston wrote *An Essay to Revive the Primitive Doctrine and Practice of Infant Baptism*, in which he asked the provocative question, whether the promises are made definitely or indefinitely to the infant-seed of believers? The Baptists criticized the paedobaptist covenantal system, saying that if the promise is made to the children, and yet not all children come to faith and salvation, then God is unfaithful to his promises, and the covenant is not sure. – WHG

[←3]

*Heb 1.1, 2. Πολυμερῶς, Deus non semel olim omnia, sed particulatim, deinde etiam deversis modis sus notitiam ac cultum declaravit. per Prophetas, quò propius dies imminebat, eo clariorem lucem edentes. Beza.*

[←4]

*Deus in omnibus Actionibus prisci seculi, semper ob oculos habebat tempora Massia,*  
Grotius.

[←5]

Vid. *Cooceii de faedere.* ca. 1. & *Rivet in Genesis Exerc.* 53.

[←6]

Job 35.7, 8. Rom 11.35, 36.

[←7]

*Est enim Dei Foedus nihil aliud quam divina declaratio de ratione percipiendi amoris Dei, & unione, ac communione ipsius potiendi.* Cocceius de Foed.



[←8]

*Answer:* accord with, correspond to, serve the purposes of, or *here*, meet the requirements of. – WHG

[←9]

2Cor 5.17; Gal 6.15.

[←10]

That is, God's Chosen People, "a peculiar people" in the KJV, Deu 14.2; 26.18; Tit 2.14;  
1Pet 2.9. – WHG

[←11]  
2Cor 1.20.

[←12]

*cum ratione errare.*

[←13]

*Jus naturale est dictamen rectae rationis, judicans actut alicus, ex ejus convenientiâ vel disconvenientiâ cum ipsâ naturâ rationalis, in esse moralem turpitudinem, aut necessitatem moralem, & consequenter ab Authore Naturae, ipso Deo, talem aitem aut Vetari aut Treoisi.* [Grotius]. This, as a late Philosopher expresses it, was *Nota Artificis operi suo impressa*. And of some Dictates of the Law of Nature (as I remember) Cicero says, that with respect to them, *facti non docti, imbuti, non instructi, sui mios*.

[←14]

*Positive Law*: expressly given. Legislative laws may establish specific duties and rights that are not intuitive, like the ceremonial laws given by Moses. These are distinct from *Natural* or *Moral Law*, which refers to inherent duties and “unalienable” rights, not established by legislation or human order, but by God (*written on the heart*); they arise from human *nature*, rather than God’s expressly given laws (see Rom 2.14). – WHG

[←15]

*Commination*: a threat of divine punishment or vengeance.



[←16]

**Rom 1:32** knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death... **Rom 2:15** who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*.

[←17]

En divinitatem promissam!

[←18]

Nos omnes eramus ille unus homo.

[←19]  
Job 38.2.

[←20]

He had not a *non posse peccare*, and so a *non posse mori*; yet he had a *posse non peccare*, and so a *posse non mori*. This is from Augustine's *Enchiridion*, par. 105, concerning free will. – WHG

[←21]

Originally, *suasion*.

[←22]

*Denounce*: to pronounce or proclaim with regard to someone's guilt or liability. –  
WHG

[←23]

*Fruition*: enjoyment; here, it means deriving the fruits and blessings of the relationship itself. – WHG



[←24]

**Psa 75:3** The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved; I set up its pillars firmly.

**Heb 1:3** who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

[←25]

*2Tim* 1.9, 10; *Tit* 1.1-2.

[←26]

Rom 3.24; Heb 9.15.

[←27]

**Pro 8:22-31** <sup>25</sup> Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; <sup>26</sup> While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primeval dust of the world... <sup>30</sup> Then I was beside Him *as* a master craftsman; And I was daily *His* delight, Rejoicing always before Him, <sup>31</sup> Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight *was* with the sons of men.

[←28]

*De primâ igitur Corporis Morte, dici potest quod bonis bona sit, malis mala, secunda vero sine dubio sicut nullorum bonorum est, ita nulli bona.* Aug. De Civit. Dei Lib. 13. Cap. 2.

[←29]

**Gen 5:24** And Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God took him. **Heb 11:5** By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

[←30]

Henry Ainsworth (1571-1622?), *Annotations on the Pentateuch and Psalms of David*,  
1627. – WHG

[←31]

**Jud 1:14-15** Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, <sup>15</sup> to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.



[←32]

*Potuit fieri ut quidam privati Homines ex generatione Cain, Instinctu divino, se ad Adam conjunxerint, & salvati sint.* Luther in Genesis.

[←33]

Christ's Mediation and Sacrifice is the cause of God's Forbearance towards the World.

[←34]

**Gen 5.29** *And he called his Name Noah, saying, This shall comfort us, etc.*

[←35]

**Gen 8:21** Then the LORD said in His heart, I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, *although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*

[←36]

*Namely, the Messiah, and his Members.*

[←37]

**Isa 54:9** For this *is* like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.

[←38]

*The rainbow about the throne* denotes God's regard to his Covenant in the government of the world; all the administration of providence is bounded by His faithfulness.

[←39]

The same may be said of the *promises* of typical Blessings to *Abraham's* carnal seed, and their *interest* in them.



[←40]

**Deu 32:8** When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.

[←41]

**Gen 9:24-26** So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: “Cursed *be* Canaan; A servant of servants he shall be to his brethren.” And he said: “Blessed *be* the LORD, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant.”

[←42]

יִפְתָּח – Japheth, meaning *he will persuade*.

[←43]

**Hos 2:14-15** Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She will sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

[←44]  
*Gen* 10.25.

[←45]

This gave the name to the place *Babel* signifying *confusion*.

[←46]

The Covenant of Grace is to be considered by us a *Testamentary Covenant*. Cf. *Heb* 7.22 with 9.16.

[←47]

**Gen 17:7** And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your seed after you.



[←48]

The LXX uses σπέρματος (*spermatos*), singular *common*. The Hebrew word עֶרְוָה is also singular *common*. Consider 1Cor 6.19, “your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.” The word *body* is singular *common*, while *your* is plural. It is literally, “the body of you all.” Hence, we are “all one in Christ,” Gal 3.28. – WHG

[←49]

This promise is particularly cited by *Peter*, as a summary of the Covenant of Grace made with *Abraham*, Act 3.25.

[←50]

See *Strong*, Of the Covenant, p. 126.

[←51]  
εἰς χριστόν.

[←52]

David Pareus (1548-1622) – *individuè de uno Christo, ex quo omnis spiritualis  
Benedictio in fideles diffluit.*

[←53]

*Duorum maximè Filius dicitur Christus Abrahæ & David, quoniam istis sapius, ac desertius, quam caeteris, est promissus, Lud. Vivis (Vives).*

[←54]

Heb 9.10; Gospel times. – WHG

[←55]

**Isa 54:13** All your children *shall be* taught by the LORD, And great *shall be* the peace of your children. **Isa 59:21** “As for Me,” says the LORD, “this *is* My covenant with them: My Spirit who *is* upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants’ descendants,” says the LORD, “from this time and forevermore.” **Jer 31:33** “But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> “No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” **Eze 36:26** “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*. **Heb 8:10** “For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”



[←56]

Both originating in Adam's sin, and originated in a fallen nature. This is probably the position of Whiston, mentioned earlier, the "author" that Coxe is refuting here. – WHG

[←57]

*Analogy of faith*: Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture, comparing like with like. – WHG

[←58]

Rom 5.14, etc.

[←59]

*Cui non magis est dulce proprium tugurium quam palatia Peregrina & Voluntaria Casa, quam digesta Praetoria? Cui non est durum illos conscios natalium Parites, dulcia illa Limena arg; amabilem larem, quem & parentum memoria, & ipsius infantiae rudimenta commendant — Inter [hoc] ergo tam [bianda tem] dulcia, [quacum omni fuerant difficultate rilinguenda]; Exi, ait, de texa? Quis haec [sin fides]? August.*

[←60]

*Vid. Riveti exercitationes in [locum].*

[←61]

Originally, *peregrination* (traveling or wandering around, like Israel in the desert). –  
WHG

[←62]

*Gen* 12.4-5.

[←63]

*Gen 12.6-7.*



[←64]

Gen 12.17. Psa 105.13-15.

[←65]

See *Ainsw.* Annot.

[←66]

*Lege Riveti exercitationem in Locum; ubi dubium hoc proponitur & accuratè solvitur.*

[←67]

Cf. *Romans* 4.

[←68]  
*in terminis.*

[←69]

Originally, *encomium*.

[←70]

This may be based on Bp. Ussher's *Annals of the World*, 1658, par. 86. – WHG

[←71]

*Exo 2.24; Act 7.17.*



[←72]

*Gen* 15.18-21.

[←73]

See §10 and §11 below, distinguishing the covenants of Isaac and Ishmael.

[←74]

Read diligently *Galatians* 3.

[←75]

המב גוימ Abraham (father of a multitude)

[←76]

Mattathias ben Johanan (? to 165 BC); see the book of Maccabees.

[←77]

Και παιδάρια τὰ παιδάρια τὰ ἀπερίτμητα, ὅσα εὔρον ἐν ὁρίοις ἰσραὴλ, ἐν ἰχὺϊ.

[←78]

**Gen 9:12** And God said: "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations."

[←79]

Cf. *Gen* 25.23 with *Mal* 1.2 & *Rom* 9.10-13.



[←80]

*Chimera*: a grotesque product of the imagination.

[←81]

See Dr. *Owen's* Exercitations on the *Hebrews*, Vol. 1.

[←82]

**Jer 2:3** Israel *was* holiness to the LORD, The firstfruits of His increase.

[←83]

See Mr. *Whist*. Prim. Doctr., p. 124.

[←84]  
*è contra.*

[←85]

Many to whom the Lord *was a God* according to the tenor of the Old Covenant, died in their sins, and were eternally lost; But those *to whom he is a God*, according to the tenor of the New Covenant, receive from him the blessings of a new heart, remission of sins, and eternal salvation.

[←86]

Brechrw. Inquir.

[←87]  
*eo nomine.*



[←88]

Originally, *adumbration*.

[←89]

**Gen 22:16-18** By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son* – blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.

[←90]

Vid. *Junii Annotationes in locum, & ejusdem* Parallela.

[←91]

Originally, *overweening* it.

[←92]

*Pars quaedam terrenae Civitatis, Imago coelestis Civitatis effecta est, non se significando, sed alteram, & ideô serviens. Neque enim propter se ipsam, sed propter aliam significandam est instituta, & praecedente aliâ significatione, & ipsa praefigurans, praefigurata est: Namque; Agar ancilla Sarae, ejusque; Filius, Imago quaedam hujus Imaginis fuit. August. de Civita. Dei, Lib. 15. Cap. 2.*

[←93]

*genitivus speciei.*

[←94]

*Rule of grammar.* A relative pronoun refers to an antecedent (a preceding) word. The pronoun “which” can refer to either or both antecedents here, *righteousness* or *faith*. Abraham had both, righteousness *by* faith.

[←95]

Or, “all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised.”