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DISCOURSE
CONCERNING THE
COVENANTS:

CONTAINING

The Substance of Two SERMONS,
preached at *Middle-Octarara*,
January 10 and 17. 1741, 2.

Upon JOSHUA IX. 15.

By ALEXANDER CREAGHEAD.

*Pfal. xv. 5. He that sweareth to his own Hurt, and
changeth not.*

*Jer. 1. 5. Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord,
in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten.*

PHILADELPHIA:

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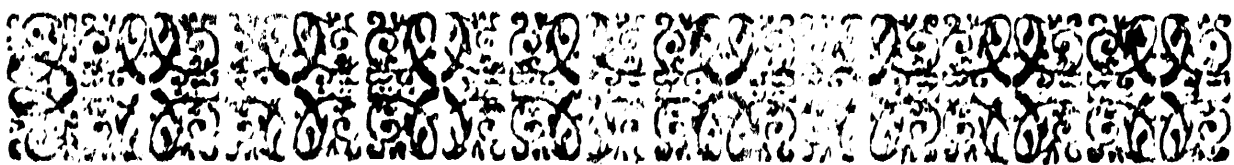


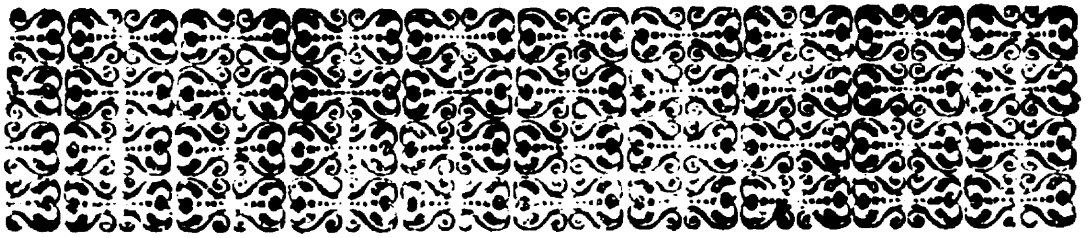
P R E F A C E.

CANDID READER.

YOU may justly be surprized, to find such an unpolished Scribe appearing so publickly unto the World, and especially treating of those Things concerning the Covenants, that I know not of any Writer who insists on the same; and thus undoubtedly must labour under very great and uncommon Disadvantages, in this Age there being scarcely any Subjēct to be spoken of, but there may be a Recourse unto some former Writer for Assistance. But not to be prolix, so as to weary the Reader with a Preface, The only Motive (as far as I can know of myself) which excited me to trouble the World with this small Pamphlet, was to endeavour to remove the false Aspersions cast upon the Covenants, and those which adhere unto them; and to remove that profound Ignorance of the Nature of the Covenants, of our Obligation to them, and Usefulness of them: For which, if it shall please the everlasting God to bless the weak Endeavours of such a poor Worm, I hope Glory will redound unto the Name of God, and Good unto his Church; which is the hearty Desire and earnest Prayer of your humble, altho' unworthy, Servant in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

ALEX. CREAGHEAD.





JOSHUA ix. 15.

And Joshua made Peace with them, and made a League with them, to let them live : And the Princes of the Congregation sware unto them.

COVENANTING has been the common Practice of not only those who are within the Pales of the visible Church, but also of those who are Strangers unto such Privileges: And hence the *Gibeonites* use strange Methods to obtain the Opportunity of Covenanting with *Israel*, under a Pretence of Religion; *Verse 9.* *Joshua* had asked, *from whence they were?* They say, *from a very far Country thy Servants are come, because of the Name of the Lord thy God: For we have heard the Fame of him, and what he did in Egypt.* Downwards they tell, that *their Bread was mouldy, their Bottles were rent, and their Shoes were out, with the Length of their Journey.* All which they did to persuade the *Israclites* to enter into a League with them; while in the mean time, they lived within *Three Days Journey* of them.

In the Words of our Text we may take Notice, 1. Of the Subject of it, *that is,* a League made. 2. Of the End or Design of the League, which was to spare the *Gibeonites* alive, and to be at Peace with them. 3. Of the Manner in which this League was confirmed, *to wit,* by Oath, *And the Princes sware unto them.*

A League I take to be the same with a Contract or Covenant, it being a synonymous Term, signifying the same Thing. A League may be taken either extensively, for any Kind of Bargaining in Commerce or Dealing, in Buying or Selling, or the like; but strictly and properly, for a Bond, whereby each Part covenanting, is bound and obliged to fulfil the Conditions agreed upon therein. *And the Princes swore unto them, to wit, to the Gibeonites:* Swearing is the ordinary Method of confirming Covenants or Contracts, approved of by the Word of God, altho' its by some disapproved. The Apostle tells us, that *an Oath is for Confirmation, and an End of all Strife.* It was the Princes that swore, as Representatives of *Israel*, unto the *Gibeonites*; yet this Oath was binding upon all the *Israelites*. The Lawfulness of this League or Covenant, is called in question by some, because its against a Command of God: *Exod. xxiii. 32, 33. Thou shalt make no Covenant with them, nor with their Gods. They shall not dwell in thy Land, lest they make thee sin against me.* The Case of the *Gibeonites* differed from all other of the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, because they freely gave up themselves unto the Will of *Israel*; *do unto us as seemeth good and right unto thee,* ver. 25. This discovers that the *Israelites* were not in much Danger of being insnared by them, as others who would not submit to them. It must be acknowledged, that the *Gibeonites* acted very deceitfully in this Affair; and it cannot be asserted, that the *Israelites* managed rightly, in not first asking Direction of God. *Ver. 14. And the Men took of their Victuals, and asked not Council at the Mouth of the Lord.* Yet notwithstanding all these melancholy Circumstances, the Matter of this League or Covenant is lawful, in the Sight of a pure and holy God, as appears from these Things. 1. Because *Jeshua* and all the Princes, upon a Review of this Covenant, confirmed it, by sparing the Lives of the *Gibeonites*, ver.

19. 2. Because God, who can do no Injustice, punished the Violation of it many Ages afterwards, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. 3. Because its said, that the ~~Levites~~ hardened all the rest of the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, that they would not make Peace with *Israel*, Josh. xi. 19, 20. From the Words thus opened up, this Doctrine ariseth, to wit.

That National Covenanting, in itself, is lawful in the Sight of the God of Equity. And Joshua made Peace with them, and made a League with them, to let them live. &c.

In speaking of this Doctrine I would endeavour, by divine Assistance,

- I. To touch at several Kinds of Covenants.
- II. Shew something of the general Scope of the national, and solemn League and Covenant.
- III. Prove the Lawfulness of them in the Sight of God.
- IV. Inquire whether they are binding upon Posterity, or not.
- V. Enquire whether they are necessary or useful.
- VI. Answer some Objections which are advanced against them.
- VII. Make some practical Improvement of the whole.

I. I am to touch at several Kinds of Covenants, And,

I. At the Covenant of Redemption, in which there was a Contrivance and Consultation of all the Persons in the glorious Trinity, concerning the Restoration of some of the fallen Race of Mankind. The great Things to be concerted in this Covenant, was to find out a Method whereby the offended Justice of God could be fully satisfied, and yet the guilty Sinner saved.

Now

Now, Justice being infinite in its own Nature that was offended, justly demanded Satisfaction equivalent to its own Nature; otherwise it could not be a compleat Satisfaction, because not proportionable to the Affront done, so it must be infinite Satisfaction; This Man could not give; though he had given Thousands of Rams and ten thousand Rivers of Oyl; yea, the Fruit of his Body for the Sin of his Soul: This all would come exceedingly short of making Attonement for one Sin. Nay, if all the Angels in Heaven would freely lay aside all their Royal Crowns of Glory, and should suffer ever such Sufferings, what would all this be but the Sufferings of Creatures? which could nowise be equal to that which is infinite. When none of all these Offerings would do to satisfy infinite Justice, nor any other that the whole Creation could offer, then our blessed EMMANUAL steps in, and speaks thus: *Then said I, Lo I come: In the Volume of the Book it is written of me: I delight to do thy Will, O my God? Psal. xl. 7, 8.* O how marvelously does all the Persons in the adorable Trinity concert and sweetly harmonize in this glorious Work of Redemption, joining Hand and Hand therein. God the Son freely undertakes the Work, God the Father prepares a Body for him, *Heb. x. 5.* The Father promiseth to uphold the Son in this great Work. *Isai. xl. 1.* *Behold my Servant whom I uphold.* Yea, promiseth, as a Reward of his Sufferings, *to give him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession,* *Psal. ii. 8.* The holy Spirit concurs in this Work, by sanctifying that Part of the human Nature, which the Son of God assumed, into a personal Union with the divine Nature, *Luke i. 35.* Hence also the good Jesus is said to be *anointed with the Oil of Gladness above his Fellows,* *Psal. xlv. 7.* This Covenant of Redemption was before the Mountains were brought forth,

or ever *he had formed the Hills*; before the Morning Stars sung together, *Prov. viii. 28.* to the 32d Ver.

2. I am to touch at the **Covenant of Works** which was made with *Adam* while in the State of Innocency; and it is termed the **Covenant of Works** because there was something for to do as a Condition of the Covenant, to wit, perfect personal and perpetual Obedience, and something threatned upon the Violation thereof, to wit, Death of all Kinds, *Gen. ii. 15. 16. 17.* Had Man continued in the State of Innocency, this Condition would have been very easy Terms unto him, for he had both Power and Will to perform the same, but by his Fall thus became impossible for him to do, because by his Fall he not only lost all his Power and Will to do good, but also his Nature was poisoned with Sin, so that he, nor none of his ordinary Posterity, by Nature, either does, or can do or will any thing but what is evil, and that continually. *Gen. vi. 5.*

3. I would speak a little of the **Covenant of Grace** which God was graciously pleased to make in and thro' the Lord Jesus Christ with his Elect, soon after the Fall of Man, which Covenant is called a **Covenant of Grace**, both because there is nothing in poor sinful Man any wise to move or excite the holy God to enter into Covenant with him, but mere Bowels of Pity and Compassion; and because all that is promised in this Covenant unto Man is freely promised to him thro' Christ, without any thing being left for him to do but to accept of the Mercy freely offered to him, to wit, Christ and all the Benefits purchased by him: That this Covenant is only in and thro' Christ, without any respect to any thing that is in Man, or done by him, see *Gen. iii. 15. I will put Enmity betwixt thy Seed and her Seed; Isai. xlii. 6. and give thee for a Covenant unto the People.* Hence are those free Invitations, *Jf. lv. 1. Matt. xi. 28. Rev. xxii. 17.* Thus it's evident that the most guilty repenting Sinner is not excluded by this Covenant, but
all,

all, where ever the Gospel comes, all are invited to come, and well-come if they do come : But some may say, if this be so, that this Covenant requires nothing but to accept of offered Mercy, then farewell all Graces, I can be gracious when I please : Stop a little, Friend, who-ever thou art, thou abusest the Goodness of God ; for altho' the Covenant of Grace requires nothing of thee, either in thee or done by thee, to recommend thee unto God, it yet requires of thee something to render thee capable to receive the offered Mercy, to wit, Faith : Hence it's said, *he that believeth, shall be saved.* Mark xvi. 16. Now this thou hast not by Nature, neither can get it by all the Means which thou canst use ; *it is the Gift of God.* Ephes. ii. 8. The Reason why this Grace of Faith is so absolutely necessary to Salvation, is not from intrinſical Value, that there is in Faith, no, no ; for there is none in it : Neither does Faith any way recommend the Soul to God, but it's only an Instrument which renders the Person capable of receiving the offered Mercy, and without which Instrument the Person cannot comply with the Offer of Salvation ; why ? because he has nothing to receive the Offers with, like a Person that has no Hand : And hence it's said, that *it's impossible to please God without Faith :* Heb. xi. 6. Other Graces are required by this Covenant as a Demonſtration of a Soul's Union to Chriſt, and as the neceſſary Fruits and Effects thereof. Thus you may ſee, that it is not our Graces which recommend us unto God, but Chriſt alone. Again, Some may ſay, that the Doctrine of Free-Grace opens a Door unto Licenciuſneſs, that is, to the Neglect of Duties, and the Commiſſion of Sin ; let ſuch ſee Rom. vi. 15. *What then ? ſhall we ſin, becauſe we are not under the Law, but under Grace ? God forbid.* That Perſon who is not drawn more by the Cords of Love to perform Duties, and to guard againſt Sin, than ever he was either by the Fear of Punishment or the Hopes of Gain

there is no Power or Authority in itself, but what is of God, and ordained by God; and thus we must distinguish between Power and Authority in themselves, and the Execution of Power and Authority by Man. The former is an Ordinance, of God's own Institution, appointed for the Punishment of all Impiety, and for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and the better Regulation of the World: Whereas the latter, *to wit*, the Exercising of Power and Authority, as many cruel Tyrants have done, suppressing the Cause of God, and shedding the Blood of the Saints, and pouring it out, like Water, on the Ground, as was done by *Manasseh* and many other Kings of *Israel*; and also by some since the Reformation. I say, to imagine that such an Exercise of Power and Authority is allowed and approved of God, is as gross an Absurdity as almost can be supposed. Thus you may perceive, that we are always to be subject unto Power and Authority, *i. e.* we are always to allow of the Lawfulness of them in themselves, as being of God; and should not be resisted in themselves, nor in the right Exercise of them upon any Rank or Order of Persons, without Exception. But the wrong Exercise of Power and Authority, *to wit*, the Using of them contrary unto the Word of God, ought to be resisted, as is plain from the fore-cited Text, *We ought to obey God rather than Man*; and hence we may observe, that the Subjection which we truly do owe to those in Places of Power and Trust, is only in the Lord, *1 Pet. ii. 17. Fear God and honour the King*. Again, certainly it's lawful to endeavour to preserve vital Piety and the Union of the Nations, to be humbled for our Sins and the Sins of others, and to study to live new Lives.

There yet remains *Three* Paragraphs of the solemn League and Covenant to be spoken of. --- I incline to speak of each of them by themselves. And

1. Of the *Second* Paragraph of the solemn League and Covenant, which runs thus, That we shall, in like Manner, without Respect of Persons, endeavour the Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy (that is, Church-Government by Arch-bishops, their Chancellors, &c.) It's observable, that the Covenanters do not oblige themselves to extirpate Popery, Prelacy; for this would indeed have been unlawful, because it was intitely out of their Power to do, and so it is to us: They only swear, to use their Endeavour for this End; and this was not only to try this or the other particular Person which they had Power over, or the like; but they are impartially to endeavour it of all Ranks, according unto their Station and Opportunity; for Persons are not called hereby, to leave their proper Stations in the World, such as, for Persons to run through the Country or Neighbourhood; No, no: This is to be Busy-Bodies, which we are no-wise called to, only as the Lord is pleased to open a Door to us, we are to embrace it. To extirpate, is properly to root out or take clean away that, to which it is applied to; and now we may consider, what it is which is to be extirpated here by the Covenants; and this is not Persons, as some would understand it, that the Covenanters are bound, by this Covenant, to take away the Lives of the Maintainers of those Errors which are spoken of; but this is a notorious false Aspersion cast on the Covenants, and the Adherers to them, as is undeniably evident by the express Words of the Covenant; *In like Manner, we shall endeavour, without Respect of Persons, to extirpate Popery, Prelacy, that is, Church-Government by Archbishops, their Chancellors, &c.* Thus you may see, that it is the Error which is to be extirpated, and not the Persons. Christ's spiritual Kingdom is not carried on by the Power of the Sword, neither ought his Subjects to make use of a common Sword, in the Propagation of their spiritual Warfare; Hence
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the Apostle tells us, that *the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of Strong Holds, 2 Cor. x. 4.* God has told us, what Sword we should use in this War, *Eph. vi. 17. And take the Helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.* This is the Weapon which should be used in cutting down all Kinds of Error. It's true indeed, that it's not only lawful, but also a Duty, to use the Power of the civil Sword, in Defence of our religious and civil Rights and Liberties: And there are some Errors, that, according unto the Word of God, fall under the Power of the civil Sword also; and what is a civil Power, ordained by God, for, but the Punishment of Wickedness, and the Encouragement of Piety. Again, We may take Notice, that it is Prelacy which is signalized, and particularly spoken against in the Covenant; and this is evident, because it's the very Method of Exercising prelatical Government that is spoken of, *to wit,* by Archbishops, their Chancellors, &c. which is a Method distinct from the popish Method of Government; for the latter is exercised by one Person, but the former by many Persons. There is no just Ground to suppose, that the Covenanters did here overlook Popery, because they particularly speak of Prelacy; No: But I suppose the Reason of this to be, partly because Popery is spoken largely against in the national Covenant, and partly because Popery is so exceeding notorious and manifest, that *he who runs may easily read* the dreadful Errors of it. Again, you may perceive what we are to understand by the Word Prelacy, *to wit,* not Persons, but the Way and Manner of Governing the Church by Archbishops, their Chancellors, &c. "Thus you see, Archbishops are the highest Order in that Church, under whom there is many Ranks of Teachers; for which I know of no Warrant in the Word of God. Having thus explained this Paragraph,

graph, the Way is more clear for the Proof of it; and lest any should mistake what is to be gone about in this; I suppose it is to prove the Lawfulness of Endeavouring to extirpate Prelacy, which perhaps may appear by that which follows.

1. I suppose there are few Protestants who will deny that Christ has appointed a Government in his Church here upon Earth; and if they should deny it, it may be proven, *Matt. xviii. 17. 18.* Many other Scriptures might be advanced to the same Purpose.

2. Since it is so, that Christ has instituted a Government in his Church, is it not the Duty in particular of every Child of God, to endeavour to oppose every Kind of Government in the Church of Christ which either has no Warrant from the sacred Oracles, or is contrary unto them: Ah! can a gracious Soul see the Appointments of his dearest Lord and Master laid aside, and the Inventions of Men brought in their room, and yet not be grieved for it, and use Endeavours to prevent it: Certainly, where this is rightly considered, it is contrary to the renewed Nature. Oh! how justly may the dear Jesus say to such, Is this thy Kindness to thy Friend, to behold my Laws despised, and thou never resent it, either being ashamed or afraid to appear for my Cause in this evil and adulterous Age?

3. Is there any Ground or Warrant from the Word of God for a Superiority in one Minister over another, and for some of them to have the whole Power of Church-Government, and others have none; for either of these I suppose that there is no Scripture-Proof; but the contrary is evident, to wit, Proofs against it, *Matt. xx. 25. 26. 27. 28. Matt. xv. 9. In vain do ye worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. Isai. viii. 20. To the Law and to the Testimony, *if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.*

4. Seeing

4. Seeing Christ has established a Government in his Church, there is certainly no need of any other Government in this Church, because he wanted not Wisdom to know what Kind of Government was fit for it, neither did he want Regard to his Church, (most suitable) when he laid down his Life for it: And thus it will follow, that all other Kinds of Government in the Church are at least superfluous, and so ought to be abolished.

5. To conclude, you may see the Lawfulness in the Sight of God, to endeavour the Extirpation of Prelacy,
 1. Because it's not founded on the Word of God, and therefore it ought to be rejected; for the Word of God is a full Rule for our Direction. 2. *Tim* iii. 16. 17.
 2. Because it is contrary unto the Word of God, as has been proved. 3. Because it's contrary unto the Way and Manner of exercising the Government which Christ has appointed, that is, by Way of Superiority, whereas Christ himself strictly forbids a Superiority among his Disciples: *It shall not be so with you.* 4. Because there is no Necessity of such a Way of Government, Christ having instituted another Method of Government.

In the fourth Paragraph of the solemn League and Covenant, they promise to endeavour to discover all such as have been or shall be Incendiaries, Malignants, or evil Instruments, by hindering the Reformation of Religion, dividing the King from his People, or one of the Kingdoms from another, or making any Faction or Parties among the People, contrary to this League and Covenant; that they may be brought to publick Trial, and receive condign Punishment, &c. All that I shall say at present, in Vindication of this Particular, is, that some of the Offences spoken of, are partly under the Lash of the civil Law, and partly under the Lash of the ecclesiastical Law, such as Incendiaries, Malignants and the like; others lie most properly under

under the civil Law, such as dividing the King from the People, and the like; that they may be brought to publick Trial and receive condign Punishment, that is, that they may be brought before any lawful Judicature, whether civil or ecclesiastical (as I take it) and receive suitable Punishment, according unto the Nature and Aggravation of the Crime; there is no Difficulty in looking upon Church Censure as a Punishment, as well as what the civil Law directs unto.

In the sixth Article they promise to assist and defend all those that enter into this League and Covenant, in the maintaining thereof. If this Covenant be lawful, as I have endeavoured to prove, then it is lawful also for Persons to endeavour the Defence of others, in defending that which each of them are respectively concerned in: This Promise seems to be limited unto suitable Bounds, and not like many Promises of this Nature, without Restriction.

The Manner in which these Covenants were confirmed, is warrantable, *to wit*, by Synods, Assemblies, Acts of Parliament, and by solemn Oaths of Persons in all Ranks and Stations: This is agreeable unto the Custom of the People of God of old, as *Nehem. ix. 38*, compared with the tenth Chapter; and of the *Israelites* in our Text; yea, unto the Method of God himself in confirming his Covenant, *Heb. vi. 13*. Covenants may be good as to the Matter, and yet be quite mismanaged in the Manner of them; and I suppose you will find both the Matter and the Manner of confirming these Covenants, to be agreeable unto the revealed Will of God, and to the Practice of the Children of God in former Ages.

IV. Thing to speak of, was, *To enquire whether the Covenants be binding on Posterity, or not?* which will appear by the following Particulars.

1. If the Matters contained in the Covenants be agreeable unto the divine Law, than undoubtedly they are binding upon the Offspring until latest Posterity: The Antecedent has been proved, *to wit*, that the Covenants both as to Matter and Manner of their being confirmed, are agreeable unto the divine Law; the Consequence cannot be denied; for the Covenants are still binding materially, being conformable to the Word of God, which cannot cease to bind Mankind while in Time.

2. If Covenants relating unto Things merely civil, be binding upon the Offspring of them which composed the Covenants; why then are not the Covenants which relate unto Things spiritual and holy, binding upon the Offspring of those that composed them? Is there not the same Equality of Reason for the latter, as for the former, or rather more; unless you will say, that the only Reason which disannuls the Obligation of Posterity unto Covenants, is, because they relate to Things sacred; but I would fain hope, that few or none will be so notoriously absurd, as to imagine any such Thing. Now that Covenants respecting Things that are merely civil, are binding upon the Offspring of the Composers of the Covenants (when the Matters contained in them are lawful) is evident, even to a Demonstration, from the Words of our Text compared with *2 Sam. xxi. 1.* *Then there was a Famine in the Days of David, three Years, Year after Year; and David enquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody House, because he slew the Gibeonites.* The Substance of this Covenant was to save alive the Gibeonites, and it was made in the Days of Joshua, by him; *And Joshua made Peace with them, and made a League with them to let them live.* This same Covenant was violated by King Saul, in slaying the Gibeonites, and this Violation of the same Covenant was punished by the God of Equity in the Days of King David, which was many
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Ages after it was made; and certainly had this Covenant not been binding upon the Posterity of the *Israelites*, which composed it, even after so long a Time, it could never have consisted with the spotless Justice of a holy God, to have punished them for the Violation thereof, as the Scripture expressly tells us he did; for of Necessity there must be a Transgression before there is just Ground of the Execution of Justice; now, if this Covenant had not been binding upon Posterity, where was the Ground for the Famine, when the Violation of this Covenant was the very Reason assigned by God himself for the Famine? so that there is no possible Method to deny the Obligation of the *Israelites*, in the Days of *David*, unto this Covenant, without charging the holy God with Injustice, which is dreadful Blasphemy.

Thus you may observe, that altho' there was great Deceit used in making of this Covenant; yet the Matter being lawful in itself, it was binding on the *Israelites* many Ages. Again, as this Covenant related unto Things civil, so the Stroke ~~was~~ upon the Body: And thus we may observe also, that as our Covenants are concerning Things spiritual; so has our Stroke been spiritual, since the awful Violation of them. Oh! is it not mournful to consider what a dreadful Flood of Errors has crept into the Church of God, since these were laid aside; and how much Profaneness and Impiety, of almost every sort, has abounded with Persons in all Ranks and Stations? How much has Love to God and Man waxed cold! and how much has there been of Indifferency, Neutrality and Coldness in Religion, and little Success of a preached Gospel! little of vital Holiness, and very few to appear in the Streets for Christ, contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints. *Lord grant that it may not be said of us as of Ephraim, Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone!*

3. Do not many look upon Prelacy as binding upon Offspring; or at least, that they are obliged to favour it, because their Progenitors long upheld it, and many Acts of Parliament have confirmed it? and why then are not the Covenants binding which have been long upheld by our Fore-fathers, even to the Expence of some of their Blood, and have been confirmed by a great many Acts of Parliament? What can the Reason be that the latter is not binding as well as the former? Is it because the One is founded upon the Word of God, and the other is not?

4. If the Covenants are not binding upon us, why do not Ministers except them, when they bind Parents at the Baptism of their Children, unto the Confession of Faith in general, and these Covenants bound up in the same Book; and they know that many Parents look upon the Covenants to be binding upon them, although they be not named? Is not this exceedingly strange, that they do not endeavour to inform Parents (if they are in an Error) or to cut out the Covenants out of such a valuable Book? or if Parents be right, they should be encouraged; and for my own Part, I cannot find out, according unto the common Proceedings of Ministers in this Affair, how they can prevent their falling into a dreadful Dilemma; for if the Covenants be good materially and formally, and binding upon us (as is supposed) then surely, if Ministers do not appear for the Covenants, the Reason must be, either that they have never seriously and impartially weighed and considered them, in order to find out the Value and Usefulness of them (as I really believe is the Case of some) or if they know something of the Value and Usefulness of them; yet will not appear for their Vindication; this must flow from some selfish End, either for Want of a true Zeal for the Glory of God on Earth, and so unwilling to appear in the Streets for the Cause of Christ, (many are willing to appear boldly

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for Christ in those Things whereby they are almost sure will no Way expose them to Danger, but if there is but the very Appearance of Danger, then they are mute,) or from fear of suffering the Loss of their Character, the Loss of their Ease, Pleasure, Worldly Substance, and the like; or of suffering in their Bodies, Minds, and the like; or this must flow from a wilful Neglect of known Duty: Any of which all could easily be proved to be very awful. But on the other Hand, if Ministers are perswaded, that these Covenants are unlawful in themselves, and not binding upon us; why do they not discover the same unto the World? Ought not Persons to have the same Zeal in opposing of Error, as they have in upholding Truth; for surely Error has a native Tendency to darken the Understanding, and to alienate the Mind, and thus to prevent our receiving real Benefit by Truth: And is it not evident, even to a Demonstration, that the Reason why Ministers who are thus perswaded of the Unlawfulness and Unusefulness to us of the Covenants, do not declare the same, is, because some of the above Particulars prevail with them to keep silent, or such like Causes.

V. Thing proposed. was to *enquire into the Usefulness of the Covenants.*

And here I would not have any suppose, that there neither was or can be a good Church without them; No, no: The Reverse of this is Truth. But I am perswaded, that if these Covenants were rightly used, they would be very beneficial unto the Church:

I. As a Bond to unite the Members of a Church into an Oneness of Mind. in Respect to Principles; which Union would have a native Tendency to prevent the unhappy Jarrings and vain Disputations, which are so common among us, unto the Dishonour
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of God, and the Wounding of vital Piety ; and thus might be a Means of creating Peace and Unity in the Church of Christ ; which, upon good Ground, is a very singular Mercy *Psal. cxxxiii.*

2. The Covenants are Useful for purging the Church from Errors: This is the very Scope of the Covenants, to protest against Errors ; and I think, if ever there was Need of the Covenants for this End, since the Reformation, it is now, when almost all Kind of Error has Footing in the Church, and very strange Notions.

3. The Covenants are useful as a Hedge unto the Church: Its spoken of as an awful Stroke, which should come upon the *Jewish* Church to take away her Hedge, *Isai. v. 5, 6.* And indeed, when the Hedge is taken away, I know of Nothing to marr any Sort of People to make Havock of the Church of God. The wild Boar of the Forest may waste it at his Pleasure.

I suppose by the Hedge we are to understand Church-Government ; for as a Hedge, while it is whole, keeps Beasts from going out and in at their Pleasure, or their wandering away, so true Church-Government, rightly exercised, would be a special Means: 1. To cast out all erroneous Persons, of all Stations, out of the Church. 2. All prophane Persons. 3. All Sorts of scandalous Persons. And not only cast them out, but also keep them out ; and God alone knows what a thin Church would be left in our corrupt Age. Alas, for it ! Any Person, that has but half an Eye, may easily observe the dreadful Breaches made in our Church-Government, which has opened Passages for Swarms of erroneous Persons to come into the Church ; Swarms of prophane Creatures, and Swarms of scandalous Persons ; yea, and some, of all these Swarms, have crept into the Ministry, in such awful Flocks, that our once beautiful *Zion* is trodden down to the Dust, by this wretched Brood : And that which still adds unto the

Grief of some of God's Children, is, that there appears so few desirous to rebuild the Ruins of our *Zion*, and endeavour to heal the Breaches thereof, that we may not always lie open unto every Bird of Prey. And I really believe, that our declining from the Standards of our Church-Government, has been the Means of Opening all those Passages whereby our Church is ruined; for where there is not some good Standard for Church-Government exactly followed, its next to impossible (for Persons not immediately inspired by God, which we need not expect now) to govern the Church, without opening a Way for some Mischief to come in, because where is no exact Rule, a Mistake is not so easily observed, neither does the Transgression appear in such aggravated Circumstances. But you may say, you have the Word of God for a Rule; so will many Professions say, as well as you; but certainly every Church should be agreed, in Respect to some Plan of Government, which they believe the Word of God directs to, and which they will strictly adhere to: And several Churches have done so, and ours amongst the rest, did once agree unto a certain Plan for the Government of the Church; but indeed I know no Church, that has walked so contrary unto their Plan of Church-Government, as we have done, who have in a great Measure laid it aside for many Years past; and for my Part, I know no greater Reason, why we do less regard our Plan of Government, than other Churches do theirs, but because it seems to be directly founded upon the Word of God, and thence is not so agreeable unto corrupt Nature as some other Kinds of Government are, which we are all too much inclined to gratify; although indeed it cannot be said of many of us, who call ourselves Presbyterians, that we do professedly deny any Part altogether, which is contained in that Book which we call the Confession of our Faith; yet it is difficult to know, what Part of it we do

do all agree to ; for it is but little of this valuable Book but what is at least carped at by some of us, and some of it, up and down through the whole Book, partly denied ; so that it is not very easy to find out, not only what our Plan of Government is, but also the Articles of our Faith : And undoubtedly when the Plan of our Church-Government is not easy to find, it must be more difficult to manage the Government of the Church right, when the Plan itself is to seek.

VI. Thing proposed, was to *answer some Objections which are advanced against the Covenants.*

Objection 1. Some say, that Parents can make no Covenants to bind their Children to, and therefore they will not adhere to them.

Answer 1. I readily grant, that Parents have no Power over their Children, to bind them unto any Covenants, which are in themselves unlawful. 2. But to say, that Parents have no Power to bind their Children unto any Covenant, is true in Fact ; which might be proved many Ways : 1. Against Parents, according to the Command of God, dedicate their Children to him in that Sacrament of Baptism, at which Time they come under very solemn Vows, in the Name and Room of their Children, to train them up in the Fear and Service of God ; and when Children become notoriously wicked and profligate, is it not often said, such a Person has renounced his Baptismal Vows, although he never did personally make any ? And if Parents may make such Vows for to bind their Children to, why not to any that are lawful ? 2. To deny, that Parents have Right to make Covenants to bind their Children, would cast a most awful Affront upon a holy and pure God, who frequently visits the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation. And thus the Lord punished

nished *Rehoboam, Josiah, and the Israelites*, in the Days of *David*, for the Sin committed by *Saul*, who was before him King. 3. What are Parents, in this Respect, but Representatives of their Children; and to deny any Power to Representatives, to act in the Room and Stead of those which they represent, would be to bring the greatest Confusion into the World imaginable; for if one Person could not represent another more, it would be next to impossible to manage our common Affairs: But this wild Notion is directly opposite both the Law of God and Man.

Obj. 2. Others say it's impossible to keep the Covenants now, because there is such a Change in the Government from what it was when those Covenants were composed, and I will not bind my self to that which I know I cannot perform.

Answ. 1. This Objection is founded upon a false Foundation; for it supposeth a Person to be free from any Obligation to the Covenants, until he actually binds himself unto them; which has been proven to be false from the good Word of God, that we who are the Offspring of the Covenanters, neither are nor can be freed from an Obligation unto the Covenants, by all the Laws which can be made on Earth, until we can prove the Matter contained in them to be unlawful, which I suppose will pass the Skill of the whole Creation to do. 2. It's asserted, that it's impossible to keep the Covenants now; it's true indeed, that it's impossible for Man in his lapsed Condition, to do any Thing in and of himself, which as it flows from him can be good; but to imagine that the Impossibility of keeping the Covenants, ariseth from the Change of Government, is false; for it's as easy with God to assist and strengthen us to keep the Covenants, as ever it was, and we never could have kept them without his Aid and Help: But I always supposed, that the Commands of God had been the Rule of our Actions, and not our Can-

Can-does; for I know of no Strength or Will that we have of ourselves to do any Thing but Sin, and to this we have Strength enough. Can you read, pray, praise, receive the Sacraments, aright of your selves, and will you neglect them, until you know that you can do them aright: If so, it's probable you never would do them: It's our Duty, to strive to stretch out the wither'd Hand; and how do you know if you would assay to keep the Covenants, but the Almighty would assist you, and then you need not fear; for *if God be for us, who can be against us?* Rom. viii. 31.

3. You say, that the Government is changed from what it was when these Covenants were composed; which is indeed true: What then? Must we change our Profession agreeable unto every Alteration of Government? This would be exceeding awful indeed! but surely the Word of God, and the Principles which we pretend to own, ought to be the Ground and Foundation of our Profession, and not the civil Government, which in all Ages has been subject to change. Again, you may say, *if it be so, we shall expose ourselves to Suffering; and what although it should fall out so, must we sell or sacrifice a good Conscience to prevent bodily Sufferings?* Sure this is not the Lesson which Christ has taught us, *Matt. x. 26. And fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell.* Yea, he tells us, that *such as suffer for his sake are blessed, Mat. v. 10, 11, 12.* To endeavour to save our Lives by denying to appear for Christ's Cause, is the ready Way to lose them, *Mat. xvi. 25. For whosoever shall save his Life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his Life for my sake, shall find it.*

4. Again, I do not suppose, that the Government is so much changed now from what it was when these Covenants were composed, as it was in the Days of Saul, from the Government in the Days of Joshua, who

who was present at the making of the League with the *Gibeonites*; yet notwithstanding all the Mutations of Government which were in *Israel*, in that long Tract of Time, we find that the holy God punished them for the Violation of that Covenant. Again, I know Nothing, for my Part, according unto the present Establishment of Government, to marr our adhering unto the Covenants, or our renewing of them; seeing King *George the First*, at his very Entry unto the *British* Throne, proclaimed Liberty of Conscience to all his Subjects without Exception, which I suppose has never yet been repealed; which Liberty we ought to look upon as no small Mercy, although, alas for it! that it has been so poorly improved by us unto the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church.

Obj. 3. Some say, that if they adhere unto the Covenants, that they are obliged to rise in Rebellion against his present Majesty *King George*.

Answ. This Objection flows from a Misapprehension of what the Covenants actually oblige unto; for it supposeth, that the Covenants bind all which adhere unto them, to the Use of the civil Sword in Defence of them; which Supposition is notoriously false; for no Covenant on Earth can bind Persons in a private Station, unto the Exercise of the civil Sword, even against Malefactors, because it is directly opposite unto the expres Word of God, who has committed the Exercise of the civil Sword unto Magistrates, *Rom. xiii. 4.* *For he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth evil.* Again, the Covenants relate to Things spiritual, and consequently the Warfare for the upholding of them, ought to be spiritual; for as I have already proved from the Word of God, Christ requires not the Use of the civil Power or Sword in carrying on of his spiritual War; but he useth, and has taught his Disciples to use the Sword of the Spirit.

Obj. 4.

Obj. 4. Some say, if they adhere unto the Covenants they must forsake the Communion of the Saints ; which is so much recommended in the Word of God, and so very desirable in itself.

Ans. 1. Here we should enquire carefully, what we are to understand by the Communion of Saints, (1) Whether we are to understand by this Communion a joining with Saints in their Errors, as it cannot be denied but that the greatest Saint, while in this imperfect State, may be guilty of Errors, and indeed still is in one respect or another ; it cannot be denied that such kind of Communion, even with Saints would be very sinful : We ought to join with none but as far as they follow Christ, see Gal. ii. 11. *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the Face, because he was to be blamed.* Some imagine, that it's very awful to see the Children of God contending with one another ; yet you have he. ~~an~~ Instance of it in two of the greatest of all Christ's Apostles : It's melancholy that there should be a just Ground of Difference between them ; but when **there** is, they ought faithfully to reprove one another, Lev. xix. 17. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart : Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him.* (2) We may enquire, whether by the Communion of Saints, we are to understand that we should keep Communion with none but such as are free from all kind of Error in Principle ? and if so, I fear we never shall enjoy Communion with one Saint on Earth ; and were this my Opinion, I think there would be just Ground to fear, that I should never enjoy Communion with the Saints hereafter ; for **there** is no Man that liveth and sinneth not ; and there is no such Thing as even true Grace itself, while in time, perfectly enlightening the Mind, any more than purging the other Faculties of the Soul ; which is not perfectly done here below the Clouds : Here we see but darkly, as through a Glass.

Oh, it's very strange what unaccountable Notions many of the dear Children of God have entertained, which all tends to demonstrate the Riches of God's free Grace, in saving of such Creatures, and to discover the various Effects of the Operations of the holy Spirit. (3) We may enquire, whether by the Communion of Saints we are to understand here, a keeping up of Fellowship with all sorts of Persons, without Exception, which we truly believe to bear something of the Image of Christ, *to wit*, that are really renewed in Part, in as far as we are agreed; altho' in the mean time no ways joining with any of them in any Particular which we are persuaded in our Conscience to be contrary unto the Word of God, either in Doctrine, Principle, Practice, Discipline or Government of the Church; and instead of joining with any of them in any Particular above, using all proper Means to gain our Brother or Sister in Christ, to that Light which God has been pleased to give us? This I take to be truly the Communion of the Saints in Time, and I suppose it's not contrary unto the Word of God, nor to any Part contained in the Confession of Faith; for this of the Communion of Saints cannot be understood to join with none but such as are free from all Error, because there is none such, as has been said; neither can it be to join with Persons in known Error; because this would be to Sin directly contrary unto the Light of our own Conscience, which would surely marr our Communion, and be a dreadful Guilt: So that if what is said above, be not the Communion of the Saints, perhaps it will be difficult to find out what it is: *Phil. iii. 16, Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule; let us mind the same Thing.* 2. In the Objection it's observed, that if we adhere unto the Covenants, we must forsake the Communion of Saints; and in order to find out either the Truth or Falshood of this, we must enquire, whether the Covenanters or the Non-

Covenanters, are the Cause of this Breach of Communion? And (1) a meer Adherence to or owning of the Covenants, cannot be the Cause of the Breach of the Communion of the Saints; they may be the Occasion of it, but not the Cause; for as has been proved, the Covenants both materially and formally, are agreeable unto the divine Law, and unto the Practice of the People of God in several Ages, both of Jews and Gentiles. (2) If a gracious Person who does not concur with the Covenants, will not keep Communion with a Covenanter, whom he cannot but look upon as a Brother or Sister in Christ; yet merely on this Account breaks up Communion with the Covenanter; the Non-covenanter may justly be said to be the real Cause of the Breach of the Communion of the Saints, and the awful Guilt of which lies at his Door, because he forsakes his Brother for doing his Duty. (3) If the Covenanter will not join in Communion with any of those which he cannot but look upon as a Brother or Sister in Christ, (in as far as they are agreed) merely because he is not a Covenanter; I really believe that the Covenanter is the real Cause of the Breach of the Communion of Saints, the dreadful Guilt of which lies at his Door, because there is not sufficient Foundation of Separation, as may appear from many Particulars, as, (1) Because it's no fundamental Error, that is, a Person may really be united to Christ without adhering to these Covenants, as I hope many are: But some may say, *If it's so, I will not own the Covenants, if I may be saved without them.* Whoever thou art which speaketh so, you speak like a Stranger to God and true Holiness: There are many Things which are not essential to Salvation, which are no Matters of Indifference, such as a preached Gospel, the Use of the Sacraments, and such like. (2) Because the Covenants are what both great and good Men have differed about, and possibly may still do so; and for my Part, I only look

upon it as a Weakness in a Child of God ; for a wilful Sin it cannot be ; because to continue in a wilful Sin is inconsistent with the right Exercise of Grace ; It's very possible, that some Persons who cannot come to a Clearness in respect to the Covenants (especially now when they have been so little regarded) may far excel the Covenanter, both in respect of Experience in Grace and Knowledge of other Particulars in Religion ; and how unaccountable would it be, for the Covenanter both to deprive himself of the Priviledge of Instruction in those Things which his Brother is both able and willing to help him in, and also to deprive himself of having such an Opportunity of informing and reasoning with his Brother, in order to convince him of his Wrong ? Can any Person deny but such a Covenanter is instrumental in this respect, to bind up his Talent in a Napkin, and the Talent of his Brother also ? And where is his Condescension unto his weak Brother ? Is he not by this Means more likely to destroy his Brother than save him from his Error ? I know some will say, *I may converse and reason with Persons, without joining in Communion.* I know you may ; but who thanks you for this ? for you are bound to do so unto a Turk or Mahometan, if you had Opportunity ; but oh, how little Benefit can one Person be to another, when he does enjoy no free Communion with him ? They are still in some Measure like two Armies. Again, some will say, *We may be mistaken in Persons, thinking them to be Christians who are not :* And this is a bad Mark to deny any Part of the Truth. Indeed there is a Possibility of the former, and I do not desire to commend the latter : But whoever thou art that reasons thus, it does not sound well, because there seems as clear and undeniable Evidences of the Grace of God in some that cannot yet comply with the Covenants, as any that I know of ; and this Notion also looks too selfish, like Persons highly esteeming of themselves ; and I suppose

Suppose you are not so very doubtful of the Faithfulness of those that join with you in the Covenants: If it's dear Brethren, is not this too much like the Jews who cried, *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these?* Do you not practically say, *Stand by thy self, come not near me, for I am holier than thou?* (3) Because the Covenanter by so doing, he denies Communion with those whom God has received into Communion with himself, and those which he expects to enjoy Communion with when Time shall be no more; he denies them of the Communion of the Saints here, which God has given them a Right unto, and which the dear Children of God delight much in, *But to Saints that are in the Earth, and to the Excellent in whom is my delight,* Psal. xvi. 3. He, if a Minister would deny them of the Children's Bread, as he won't join in Communion with none but Covenanters, consequently would admit none others; and thus not only deny God's Children the Children's Bread, but also turn them out among Dogs and Swine. Well may the dear Jesus say, *Is this thy Kindness to thy Friend?* Little does the Covenanter think on these Words of Christ, *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; but whoso shall offend one of these little Ones which believe in me, it were better for him, that a Millstone were hanged about his Neck, and that he were drowned in the Depth of the Sea,* Mat. xviii. 6. And do you not give him just Ground of Offence, when you deny him the Communion of the Saints, and deny him of the Privileges of God's Children? Add to this, how unbecoming it is to see the Followers of the immaculate Lamb of God, like so many wild Creatures, tearing the Flesh of one another. Oh! have we not all great Need to take that Advice which Joseph gave to his Brethren, *Gen. xlv. 24. See that ye fall not out by the Way?*

Obj. 5. Some say, that the Reformation, or the renewing of the Covenants, should begin with Persons in great Power, or it won't do.

Ans. 1. The Profession of Religion, which only depends upon the Power of Man for the Upholding of it, is very little worth; and is ready to turn with the Power or Multitude: *Jer. xvii. 5. Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the Man that trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm.* 2. Such a Reformation is contrary unto what is revealed in the Scripture, *Matth. xi. 25, 26. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28, 29.* It's also contrary to the Method which the Son of God used for publishing the Gospel, who made use of poor illiterate Fishermen for the same, and did not use mighty Princes, or the learned Rabbies of the Age; and the same we may see in the Reformation from Popery.

Obj. 6. Some say, that the Covenant of Grace binds to the same Things which these Covenants do; and therefore there is no Need of them.

Answ. 1. I never knew, that the more one Duty agreed with another, that by this the Necessity or Usefulness of the one was removed; No: For if so, where is the Usefulness of Praying in Secret, in Families, and in Publick; seeing Prayer in all these Places ought to be much the same? It's not uncommon, for the best of Divines, to be at Pains to discover unto People the sweet Agreement and Concurrence that is in all the Duties of Religion, and how one depends on another; and use this, as an Argument, to excite them to the Performance of Duty. 2. The principal Thing which the Covenant of Grace requires, is, to accept of offered Mercy, *that is, Christ* and the Benefits purchased by him. Indeed, Persons which are under the Covenant of Grace, are required, to endeavour to keep the whole Law of God; but this is not required of them by any Condition in or by the Covenant of Grace, but it is required of them as an Evidence or

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Demonstration, that they are the Children of God, whose Will is their Delight and Pleasure; which natively flows from the Soul's Union to Christ: So that no sooner is a Person united to Christ, but immediately he endeavours Obedience to him, as the necessary Fruit and inseparable Effect of the Union. But these Covenants require us to be agreeable unto the Confession of Faith in Principle, Doctrine, Practice, Discipline and Government; and to renounce all Error in all the fore-mentioned Particulars: So you may perceive some Distinction between the Covenant of Grace and those here spoken of.

VII. And last Thing proposed, was to make some practical Improvement of the Whole.

And by what has been spoken there is a very large Field laid open, which might afford sufficient Ground for very extensive Improvements: But the doctrinal Part of the Discourse being my chief Design at present, I shall conclude with a few Reflections by Way of Information, Examination, Lamentation and Exhortation.

1. For Information; is it so as we have heard, that national Covenanting, in itself, is lawful in God's Sight? Then hence we may be informed: 1. Of the great Loss that we are in this Age, that know so little of this of national Covenanting, unless it be in Things entirely earthly. We have been very little troubled these many Years past, either in making national Covenants, which relate unto Things spiritual and holy, or in keeping or in renewing those which are composed already; which cannot rationally be supposed to redound much to our Honour or Advantage, but the reverse. 2. Seeing there is so many Kinds of Covenants as we have heard, this may inform us of the surprizing Condescension of God, in ever stooping so low as to enter into Covenant with any of his own
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Creatures ; when it may justly be termed an humbling of his glorious Majesty, to behold the Things which are in Heaven, and how much more to behold Things on Earth. Oh ! how stupendiously do the Beams of the divine Perfection shine forth, in the Covenant of Redemption and of Grace ; and especially those of Wisdom, Goodness and Mercy : With what marvelous Beauty and admirable Lustre do they appear in these Covenants ; yea, how sweetly do all the glorious Attributes meet in these, and how wonderfully do they harmonize and concur together ! *Psal. lxxxv. 10.*

Mercy and Truth are met together : Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other. These Covenants are the very Ground and Foundation of that sweet Song of the holy Angels, *Luke ii. 13,--19.* Of the redeemed Company, *Rev. v. 9 ver. to the end* : Yea, of that melodious love Song, which every one of the heavenly Choir shall still be chanting forth, with their warbling Notes, throughout the lasting Ages of an endless Eternity. Oh this matchless and boundless Ocean of Redeeming Love ! Oh who can think, speak or write, in any Measure becoming of it ! The highest Arch-Angel is incomparably too low, to set forth all the manifold crystal Streams, which continually issue from the pure Fountain ; and much more to set forth Redeeming Love itself. The longest Line of the whole Creation cannot fathom it.

Use 2. Shall be for Trial. It is not a question but you have made several Contracts, and Leagues or Covenants, with Man : But the Question is, hast thou ever yet made a Contract, League or Covenant with God ? And I suppose some of you will readily answer with *Isaac*, *Is thy Servant a Dog*, that I should live so long without being in Covenant with the Lord ? I was dedicated to the Lord in my Infancy, by my Parents, in that holy Sacrament of Baptism ; and frequently renewed my Baptismal Vows, at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ; and have formally entered into a Cove-
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nant with the Lord. These Things are desirable ; but what are all these more than Hypocrites may do ? And if thy Righteousness does not exceed what they can do, thou must perish, *Matth. v. 20.* Seeing Things are thus, thou shouldst examine a little further : Art thou yet received into the Covenant of Grace, *that is*, art thou united to Christ, who is the Sum and Substance of that Covenant ? To which the following Particulars may give some Light.

I. Was thou ever dead to the Law ; not only to the ceremonial Law, but also to the moral Law, in Point of Justification ? This is necessary to every Soul that expects to be united to Christ : *Gal. ii. 19. I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God.* Now a Death necessarily pre-supposeth a Life ; for it's impossible for that to die which never had Life : And if thou wouldst know, whether thou art dead to the Law, see if ever thou wast alive to the Law, *that is*, looked for Justification, either on the Account of some Good in thee, or done by thee ? And if thou hast never found thyself depending upon thy own Righteousness, it is a plain Demonstration, that the Law has never yet come with Power to thy Soul, so as to kill thee ; that so thou, *through the Law, might be dead to the Law* ; and consequently art yet alive to the Law, *that is*, you are depending either upon some pretended Good in you, or upon your sober, honest Life, or Prayers, or giving of Alms, or Repentances, or something of this Nature. You may see both this Life and Death set forth by the Apostle, *Rom. vii. 9. For I was alive without the Law once : But when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died :* That is, before the Law came with Power to his Soul, he conceited that he lived very well, being exceedingly strict and zealous in his Doings (as perhaps Reader it may be with thee) but when the Law came with Power to his Soul, he saw Sin in quite another Colour, *to wit*, exceeding heinous ; and that himself

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and the best of his Actions was full of Sin ; which Sight of Sin caused him to die unto all his former Hopes and Expectations of obtaining Salvation, in the Course which he followed ; and like a Person expiring, with a bitter dying Groan, cries out, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death!* Oh Reader ! hast thou ever experienced these Things.

2. Wouldst thou know, whether thou art yet received into the Covenant of Grace ; then inquire, art thou yet become a New Creature ? 2 Cor. v. 17. *Therefore if any Man be in Christ, he is a New Creature: Old Things are past away, behold, all Things are become New.* Where this New Creature is, it must be born, Job. iii. 3. *Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.* In Births there is always two Things, extream Pain and something new. 1. That Women have extream Pain when in Travel, is undeniably Evident, not only by their awful Out-cries, but by the Spirit of God, which frequently compares these with the sharpest Pains. So it is in this spiritual Birth, the Pains are always extream Pains, *that is*, they must always have the same Effect, upon every Soul that is brought savingly home to Christ, *to wit*, to see and feel with the Prodigal, that they are at the very Point of Perishing : Altho' it's certain, that these Pains may be greater or less, of a longer or shorter Continuance, and proportioned agreeable unto the holy Will of God ; yet are they always sharp Pains ; for though Persons, either on a Death Bed, or Women in Travel, may much differ, in respect both to the Continuance in Pain, and the Greatness of the Pain ; yet it must be acknowledged, that the Pains are very sharp. 2. In a Birth, there is some new Creature is brought forth into the World, which never was seen by any human Eye before ; so it is in this spiritual Birth, there is a new Creature brought forth. *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature :* And hence the forming of this new

new Creature, is termed a Creating, to discover, that there was Nothing of this new Creature in the Man or Woman before this; *Eph. iv. 24. And that ye put on the new Man, which after God is created in Righteousness, and true Holiness.* This new Creature is a spiritual Creature, formed by God, *1 Pet. i. 3.* And hence it is, that the carnal Eye cannot rightly observe it, *1 Cor. ii 14.* And therefore do Christless Persons conclude, that this Work of the holy Spirit of God upon the Souls of Persons, is all a meer Delusion, some whimsical, enthusiastical Notions of the Brain; because they are ignorant of this themselves: And they imagine, that it must be so with others too, not considering, that *blind Persons are unfit to judge of Colours.* But some of you who reads may ask, how can this Creature be known? And as to an infallible Knowledge of this in another Person, is what cannot be known by Mankind, in Time; but lest you should think, that there is no such Thing as any Discovery thereof, you may observe the following Particulars. It may be known by its Life, by the Renewing of the Faculties, and by the Grace infused into the Soul. 1. I say, the new Creature may be known by its Life: Life is discovered by Breathing, and this you may find in the new Creature, *Psal. xlii. 1. As the Heart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God!* It's known by its spiritual Motion after God, *Psal. lxiii. 8. My Soul followeth hard after thee.* It's known by its spiritual hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, *Matth. v. 6. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after Righteousness.* Many such might be added. 2. This new Creature may be known by the Renewing of the Faculties of the Soul. There is a new Heart given. *Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new Heart also will I give you.* The Conscience is purged. *Heb. ix. 13. Purge your Conscience from dead Works to serve the living God.* The Understanding is enlightned, *Luke xxiv 45. Then*

opened be their Understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. The Will is changed, *Psal. cx. 3. Thy People shall be willing in a Day of thy Power.* The Affections are set on Things above, *Col. iii. 2. Set your Affections on Things above.* 3. This new Creature may be known by the Graces infused by the holy Spirit in the Soul. By Faith, *Acts xv. 9. Purifying their Hearts by Faith.* By Love to God, *1 John iv. 16. God is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* By Hope, *Heb. vi. 19. Which Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure, and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the Vail.* By Joy in the Holy Ghost, *Rom. xiv. 17. For the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.* Whoever thou art which has truly experienced all these Things in thy Soul, I dare say, in the Name of God, that thou hast some true Knowledge what a new Creature is; and if thou hast never experienced what these Things are, in thy Soul, thou needest not wonder that thou knowest not what this new Creature is; for at best thou art but a Babe in Christ; and it's well if thou be not as yet a Deceiver of thy own Soul. Again, wilt thou examine thy self, whether ever thou hast surely entered into a personal Covenant with the Lord? Canst thou say, with David, *Altho' my House be not so with God; yet with me he hath made an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure?* Hast thou any Evidences of this Marriage Tie? Thy Marriage may be a Counterfeit, without Evidences; it would not stand in common Law, and how will it stand at the Bar of God? At Marriages there are ordinarily some Love Tokens. Hast thou the earnest of the Spirit, some Foretastes of the heavenly Canaan? Dost thou frequently cut down some Clusters of Grapes from the Brook Eschol? Art thou acquainted with the flowry Hills of Zion? Dost thou feed upon the Mountains of Myrrh and Hills of Frank-

Frankincense? Dost thou drink of the Water of Life? Does the Dew of Heaven lie all Night on thy Branches? In short, hast thou the Spirit witnessing with thy Spirit, that thou art a Child of God? If so, thou hast just Ground indeed to conclude, that thou art in Covenant with the Lord.

Use 3. Seeing that the national and solemn League and Covenants are agreeable unto, and founded upon the Word of God; is there not just Ground of Lamentation? 1. Because these Covenants have for a long time been in a great Measure laid by, as if they were useless, and too few to lament and mourn for the same, altho' many are the doleful and awful Fruits of this: We may justly say, that since these Covenants were laid aside, the Crown is fallen from our Heads; our *Zion* languisheth; our Gold is become dim; our *Nazarites* are become blacker than a Coal, and are not known in the Streets: and few to cry, O Lord how long shall it be so! When wilt thou revive these buried Covenants! Thy Servants favour the very Dust of *Zion*, and take Pleasure in her Rubbish and her Stones for thy Sake. 2. Is there not just Ground of Lamentation, that there is such dreadful Floods of Errors crept into the Church since these Covenants were laid aside? While these Covenants were professed, they were not only like a Wall to keep out Error, but also were special Engines to cast out Errors of the Church; but now when the Walls are broken down, the Way is laid open unto all kinds of Birds of Prey, to come into the Church; and instead of any Thing to marr their in-coming; the Church is become a Shelter and a quiet Habitation, for the most erroneous Person that will make any kind almost of a Profession: So that our Church, instead of being a House of Prayer for all People, it's become more like a Den of Thieves: Wild Boars wasting it at their Pleasure, and few to fray them away; agreeable to *Psal.* lxxx. 12, 13.

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That this is the present melancholy State of our Church; Does not those that deny the Equality of the Son with the Father, prove this? Does not the Deists and Free-Thinkers among us, prove this? Does not Persons who bless God that Sincerity is come now in the room of Perfection, prove this? Does not Persons that deny the Necessity of Conversion to Gospelized People, prove this? Does not Persons that assert, that People may be converted, and yet entirely unacquainted with the Working of the Spirit of God upon the Soul, prove it? Does not not Persons that assert, that if a Youth passeth his Trials with Approbation of the Presbytery, that the Youth has the Call of God to the Ministry, and ought to be looked upon as a faithful Embassador of Christ, prove this? Does not Persons who assert, that People have as good Ground to expect saving Benefit to their Souls, from Ministers that are void of saving Grace, as from those who are gracious, prove this? Does not Persons that deny the Necessity of Conviction in order to Conversion, prove this? Is not our Church come unto a very poor Pass, when almost all these Errors, if not every one of them, may be found in Ministers approved by the Church? And if so with Ministers, how is it with common People? (3) Does not the Prophaneness, Looseness and Impiety, both of Ministers and of People, loudly cry for bitter Lamentation in our Day? 4. Does not the general Unsuccessfulness of a preached Gospel, call for bitter Mourning before God? 5. Does not the heavy Wrath of God, which has long been pouring out upon us, and is still hanging over our Heads, on the Account of our awful Backslidings from him, call for bitter Wailing and Lamentation? 6. Does not our Breach of these Covenants; our denying of our Obligation to them, and continuing in the same, call for deep Humiliation before God, and speedy Amendment, seeing they are undoubtedly binding upon us?

Oh!

Oh Reader! art not thou frequently lamenting, sighing and crying, for these and all other Abominations of the Age and Place where you live? This has been the Practice of the People of God, and I hope is of some yet: *Ezek. ix. 4. And the Lord said unto him, Go through the Midst of the City, through the Midst of Jerusalem, and set a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh, and cry for all the Abominations that be done in the Midst thereof.* Oh! is not this the Day of *Jacob's* Trouble? and will not the Sons and Daughters of *Zion* sit in Sack-cloth and Ashes, and lament and mourn to behold the broken-down Walls of our *Jerusalem*; and to see *Zion* trodden down under Foot, which was once the Beauty of all Lands? Oh! should we not long to see the Tabernacle of *David* raised, which is fallen down, and the Breaches thereof closed up? When shall we see the Children of *Israel* they and the Children of *Judah*, together, going and weeping? They shall go and seek the Lord their God, saying, Let us join our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, that shall not be forgotten. Oh! wilt thou not say, Reader, with the Psalmist, *Psal. cxxxvii. 5, 6.* Remember it's no Matter of Indifferency whether thou appears for the Cause of God, *Judges v. 23. Curse ye Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the Inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the Help of the Lord; the Help of the Lord against the Mighty.*

Use 4. Seeing that national covenanting is lawful, and that there is so many kinds of Covenants, some of which has been spoken of; then let one and all be exhorted, 1. To endeavour to make a League or Covenant with the holy God, that he may be at Peace with us, through the Lord Jesus Christ; and that we may everlastingly live a glorious Life in the heavenly World: Happy were it for us, if we upon just Ground could say with the Apostle, *Rom. v. 1. Therefore having*
Justification

By Faith, we have Peace with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Little avails thee, O Man or Woman, what Covenant or Contract thou hast made on Earth, if God is not become thy covenanted God : If God be for thee, who can be against thee ? and if God be against thee ; who can be for thee ? Oh ! then labour first and above all other, labour to be in Covenant with the Lord, and this will never marr thee to enter into any other lawful Covenant ; but will rather prove a great Help to thee in performing of them.

2. From what has been said, let us be exhorted to consider seriously, how agreeable the national and solemn League and Covenant are unto the Word of God ; how binding they are upon us ; how useful they would be to us if they were rightly renewed, and what an awful Loss we are at, by the Want of their being duly adhered unto ; which if it were the blessed Will of God to bring Ministers and People thereto, would be some Hope of the Revival of those long buried Covenants ; which is the Heart's Desire and fervent Prayer to God, of many of his own dear Children.

F I N I S.
