

VINDICIAE JUSTIFICATIONIS GRATUITAE

Justification without Conditions; or

**the Free Justification of a Sinner,
Explained, Confirmed and Vindicated from
the Exceptions, Objections and seeming
Absurdities which are cast upon it, by the
Assertors of Conditional Justification;
More especially, from the Attempts of Mr. B.
Woodbridge, in his Sermon entitled, "Justification
by Faith;" of Mr. Cranford, in his Epistle to the
Reader; and of Mr. Baxter, in some Passages which
relate to the same Matter. Wherein also, the
Absoluteness of the New Covenant is proved, and
the Arguments against it are disproved.**

By William Eyre

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a Church in the City of New Sarum.**

**"Being justified freely by his Grace, through
the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ."
{Rom.3:24}**

PRINTED 1653

COMPLETE & UNABRIDGED

Supralapsarian Press

2014 EDITION

Recommendation

Reader: The great Work of them who are Ambassadors for Christ, to beseech men in his stead, to be reconciled unto God, is to reveal the Will and Love of the Father, in making him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him. The manifestation of the Excellency, Fullness, Sufficiency, and Absolute Preeminence of that Righteousness, so wrought out, from the Council of the will of God, dispensed in a Covenant of Grace, is that, which in the pursuit, and discharge of the Trust committed to them, that they chiefly, through the strength of God, do, or ought to lift up themselves unto. In this Labor of the Gospel, hath the Author of the ensuing Treatise, evinced his Fellowship and Communion, by the travel of his mind, {accompanied with those advantages of Abilities, and Learning, which make such undertakings acceptable, and useful} which he hath laid out therein. The persons, occasion, and other circumstances, related unto, in this Discourse, I am utterly unacquainted withal, but only by the light which concerning them, it self holds out unto me; which being not a sufficient bottom for a Judgment of this notoriety, I am not called, no more than desired to deliver my thoughts concerning them. Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. Of the Matter treated on herein, various are the thoughts of learned Men; those doubtless seem to have the advantage, who walk in a professed compliance with the design of God, to give the Son of his Love, with his Love and Grace in him, the Preeminence in all things. To deliver my Thoughts concerning the severals, argued, and disputed in this Treatise, neither the minute of time, whereunto for this expression of myself I am confined,

will admit me, nor doth my present aim require. {Especially considering that I have at large delivered myself to the main Head of the whole, in my Book of the Perseverance of the Saints, and Answer to Mr. John Goodwin on that subject, now almost cleared off the Press.} For the present, I shall only say, that there being too great evidence of very welcome entertainment, and acceptance, given by many to an almost pure Socinian Justification, and Exposition of the Covenant of Grace, even amongst them, into whose hearts God seems to have shined, in some measure, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ, all solid, learned, sober, endeavors, for the Vindication of the Absoluteness, Freedom, Independency, and Preeminence of that Grace in Jesus Christ, whereby we are saved, will doubtless find acceptance with the Children of Gospel-Wisdom, and all that love the glory of Him that bought us. Amongst such Labors and Endeavors {Christian Reader} I commend to thy consideration, the ensuing Treatise, and commit thee to the Lord.

John Owen, Westminster, Nov.7, 1653.

PREFACE

*To my dear flock in the City of New Sarum; unto which,
God and their own Choice, have made me an Over-seer.*

Loving, and Beloved Brethren,

It was a frequent saying in the mouth of Luther, that after his death, the doctrine of Justification would be corrupted. A few years last past, have contributed more to the fulfilling of his prediction, than all the time that went before. Can there be a greater evidence of men's apostasy from this Article of our Faith, than their branding of the doctrine itself, with a mark of heresy? Though our Adversaries are grown more subtle to distinguish, yet they are as wide from the true Doctrine of Justification by Christ alone, as the perverters of the Faith in Luther's days. It is not easy to number up all the wiles and methods wherewith Satan hath assaulted this Foundation-Truth; for he knew it was too gross to tell men that they must be justified by Works, seeing the Scriptures are so express against it; and therefore men's wits must be set on work to find out some plausible distinctions and extenuations, a little to qualify and sweeten this Popish leaven, to take off the odium of the phrase, and to rebate the edge of those Scriptures which usually are brought against it. It is true {say they} we are not Justified by Works of Nature, but we are Justified by Works of Grace; and though we are not Justified by Legal, or old Covenant Works, yet we are Justified by Evangelical or New Covenant Works performed by ourselves; and again, works though they are not Physical Causes {which no man ever affirmed} yet they are moral Causes or Conditions of our Justification; though they do not merit in a strict sense, by their innate worth and dignity; yet in a large sense, and by virtue of God's Promise and Covenant, they may be said to merit our Justification and Salvation. Or, if these will not do it, the matter is dispatched, if Faith may be but taken in a 'proper' sense, its confidence fetches in all

other works within its circumference. But that delusion which is least apt to be suspected by well-meaning Christians is the calling of Works or Inherent Holiness, by the name of Christ, the success of this bait, we have seen of late in too many, who have dallied so long with the notion of a Christ within them, {grounded on Col.1:27, "Christ in you the hope of glory;" whereas 'Christ in you' is no more than Christ preached among you, and is rendered 'among' in the same verse,} that they have quite forgotten; nay, some have utterly denied, the Christ without them, that God-man, who is the only Propitiation for our sins.

How much cause then, my Brethren, have we, of continual thankfulness unto our God, who in so general a defection hath been pleased to keep us, that we are not led aside with the deceivableness of this unrighteousness, and to lead us to that Rock which is above us? For how ever the world doth account of Pharisaism, yet they that have any acquaintance with the mind of God, know there can be hardly named a greater sin than the establishing of our own righteousness.

It is the good pleasure of God {for which everlasting praise be given unto him} to reveal these things unto babes, which are hidden from the wise and prudent; the gospel hath been, and will be a mystery to the worlds end. Human reason cannot conceive how men should buy without money; or become rich by stripping and emptying of themselves; attain unto righteousness by renouncing and abhorring their own righteousness. Hence it is that the doctrine of an Unconditional Covenant of Grace and the Free Justification of a sinner by Christ, is looked upon by our learned Rabbi's as such a foolish and ridiculous concept. A great 'master' {reputably so} in our Israel,¹ speaks strangely of it. "Unconditional promises, {saith he}

¹ Hammond, Henry, 1605-1660; Church of England; a pioneer Anglican theologian, much influenced by Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes, but also by that form of Arminianism as found in Hugo Grotius, whom he defended in his writings.

beget only an irrational, fallacious, foundationless Faith, which the bigger it swells, the more dangerous it proves." {Hammond, "Sermons & Tracts," published in 1674} And a little after, he calls the Faith and Hope begotten by Faith promises, "a dependence on some fatal chain, {some necromantic trick of believing thou shalt be saved, and thou shalt be saved} nay on Satan himself, some response of his oracle, &c., and not much before." "It is a miracle, {says he} that they who believe this doctrine of unconditional promises, are yet restrained from making this so natural use of it, from running into all the riots in the world." I remember a good note of his from John 7:48; {at a sermon preached in Oxon;} "that the greatest scholars are not always the soundest Christians." We see Christianity is not book-learning, nor is Faith attained to by strength of parts. I should {might I be so bold} humbly ask this learned Doctor, whether the Faith and hope of all the saints, which we read of in the Scripture, were an irrational, fallacious and foundationless Faith? Now let him show us any one of them that in his addresses unto God, did ever plead a conditional promise! That of Hezekiah, {II Kings 20:3,} is of a peculiar consideration. I remember Luther calls it, "fools talk;" others that excuse it say that Hezekiah draws his argument, not from his own works, but from God's; he reasons from what God hath done for him, that he would do more, and bestow the mercy which then he needed. {Joseph Caryl on Job, 1651-1666} But besides him, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation, we do not find that any of God's people have used any other plea unto God, or have had any other support for their hope and confidence, than his free promises of Grace and Mercy; not only the woman of Canaan, the Publican and such as they were; but Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Paul, &c., have all of them fled for refuge unto these promises; their Faith never knew any other bottom or foundation besides this. {Mat.15:22, Lk.18:13, 23:42, Gen.18:27, 32:9,10, Num.14:18,19, II Sam.23:5, I Cor.4:4, Phil.3:9} It is an irrational thing to receive life as a gift, and yet as wages? It were very strange, if the mercy

and faithfulness of God should not be as sure a foundation to rely on as our own works? I will be bold to say that whosoever does build upon other foundations, besides the free promise of Mercy in Christ, they will have no better success than he who built his house upon the sand. {Mt.7:27,28} They may {perchance when it is too late} experience the fallacy, they have put upon their own souls. The Doctor is as much mistaken in the use of the point, as he is in the doctrine; to say, that "the natural use of it is to run into all the riots in the world;" he might have taken notice where the Holy Ghost makes another use of it. {Tit.2:1, Lk.1:74,75, II Cor.7:1} And right reason would have suggested that the freer the promise is, the more is the love and bounty of the Promisor shown. Now, love naturally begets love; Publicans {saith our Saviour} will have those that will love them; {Mt.5:46, Lk.7:47,} and can a man believe so great a benefit as the free remission of his sins, and not love him that hath remitted them? Possibly a man that hath received this Grace but in the notion may draw such untoward conclusions from it, but for any true believer to sin upon this ground is as impossible as that light should become darkness.{I Jn.3:3,9}

I must confess, that the loose and uneven walking of many professors hath given too much occasion unto adversaries to blaspheme this doctrine; and though it be unjust in them to charge the faults of professors upon their profession; yet you cannot but see how much it concerns them who have hope of salvation through Christ alone, to vindicate the honour of this Grace, and by their exemplariness in well doing, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. The vindication of this doctrine lies as much upon private Christians, as it doth upon ministers; the strongest arguments against it are but the suppositions and consequences of carnal reason, which are soon confuted by a holy conversation, in which respect, illiterate men may be irrefragable disputants and women may nonplus the learnedest Doctor. And therefore whilst I am in this tabernacle, I shall not cease to stir you up, by putting you in

remembrance of these things, though you know them, and are established in the present truth.

Some of you know how unwillingly I undertook this public employment, being more inclined to the trowel than the sword; to build up my hearers in their most holy Faith, than to engage in controversies against opposers; and truly, nothing could have induced me to it, but the tendency of the work, to your edification; that the simplicity of the Gospel may abide amongst you, and that you may stand fast in the truth which you have received, being able to answer the cavils of them that do oppose it. It was not least in my eye, that our honest neighbors, who {by the evil arts of some that affect preeminence} have been prejudiced and disaffected towards us, may see and satisfy themselves, whether we believe and contend for any other Faith, than that which was once delivered unto the saints; for surely they will have but little comfort in separating from us, without a cause; I must needs tell them their account at last will not be with joy, who have rejected the counsel of God against themselves.

Whatsoever success this discourse may find with others, I doubt not but it will be an acceptable service unto you. I desire, that it may provoke you to be more instant in prayer for me, that utterance may be given me; and that my labors in the work of the Gospel, may be more successful unto you, and to all others that do partake of them; which will be the greatest joy on earth, unto him, who is; Yours in the nearest bonds,

Sept.3, 1653, William Eyre

To the Christian Reader

Friend,

If thou knowest me, and how many burdens do lie upon me, I dare say, thou dost not expect an apology for the tarriance of this little piece; for though considering the work, thou mightest have had it much sooner, yet by reason of my much sickness, daily services in the ministry, and the cares of my family, {which are not ordinary,} though I had finished it eight months since, it was not likely thou shouldst have had it before now. However, if any shall upbraid me, as Eckius did Melanchthon, when he delayed to answer an argument he had put unto him, "it is not praiseworthy {says he} if thou dost not answer it presently." I shall say to him, as Melanchthon to the doctor, "I seek not my own praise in this matter, but the Truth;" and perhaps it may succeed more to the advantage of the Truth that it was delayed.

I lately met with a passage, which fell from the pen of a leading man, {Mr. Richard Baxter, in his Epistle before his directions for comfort,} in these times; whereof I held it necessary to give thee my thoughts, to remove the prejudices {which probably it hath begotten against this discourse;} "there is {says Baxter} a very judicious man, Mr. B. Woodbridge of Newbery,² who hath written with much excellency against this error of Justification before the act of believing, or without conditions; and in so small room, being but one sermon, that I would advise all private Christians to get one of them; as one of the best, easiest, cheapest preservatives against the contagion of this part of Antinomianism." It is far from me to envy the praises of Mr. Woodbridge, being ready to give a more ample

² Benjamin Woodbridge, 1622-1684, an English theologian, who sailed to New England in 1639, where his elder brother, John Woodbridge, had migrated in 1634. Whilst there he became the first graduate of Harvard College, commencing B.A. in 1642. In 1648 he returned to England; and was chosen as one of the Presbyterian commissioners at the Savoy Conference in 1661.

testimony to his personal worth; I do freely acknowledge that in natural and acquired parts for his time, he is like Saul amongst the people, higher by the head and shoulders than most of his brethren. However, that commends not the cause he is engaged in. It is not to be wondered at, that Mr. Baxter hath given this superlative encomium to Mr. Woodbridge's Sermon, for he knew well enough, that it would rebound upon himself, Mr. Woodbridge being a son of his own Faith; and this notion of his, but a spark from out of Mr. Baxter's forge.³ I suppose Mr. Baxter's praises or dispraises are not greatly regarded by sober-minded Christians, who have observed how highly he magnifies J. Goodwin,⁴ with others of his notion; and how slightly he mentions Dr. William Twisse,⁵ and all our Protestant divines that differ from him. How excellently Mr. Woodbridge hath written of this matter, will appear to the impartial examiner of this survey. Learned men have held that the best way to demolish error is to build up Truth; as to drive out darkness, is to let in light. Now Mr. Woodbridge though he endeavors to prove no Justification before Faith, yet throughout all his sermon, he never so much as hinted, how or in what sense we are justified by Faith; the explication whereof, according to the sense of our Protestant writers, would have ended the matter. For the Question depending between us, is not so much about the time, as the terms, and matter of our Justification; namely, how and by what means we are made just and righteous in the sight of God? Which we affirm to be, by the perfect Righteousness of Christ alone, which God doth impute unto us freely, without works and conditions performed by us; though we have

³ Richard Baxter, 1615-1691, English theologian & controversialist; one of the most influential leaders of the Nonconformists; prolific theological writer; one source lists a total of 141 books written by Baxter; argued for a deadly admixture of Grace and Works in his views of Justification.

⁴ John Goodwin, 1594-1665, a rank Arminian.

⁵ William Twisse, 1578-1646, prominent English theologian; presiding officer of the Westminster Assembly, and firm Predestinarian.

not the sense and comfort of it, any otherwise than by Faith. The antecedency of our Justification before Faith is but a corollary from this position; and Mr. Baxter acknowledgeth it to be a necessary consequence from the Imputation of Christ's active obedience, which hath hitherto been the unanimous tenant of our protestant divines; and Mr. Norton of New England,⁶ thinks it no less than heresy to deny it. His advice unto all private Christians is to buy one of these sermons, argues rather his conceit of himself, than his charity to them; that he dares take upon him the office of a universal dictator, to prescribe not only to his Kidderminsterians, {Baxter ministered at Kidderminster, England,} but to all private Christians, what books they shall read. Whether Mr. Woodbridge's tract may be called the best, amongst none good that are written against this truth, I shall not dispute. But that it is such an easy piece for all private Christians to understand, I do very much doubt, though the men of Kidderminster {who I fear are fed but with little better food} can swallow down such choking meat, as his paradoxes and distinctions of Faith, evidencing axiomatically, or syllogistically; of Justification impetrated and exemplified; of our working actively and passively; of promises in the Covenant, which are not parts of the Covenant, but means to bring us into Covenant, &c.; yet unto other private Christians, I dare say, they are like herring bones in the throat, and not a whit more intelligible than a lecture of Arabic. The next motive he hath hit upon, probably may take with many, the cheapness of the book, which he doth commend; but if the price and profit were put together, I dare say, the buyer will confess that he hath given a groat too much. He buys poison too dear who hath it for nothing. As for the title of Antinomianism which he bestows upon our doctrine, it is no great slander out of Mr. Baxter's mouth, with whom an Antinomian and an Anti-Papist are terms convertible. Let him show us any one church or single person accounted orthodox, till this present age,

⁶ John Norton, 1606-1663, Puritan, who immigrated to America in 1635.

that did not hold some, yea, most of those points which he calls Antinomianism, and I will openly acknowledge, I have done him wrong; otherwise, let him be looked upon as a slanderer and reviler of all the Protestant Churches, who under a show of friendship, hath endeavored to expose them to the scorn and obloquie of their enemies. Mr. Baxter {the better to engage his reader} tells him his doctrine is of a middle strain; as if all the reformed churches had hitherto been in an extreme, in this fundamental point of our Justification. It is like he thinks the Papists are much nearer to the line of truth, than any of them. But in earnest is Mr. Baxter's doctrine of a middle strain? I am sure, he gives as much unto works and less unto Christ than the Papists do; he makes works by virtue of God's promise and Covenant, to be the meritorious causes of Justification and Salvation, and in no other sense do the Papists affirm it. I must needs say, I never yet met with that Papist, which calls Christ "a cause which effects nothing" of our Justification. But I shall desire the reader for his better satisfaction, to parallel Mr. Baxter's doctrine with these ten positions of Bishop Gardiner,⁷ which he endeavored to maintain against those blessed martyrs of Jesus Christ, Barnes, Garret, and Hierome, who sealed the contrary doctrine with their dearest blood.⁸

1. The effect of Christ's passion hath a condition; the fulfilling of the condition diminisheth nothing from the effect of Christ's passion.

2. They that will enjoy the effect of Christ's passion must fulfill the condition.

3. The fulfilling of the condition requireth, first knowledge of the condition, which knowledge we have by Faith.

⁷ Stephen Gardiner, 1483-1555, English Roman Catholic Bishop & Politician during the English Reformation.

⁸ English Protestant martyrs; Dr. Robert Barnes, Thomas Garret and William Hierome who were burned at the stake at Smithfield in 1541 - Foxe Acts & Monuments.

4. Faith cometh of God and this Faith is a good gift. It is good and profitable for me to do well and to exercise this Faith; therefore by the gift of God I may do well before I am justified.

5. By the gift of God I may do well towards the attainment of Justification.

6. There is ever as much charity towards God as Faith; and as Faith increaseth, so doth charity increase.

7. To the attainment of Justification is required Faith and charity.

8. Everything is to be called freely done, whereof the beginning is free, and set at liberty without any cause of provocation.

9. Faith must be to me the assurance of the promises of God made in Christ, if I fulfill the condition; and love must accomplish the condition, whereupon followeth the attainment of the promise, according to God's truth.

10. A man being dead in sin may have Grace to do the works of repentance, whereby he may attain to his Justification.

Never did the child so lively resemble his own Father, as these articles do express the Bishop of Rome's antichristian doctrine. And as for his choice notion of Justification by works, as they are our new Covenant righteousness, I find it was a shift of the Papists long ago. The said Doctor Barnes having cited this passage out of Bernard, "I do abhor whatsoever thing is of me, &c.," "see {says he} Bernard doth despise all his good works, and taketh him only to Grace." Now, had he no works of the new Law, as you call them? I shall not trace Mr. Barnes any farther, there being now in the Press {as I am informed} a large and full answer to his paradoxical aphorisms, by a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus,⁹ a workman that needs not to be ashamed;

⁹ Mr. John Crandon, who died 1654, entered into controversy by attempting to refute Richard Baxter in his book entitled, "Mr. Baxter's Aphorisms Exorized and Authorized, 1654." Crandon attacked him primarily on three grounds: Baxter's

though I heartily wish that the work may provoke others unto shame, who have more strength, leisure, and far greater helps for such undertakings than country ministers. {Crandon lived most of his life at Fawley, Hampshire; in apparent obscurity.} I dare say, that they who sit at the stern in our universities heretofore, such as Reynolds, Whittaker, Davenant, Prideaux, &c., would never have endured to see so many Popish and Arminian books {far more dangerous than the Ranters blasphemous pamphlets} show their heads, but would have sent forth their antidotes to correct their poison. I do speak the more freely, to stir up others of greater abilities than myself, to undertake this cause, least it should suffer overmuch through my weakness in managing it. We were wont to say, that if a man doth plead for the King, all is to be taken in good part; the design of this discourse, was to plead the cause of the greatest King, that no flesh might glory in his presence, who "of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," though the advocate hath not holpen the cause, yet the goodness of the cause may excuse the advocate. I shall desire thee to read without prejudice, and either to read all or none; for that which is curtailed in one place, is more explained in another. If thou reapest any good from what I have written, I know thy returns will be according to my heart's desire, praises unto God, and more fervent prayers for, Thy servant in the work of the gospel,

William Eyre, Sept.3, 1653.

haphazard charges against Antinomianism, his legalistic & conditional interpretation of Justification & his dependence upon Scholastic & Pagan philosophers.

JUSTIFICATION WITHOUT CONDITIONS;

or

the Free Justification of a Sinner
Justified.

Chapter I

*Showing the occasion of this discourse, and the rise of
the controversy which is here debated.*

Since it hath pleased the Lord to reveal the riches of his Son unto me, and to make me a Steward and Dispenser of this Grace unto his People; the chief design of my Ministry hath been to bottom my hearers upon Christ alone; {I Cor.3:11, Mt.16:18, Eph.1:20,21, Isa.28:16;} that they might have no confidence in the flesh, {Phil.3:3,9,} but in that perfect and everlasting Righteousness which he hath wrought; for which end it hath been my care frequently and clearly to demonstrate to them, both the sole-sufficiency and efficiency of Christ in the work of man's Redemption; that he is able to save unto the utmost, {Heb.7:25,} and that no work of ours, either before or after our Conversion, doth share with him in the glory of this achievement. In a word, that there is no cause without God concurring with the precious and invaluable merit of his Blood, to present us holy, unblameable, and unreprouceable in the sight of God. {Heb.5:9} Ponder the testimony of the martyr Barnes,¹⁰ as he speaks of Justification by Christ alone, "he that denies any part of the truths of Christ's merits, or takes any of them upon himself or gives them to another, the same man robs Christ of His honor and denies Christ, and is very

¹⁰ Robert Barnes, 1495-1540, an early English reformer and martyr for Christ.

antichrist. You grant that Christ was born, but you deny the purpose. You grant that Christ arose from the dead, but you deny the efficacy, for he arose to justify us. You grant that Christ is a Savior, but you deny that he alone is the Savior. Was Christ's purpose to partially fulfill the requirements for our salvation, so that we can complete what is lacking on his part? Say what you will, if you give not all, and fully, and alone to Christ, then you deny Christ, and the Holy Ghost. Wherefore John declares you to be contrary to Christ." Which truth, as it shines clearer than the Sun, throughout the Scripture, so it appears unto me to be of greatest moment, when I consider the concernment thereof, both to God, and Christ, and to the precious souls of God's Elect. I know nothing that gives so much glory unto God and Christ, as to proclaim him the only Saviour; {Hos.13:4, Isa.43:11; 49:26; 60:16, Jn.5:23, Acts 4:12;} and that besides him there is none other, that we owe the whole work of our Salvation from the beginning to the end unto Christ alone; and surely, there is no point in the whole Doctrine of Godliness, which contributes so much to the Peace, Security, and Fruitfulness of the Saints, as this doth. It affords the greatest encouragement to sinners to believe, to believers to hold fast their confidence firm unto the end, and to serve God with a willing mind, in Righteousness and true Holiness all the days of their life.

2. Now though this truth be so evident, and my intentions in pressing it, such as have been mentioned, yet it hath happened unto me {as unto many of my betters} to be mistaken, and by some of my own profession, who insinuated to the people, that I taught a new gospel; made Faith and Repentance to be needless things; for no other reason that I know of, but because I dare not give them that honour which is due to Christ, in making them con-causes with him, procuring our peace with God, and in obtaining our right and interest in all the benefits which he hath purchased; for they themselves are my witnesses {would they speak their knowledge as to matter of fact} that in all my exercises, though usually something of Christ be the doctrine

which I handle, yet the use that I make of it, is to press men unto Faith and holiness; Nay, I challenge all my adversaries to say, that ever I positively spake so much as one syllable to lessen the esteem of inherent holiness, though I am not ashamed comparatively to say as the Apostle doth, "that I count all things but loss and dung, that I may win Christ Jesus." {Phil.3:8} But otherwise, I thank the Lord, if I should speak slightly of holiness, that my own practice would condemn my doctrine; "for herein I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men."

3. It is needless to give the reader an account of all the oppositions which I have met with in the course of my ministry; nor are they worth the mentioning, seeing, {as the Apostle speaks, Heb.12:4,} I have not yet resisted unto blood. I shall only acquaint him with the rise of this present difference which happened about three or four years since upon this occasion, handling these words, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation," {Heb.2:3,} in the weekly lecture, which I preach in this city, wherein I proposed this question, Why the gospel, and not the Law, is called Salvation, seeing life and salvation is the end of both? One reason which I gave in answer thereunto, was because the Law promiseth men life but conditionally, upon condition of their perfect obedience; which condition no man is able to perform, and consequently no man can attain unto life and happiness by means thereof; but the Gospel reveals a salvation which is freely given unto sinners, which God bestows upon such as have neither money to buy, nor worth to deserve it. This led me to speak more largely of the difference between the Law and the Gospel, the first Covenant, which is a Covenant of works, and the second, which is a Covenant of Free Grace. Concerning the latter, I laid down this thesis; that in the New Covenant there is no condition required on our parts to entitle us to the blessings of it. One corollary which I drew from hence was that Faith is not the condition of the New Covenant. I cannot without too much tediousness rehearse my explications of this

proposition, and I do the rather forbear it now, because in the process of this discourse, I shall have more opportunity to rescue my sense of them, from some common mistakes. I shall only inform the reader of one reason which I then gave for proof of the last position; namely, that Faith is not the condition of the New Covenant, and particularly of our Justification {which as Mr. Woodbridge calls it, is the special and noble blessing of the New Covenant} in regard that our controversy concerning Justification before Faith, grew first from thence. The argument was to this effect. If Faith be the condition of our Justification, it must follow, that men are believers before they are justified, for the condition must be performed, before the benefit which is promised thereupon can be received. But men are not believers before they are justified; the scripture witnesseth, that the subject of Justification is a sinner, or ungodly person. {Rom.4:5, 5:8,10} Now the Holy Ghost never calls believers ungodly or wicked, but calls them saints, faithful, holy brethren, children of God, members of Christ, &c.

4. The next news that I heard was that all the pulpits in the town were filled with invectives against my sermon. I must confess it surprised me, with no little wonder, knowing that I had delivered nothing but what was consonant to the Scriptures, and wherein I was sure I had the suffrages of many godly and learned men and those too that are reputed amongst the more manly sort of our Protestant divines. But that which I mused at most, was the usage of a neighbor Minister, who though he heard not my sermon; and although by reason, of a like mistake, he had solemnly promised me, not to clash against my doctrine, until he had first conferred with me about it; yet shortly after, without giving me the least hint of his dissatisfaction, he publicly complained to the people, what dangerous errors had been lately vented amongst them, suborned the words of the Apostle, {Gal.1:8,} to pronounce me cursed, and charged the people not to hear them that do teach, {1} that the New Covenant is not conditional; {2} that Faith is not the condition of the New Covenant; or (3) that Justification

goes before Faith. To let pass those odious nicknames which my neighbors and others {who have been invited hither, to disaffect the people towards my doctrine} have frequently bestowed upon me {as Antinomian, New Declarative, Troubler of Israel, &c.,} which troubled me the less, when I remembered what Luther says, "he that will preach Christ truly, and confess him to be our Righteousness, must be content to hear, that he is a pernicious fellow, and that he troubleth all things, &c.;" {Luther on Galatians 4:29;} and a little before, "the faithful must bear this name and title in the world, that they are seditious and schismatic, and the authors of innumerable evils, &c.;" and in another place, {on Galatians 5:11,} Paul {saith he} "taketh it for a most certain sign, that it is not the Gospel if it be preached in peace." But that which grieved me the most was that Satan had got such an advantage against my ministry; for those insinuations prevailed so far upon the people, that many of my customary hearers fell off, and refrained from coming to my lecture, for fear lest I should persuade them to believe some other gospel than that which is revealed in the Scriptures; and how to remove this offence, so unjustly taken, I could not devise; for though I made things never so plain in public, thither they would not come; or if I had gone to them in private it had been to little purpose, they being convinced {as one of them most uncharitably told me} that I had a design to vent new doctrine in public, and to blanch it over with a fair construction in private. It came into my mind {as the most likely expedient, to vindicate both the Truth and myself} to desire those Reverend Ministers, who sometimes came unto my lecture, that if they were dissatisfied with what I had delivered, they would be pleased publicly to declare it as soon as my sermon was ended, and show me wherein I had swerved from the truth. I hoped that by this means, we should have a clearer understanding of one another, and the people would be better satisfied, when they had compared their exceptions and my answers together. But hitherto I could never obtain this favor from them, though some of them have taken the liberty to clamor

lustily against me behind my back, and when I was safe enough from giving them an answer.

5. About April last, {which was 1652,} I came unto the Wednesday Lecture in this City, where I heard a stranger, {whom I then knew not,}¹¹ let fall sundry passages, which I conceived to be very wide from the orthodox Faith, as well as contrary to the doctrine which I had lately delivered in the same place. It sounded harshly in my ears, "that the elect themselves, {to whom Christ was particularly given by the Father before the foundations of the world; for whom Christ gave himself a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor, whose sins he bare in his body on the tree, even to a full Propitiation,} had no right or interest in Christ, or any more benefit by his death, than reprobates, till they did believe; and that they are but dreamers who do conceit the contrary." I know not what could be spoken more contradictory to many plain Scriptures, which shall be mentioned soon, more derogatory to the full Atonement which Christ hath made by his death, and more disconsolatory to the souls of men, in laying the whole weight of their salvation upon an uncertain condition of their own performing. And therefore, after the exercise was fully ended, I desired the minister that preached, that with his leave, and the patience of the congregation, I might remonstrate the insufficiency of his grounds or reasons, to uphold the doctrine he had delivered; three of which I took more especial notice of. One was drawn from the parallel between the first and second Adam, as men {said he} are not guilty of the sin of Adam, till they have a being; so the elect have no benefit by Christ, till they have a being; whereunto he added that old philosophical maxim, "that where there is no union, there can be no communion;" and that "there is no union between Christ and the elect, before they believe; therefore the elect have no communion and participation in the benefits of Christ's death, before

¹¹ Mr. Thomas Warren, 1617-1694, of Houghton in Hampshire, who in reply to Mr. Eyre in 1654, published a work entitled, "Unbelievers no Subjects of Justification."

they have a being, and do believe in him." The proof of the assumption was managed thus. The union between Christ and the saints is a personal union, which cannot be supposed till their persons have a being. A third ground {upon which he laid the greatest stress} was to this purpose, that "the elect have no benefit by Christ before they do believe, because God hath made a Covenant with his Son, that they for whom he died, should be admitted to partake of the benefits of his death by Faith."

6. Whereunto my replies were to this effect. I told him that I conceived his first allegation made very much against him; for if the Righteousness of Christ doth come upon all the Elect unto Justification, in the same manner as the sin of Adam came upon all men to condemnation, as the Apostle shows it doth in Romans, the 5th chapter; then it must follow, that the Righteousness of Christ was reckoned or imputed to the Elect before they had a Being, and then much more before they do believe in Him; for it is evident that the sin of Adam came upon all men to condemnation, before they had a being; for by that first transgression {says the Apostle, verse, 12,} "sin entered into the world;" and more plainly, "death passed upon all men;" the reason follows, because in him, or in his loins, all have sinned. Now as in Adam, the non-elect; that is, all that shall perish, were constituted sinners, before they had a being, by reason of the Imputation of his disobedience to them; so in Christ the elect; that is, all that shall be saved, were constituted righteous; his obedience being imputed unto them by God, before they had any being, otherwise than in him as their Head and Covenant Representative.

There is a late writer,¹² who tells us, that there is not the same reason for the Imputation of Christ's

¹² Anthony Burgess, died 1664, Nonconformist English Theologian, and a member of the Westminster Assembly, who in 1648 published a work on Justification, entitled, "The True Doctrine of Justification Asserted and Vindicated from the errors of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and more especially

righteousness to all the elect before they believe; as there is for the Imputation of Adam's sin unto his posterity before they have a being; because {says he} "the issues of the first Covenant fell upon Adam's posterity in a natural and necessary way, but the issues of Christ's death do come to us in a supernatural way." But this reason seems to me to be of small validity; for the issues of Adam's disobedience came not upon his posterity by virtue of their natural propagation; for then his sin should be imputed unto none, until they are actually propagated; and the sins of other parents should be imputed to their posterity as much as the sin of Adam, because they descend as naturally from their immediate parents, as they do from Adam; so that the issues of Adam's sin may be said to descend to his posterity in a supernatural way; that is, by virtue of God's Covenant which was made with him as a common person, in behalf of all his posterity; and in the same manner do the issues of Christ's obedience descend unto God's elect, by virtue of that Covenant which was made with Christ as a common person, in their behalf; and therefore unless they can show any proviso, or restriction in the second Covenant more than in the first, why life should not flow as immediately to the elect from Christ's obedience, as death did from Adam's disobedience, the argument will stand in force.

But to return to my discourse with Mr. Warren; I added, that those logical axioms, {"there is no union between Christ and the elect, before they believe; therefore the elect have no communion and participation in the benefits of Christ's death, before they have a being, and do believe in him,"} have no force at all in the present controversy. It doth not follow that Christ's righteousness cannot be imputed to us, before we have an actual created being, because accidents cannot subsist without their subjects; for as much as imputed righteousness is not an accident inherent in us, and consequently doth not necessarily require our existence.

Antinomians; in 30 lectures preached at Lawrence Jury, London.

Christ is the subject of this righteousness and the Imputation of it is an act of God. Now the Apostle hath observed, that God in justifying, and imputing Righteousness, calleth things that are not, as if they were, {Rom.4:17,} as the Righteousness of Christ was actually imputed to the Patriarchs before it was wrought; and our sins were actually imputed to Christ before they were committed; so I see no inconvenience in saying, that Christ's Righteousness is by God imputed to the Elect, before they have a being.

7. As to his second reason before mentioned, I excepted, as I conceive but justly; against his calling our union with Christ a personal union, which seems to favor, that absurd notion¹³ that a believer loseth not only his own proper life, but his personality also, and is taken up into the Nature and Person of the Son of God. Divines do call our union with Christ, a mystical and spiritual union, because it is secret and invisible, to be apprehended by Faith, and not by sense or reason; but the hypostatical or personal union is proper unto Christ, in whom the Divine and Human nature do constitute but one Person.

Against his assertion {proposed universally,} "that there is no manner of union between Christ and the elect, before they do believe;" for though there be not that conjugal union between them that consists in the mutual consent of parties, yet is there such a true and real union, that by means thereof, their sins do become Christ's and Christ's righteousness is made theirs. God from everlasting constituted and ordained Christ, and all the Elect to be {as it were} one Heap or Lump, one Vine, one Body or Spiritual Corporation, wherein Christ is the Head, and they the members; Christ the Root, and they the branches; Christ the First Fruits, and they the residue of the heap. In respect of

¹³ See the book, section 11 B, by Humfry Chambers, died 1662, a member of the Westminster Assembly, entitled, "Animadversions on Mr. William Dell's book entitled the Crucified & Quickened Christian, by Humfry Chambers, D.D., Pastor of Pewsey in the County of Wilts, 1652."

this union it is that they are said to be given unto Christ, and Christ to them; to be in Christ; {Ephesians, Chapter 1; } that they are called his sheep, his seed, his children, his brethren, before they are believers; and by virtue of this union it is, that the Obedience and Satisfaction of Christ, descends peculiarly to them, and not unto the rest of mankind. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified {that is, they whose sins are purged by his blood,} are all of one." {Heb.2:11} God by His election, from everlasting; framed a new body of human race, opposite to the first, whereof Adam was the head, and appointed Christ, to be its Head. All our divines do define the Catholic Church to be "the whole company of God's elect."

But here I was assaulted with an objection, which the Reverend Minister of the parish was pleased to move from Rom.16:7, where Paul speaking of Andronicus and Junia, saith, they "were in Christ before me;" from whence he would infer, that none are in Christ, or, united unto Christ, before they do believe. Whereunto I returned no answer, but humbly desired him to leave the management of the conference, unto him that had preached. I did, the rather pass it over, in regard that there is so little difficulty therein, for it is evident, the Apostle speaks there, not of their spiritual union with Christ, which is invisible to man, for God only knows who are His; but of such a being in Christ, as is by external profession and Church communion; in which respect, the whole visible Church is called Christ; {I Cor.12:12;} and hypocrites, as well as the elect, are said to be in Christ, and to be branches in him; {Jn.15:2,3;} and thus it is acknowledged, that one is in Christ, before another, according as they are called, and converted, whether really, or in appearance. {See Diodati on Romans 16:7}¹⁴ It doth not follow, that the

¹⁴ Giovanni Diodati, 1576-1649, was a Swiss-born Italian theologian & translator; the first translator of the Bible into Italian from Hebrew & Greek sources, who in 1607, published a work entitled, "Annotationes in Biblia," of which an English translation, entitled, "Pious and Learned Annotations upon the Holy Bible," was published in London in 1648.

union of the elect to Christ is successive, or that it is an act done in time, depending upon conditions performed by them.

8. To prevent the like interruptions, I desired the preacher to vouchsafe us the proofs of his third ground {which in his sermon he had but barely asserted,} "that God hath made a Covenant with Christ, that the elect should have no benefit by His death until they do believe;" which I have often heard affirmed, but never proved. Whereunto he replied, that I should produce some scripture which says, that the elect have actual benefit by Christ, before believing; wherein, if I had failed, it had been but a weak proof of his assertion, for he having the affirmative, the confirmation of it lay on him. However, I readily condescended to his demands, and proposed an argument to his effect; that they with whom God hath declared himself to be well-pleased and reconciled, have actual benefit by the death of Christ; but God hath declared that He is reconciled unto, and well-pleased with all those for whom Christ hath died; therefore, to confirm the assumption which was then denied, I alleged, Matt.3:17, {intending to have added divers other scriptures, as II Cor.5:19; Rom.5:10 &c., when I had made out the force of the former place,} "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." From whence I reasoned after this manner; if the well-pleasedness of God, which is here declared, were not terminated to Christ personal, but to Christ mystical, then God was well-pleased with all his elect {who are Christ mystical} when this voice came from Heaven, and consequently before many of them do believe; but the well-pleasedness of God here declared, was not to Christ personal. Here Mr. Good, an inn-keeper of this city put me that question, which Mr. Woodbridge hath mentioned, {pg.21,} "whether God were well-pleased with unregenerate men?" To whom I did not reply, as Basil did unto Demosthenes, the clerk of the Emperors Kitchen when he affronted him for opposing the Arian Faction; {"an illiterate Demosthenes!" exclaimed Basil; "better leave theology alone, and go back to your soups;" } wishing from my heart, that all the Lord's

people were prophets; that private Christians would labor for a more explicit Faith in the grounds of religion; and therefore I answered, that this and other scriptures do plainly declare, that God is well-pleased with his elect in Christ, whilst they are unregenerate; though he be not pleased with their unregeneracy, or any of their actions in their unregenerate estate. Then Mr. Woodbridge interposed, that the place afore cited did not prove the actual reconciliation or well-pleasedness of God towards his elect, but only that he was well-pleased with the Person of Christ; or if we will extend it unto men, that then the meaning was, I will be well-pleased, or I am well-pleased, when I am well-pleased, whensoever it is; whereunto I returned no answer, but desired the congregation to judge how well this gloss did agree unto the text. "I am well-pleased," or, "I will be well-pleased;" for to say that God is not well-pleased, when he himself says expressly, that he is, is not to interpret scripture, but to deny it; and such a liberty to alter tenses and forms of speech at our pleasure, will but justify the Jesuits blasphemy, that the scriptures are but a leaden rule, and a nose of wax, which may be turned into any form. In regard there were so many speakers at once, to avoid confusion, I proceeded no farther in that conference.

9. The next day Mr. Warren came unto my lecture; and after the sermon was ended, though he had nothing to except against my doctrine, yet he offered me some other arguments to confirm his own, {which is, that the elect have no benefit by Christ, till they do believe;} to which I returned such answers, as I conceived expedient, to clear the truth; without giving him the least offence in word or gesture, that I was aware of, notwithstanding the provocations I received from him, both in the language he gave me, abusing those words of our Saviour, to compare himself unto Christ, and me unto Judas, &c. {Matt.16:54} And in the challenges he made, to dispute, write, &c., whereunto I was willingly deaf, lest our doctrinal difference might prove a personal quarrel. His arguments and my answers I shall here omit, in regard the same were

urged by Mr. Woodbridge with much more strength. The scanning of whose book is my present intendment.

10. On the Wednesday after, {about half an hour before the sermon began,} I was informed that Mr. Woodbridge was to preach. In regard he was none of the lecturers, I concluded that he had abode in town, and procured a turn purposely to blow the coals, which Mr. Warren had kindled, and to provoke the prejudices of the people, both against the truth and myself. And therefore having begged direction of God, I was pressed in my spirit to go and hear him and to bear witness to the truth, if it were opposed; and I bless the Lord, for his strength and assistance was not wanting to me. Had Mr. Woodbridge faithfully related the procedure of our conference, I had not put myself to the trouble of this reply; but seeing he hath represented my judgment in this point, with the grounds thereof, in so ill a dress, I shall endeavor to set those things straight, which are cast by him into such a crooked frame; and that I may omit nothing which makes for him, and against myself, I shall give the reader my sense of his whole book. But before I proceed to the examination of his sermon, I must crave leave to establish the reasons of my practice in this public conference.

Chapter II

A digression, concerning the proposing of questions, and reasoning with ministers publicly about the matter of their sermons.

It may seem strange to some, that I should so publicly except against my brethren's doctrine, seeing it hath been so seldom practiced in our congregations; and therefore I shall by way of apology offer them the reasons that moved me to it.

1. I did not more than what I have often desired should be done to me, if any were dissatisfied in the doctrine which I had taught. *Hanc veniam damus petimusque vicissim.* {I ask this privilege for myself and grant it to others.} And of all men, Mr. Warren had least reason to be offended with it, who had practiced the very same thing, in another place; {at Rumsty toward one Mr. Symonds whom he charged with sundry errors, as soon as he had ended his sermon, and desired the people not to believe a word which Mr. Symonds had taught, how justly I cannot tell;}¹⁵ unless he be resolved to take that liberty, which he will not give.

2. Having a ministry committed to me in this place, by the appointment both of God and man, I looked upon it as my duty, to witness against those errors that entrench so nearly upon the Foundation, as I conceive this doth, which I have engaged against. But some will say, I might have discharged my conscience at another time, and with more deliberation. I must confess that I have always highly esteemed that saying of Aristides, who being demanded by the Emperor to give a sudden answer unto something propounded,

¹⁵ Joseph Symonds, died 1652, Independent – was rector of St. Martin's, Ironmongers Lane, in London. Having espoused the sentiments of the Independents, he forsook the Church of England, and to escape the storm of persecution, Symonds settled at Rotterdam, where he was chosen pastor to the English church, in the place of Mr. Sydrach Sympson.

replied, "Do you ask today, and I will answer tomorrow;" and the like of Melanchthon¹⁶ to Ecchius, who had put to him a knotty argument, "I seek the truth, and not mine own credit, and therefore it will be as good if I answer thee tomorrow by God's assistance." Indeed sudden answers are seldom solid, especially in weighty matters. But the case here was such as would not admit delay; for I knew the greatest part of the hearers {whose prejudices by this means were strengthened against me} would not vouchsafe to come at another time, when I had more opportunity to speak unto them. I dare say, that all that were present at Mr. Woodbridge's sermon, knew that he had leveled his discourse against myself; now if I had kept silence then, and shown my dislike of his doctrine at another time, whatever I had said, would have been but little regarded; my adversaries would have given forth, that I had spoken that behind his back which I was not able to maintain unto his face.

3. The points which these ministers handled were controversial; and surely controversies are much better managed in a conference between the parties dissenting than in a continued discourse, when the same man shall frame both arguments and answers to his own advantage.

4. I see no inconvenience at all that can come of this practice, but rather very much good, were it more generally received in our congregations; that if a minister do deliver anything that is dubious, he should be desired after his exercise is ended, to clear and explain it; or if anything contrary to truth, he should by sound doctrine be convinced thereof; which if it were done with that meekness and gravity as becometh Christians, without jeering, railing, and such like

¹⁶ Philipp Melanchthon, 1497-1560, German Reformer, collaborator with Martin Luther, systematic theologian of the Protestant Reformation. He stands next to Luther and Calvin as a reformer, theologian, and molder of Protestantism. Along with Luther, he is the primary founder of Lutheranism.

personal provocations, it would very much tend unto godly edifying.

Secondly; and {first} on the ministers part, it would make them more studious and careful to weigh and ponder what they do deliver in public; were this course more frequently used, many would not do the work of the Lord so negligently as they are wont to do it, and especially when they think there is none that heeds them, or that durst to gainsay their crudest notions. Then {secondly} on the peoples part, it is a singular means. {1} To increase their knowledge, and to mature their judgments in the Articles of our Faith; for it is far easier to judge and discern of controverted points, when they are debated in way of conference, than when they are delivered in a continued discourse; especially seeing the speaker is seldom so ingenuous as either rightly to state, or to urge the strength of his adversaries tenents. {2} To confirm and establish them in the truth, which they have already received; for *nihil tam certum, quam quod ex dubio certum* {nothing is so certain, than that which is certain from doubt.} Men abide by those truths which they have thoroughly tried. {3} To hinder the spreading of many dangerous errors which are sometimes vented in our public auditories, and which the common people are ready to swallow without chewing. {4} To prevent sundry mistakes which are occasioned through the obscurity, ambiguity, or narrowness of men's expressions.

Thirdly; though custom hath not brought it in credit amongst ourselves, yet is it not any novel practice.

1. We find that the Jewish doctors {as bad as they were} gave liberty to the people publicly to ask them questions, for the better understanding of the doctrine which they taught; they would never else have allowed our Saviour, {Mal.2:7,} being but a child of twelve years old, to have asked them questions, and to make answers and replies to what they spake, as they did. {Lk.2:46,47} For at another time when he did something which was unusual, they took him up with a *quo jure*, {what right,} by what authority, &c.

{Matt.21:23} It is observable, that this was done in the temple, and not in a private house, and when a great congregation was present; "for {says the text} all that heard him, marvelled, &c."

2. We have the example of the Apostles to justify us herein, whom we find as frequent in disputing, arguing, and reasoning with them that opposed the Truth, as in their continued discourses amongst the people, Acts 6:9, 9:29, 17:2,17, 18:4,19, 19:8,9, & 15:7, and amongst themselves.

3. We have also the practice of the primitive churches, going before us in this particular. In the Church of Corinth, not only one, but anyone {except women} were allowed to speak in the public assemblies, for the edifying of himself and others. {I Cor.14:26-31} Upon which text {especially, vs.16,} it was, that Archbishop Grindal¹⁷ grounded the exercise of prophesying, which he, with the consent of the other Bishops, set on foot in the Province of Canterbury, as appears by his letter concerning that matter unto Queen Elizabeth; the reviving of which would not be the meanest piece of that Reformation which hath been attempted.

4. Paul's dealing with Peter is very considerable. {Galatians, chapter 2} The text says in verse 11; {see Luther on Gal 2:11;} "that he withstood him to the face," and in verse 14, that he reprov'd him before them all; that is, before the whole congregation, though it were for a matter of fact, yet will it not follow, that we should be more indulgent unto errors in doctrine, no doubt, but Paul would have dealt as roundly with Peter, or any other, if he had taught anything contrary to Truth; for we see his zeal for the simplicity of the gospel, "to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." {vs.5}

¹⁷ Edmund Grindal, 1519-1583, an English Protestant leader who successively held the posts of Bishop of London, Archbishop of York and Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of Elizabeth I of England.

5. It is more than once charged upon us ministers, that we should convince gainsayers, and stop their mouths, who teach things which they ought not, {not by procuring the magistrate to put them to silence,} by sound doctrine; that is, by clear and demonstrative proofs from the Holy Scripture. {Tit.1:9-11}

6. And lastly, if every Christian ought to give a reason of the hope that is in him, as it is enjoined, {I Pet.3:15,} and as it was wont to be publicly practiced in the primitive churches; much more ought a minister of Christ {who should be apt to teach, I Tim.3:2} to be willing to satisfy his hearers concerning the doctrine which he hath delivered.

Fourthly: Objection#1. All that I have heard objected against this practice is of little moment. As first, some have alleged, that the Disciples came privately to our Saviour to ask him questions, {Mk.10:10; 9:28,} to which I answer.

Answer#1. Though it were in a house, yet it was before all his Disciples, some did put to him these questions before the rest; and I suppose, that they who dissent from us in this matter, do look upon all that come unto our churches to be Disciples. 2. The negative is weakly concluded from the affirmative; for it doth not follow that because they came unto him privately, therefore they might not have asked him these questions in a public place; seeing our Saviour never forbade them to do this thing before the people. Surely, he that so readily made answer to all the cavils of his enemies, would not have refused to satisfy the doubts, cases or questions of his own Disciples, wheresoever they had put them to him. 3. Though questions which are merely for private satisfaction, should be privately proposed; yet such as tend to the edifying of others, and to the clearing of such things as are openly delivered, are most conveniently moved in the public assemblies. 4. But what is this instance to a ministers witnessing against false and erroneous doctrines, which are vented amongst the people committed to his charge?

Objection#2. Others have alleged that the Apostle reprehends perverse disputings. {I Tim.6:5}

Answer#2. True and justly too! But will it follow from hence that all public disputations and reasonings about matters of Faith are perverse disputings? Was the Apostle to be charged with perverseness when he reasoned both with Jews and Gentiles as his manner was? Those perverse disputings, {vs.4} are called "strifes of words;" but such is not the matter which we do differ about, which on all hands is confessed to be of very great moment.

Objection#3. Some have objected that prohibition of the Apostle. "Him that is weak in the Faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." {Rom.14:1}

Answer#3. The scope of the Apostle was not to prohibit disputations concerning matters of Faith before such as are weak, but to exhort stronger Christians to be tender and charitable to their weaker brethren, whom he would have them to receive into Church communion, and to own in the fellowship of the Gospel, although they were not so fully informed as themselves in the doctrine of Christian liberty, concerning the distinction of meats, days, and other Mosaical observations. Our translators in the margin render the last clause, "receive him" - not to judge his doubtful thoughts; that is, not judge him an unbeliever, because of his doubts and scruples about these indifferent matters; or do not perplex and entangle him with niceties, lest his Faith in the main be utterly subverted. There is a vast difference between those things indifferent, which the Apostle speaks of, and the points which are in difference between us. Mr. Cranford says well, "that these controversies concerning our Justification are no strife about goat's wool." 2. This prohibition makes as much against preaching of those points which do stumble the weak, as against the discussing of them by way of a conference whatsoever is necessary to be taught the people, is as necessary to be tried and examined by them.

Objection#4. It hath been also alleged {which doth cast the greatest odium upon this practice,} that these public disputations do thwart with those precepts which require us to seek and follow after peace, as Romans 12:18, 14:19, 15:2 & Ephesians 4:3.

Answer#4. For my own part, I see not the least contrariety between them. It was the judgment of a great divine, "this is the one and only way, were we may most suddenly attain to concord; if whatsoever things may be or are commonly said for any opinion, or against it, be truly propounded in the churches; so that the people be allowed free judgment in all things, &c." In my opinion, they take a wrong course to make peace, that go about to stop men's mouths and never satisfy their judgments; for from hence innumerable discords must needs arise. Methinks Christians {who are sensible of their many mistakes} should not be so strait-laced, as to resolve to be at peace with none, but such as will *jurare in verba*, {to swear by the words,} say exactly as they do. A late writer says well, "why may not Christians and scholars write plainly against one another's judgment, with a loving consent?" So say I, why may we not reason against each other's opinions in a friendly manner? But, if discord and dissention should arise by this means, yet is it not a natural, but an unintentional effect thereof; and thus the Gospel itself doth sometimes cause disturbance, as our Saviour foretold. {Matt.10:34,35} But is the Gospel to be charged with these dissentions? Or ought we therefore to forbear to preach the Gospel? The proper cause of these dissentions are men's own corruptions; it argues monstrous pride, when men cannot suffer their opinions to be discussed and examined by the Word, but straightaways their passions are up in arms, and hold them for their enemies that do differ from them; it is a sign that they are more tender of their own credit, that of the truths of Christ.

Though Peace be a jewel of great price, yet that peace is far too dear which costs us the loss of Truth; I mean of any Saving, Necessary and Fundamental Truth. For though in some lesser points, {as Augustine

speaks,} "we may for peace sake have our Faith, or persuasions to ourselves," {Rom.14:22,} yet sure in those great and weighty matters of the Gospel, which are either Foundations, or else are adjacent to the Foundation, as these Controversies about Justification are, it being, as Luther calls it, *quia isto articulo stante stat Ecclesia, ruente ruit Ecclesia*; {"because if this article - of Justification - stands, the church stands; if this article collapses, the church collapses;"} we ought not out of love to peace to betray the Truth. It is better that offences should come than that any vital truth should be lost or embezzled; for it is far more suitable to have truth without peace, than peace without saving truth. "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable." All those precepts which do call for peace and unity, are bounded with a *salva fide*; {with safety to Faith; that is, without compromising one's Faith;} as that in Romans 12:18, "if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "If it be possible;" now nothing is possible, but what is lawful; so that if we may with a good conscience, and without treachery to the truths of Christ, we ought to live peaceably with all men. So Romans 14:19, it is not barely "follow after peace;" but "peace, and things wherewith one may edify another;" it must be an edifying, and not a destroying peace; such as may promote, and not hinder the building up of the Church. {Rom.15:2} The unity we are bid to strive for, {Eph.4:3,} is the unity of the Spirit, and not like that of Simeon and Levi, who were brethren in iniquity. {Gen.34:30, 49:5} For as one, Dr. Reynolds,¹⁸ observes well out of Basil the Great, "if we once shake the simplicity of the Faith, disputes and contentions will prove endless." If Christians in their public disputes do so far forget the rules of sobriety and moderation as to betake themselves to those carnal

¹⁸ Edward Reynolds, 1599-1676, was a bishop of Norwich in the Church of England, in 1642 he sided with the Presbyterians, a member of the Westminster Assembly, in 1648 he became Dean of Christ Church and Vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford.

weapons of jeering, scoffing and reviling each other, it is an iniquity to be punished by the Judge, because it tends so directly to the breaking of our civil peace, and is more scandalous in them than in any others. Would a civil magistrate interpose himself so far as to be the moderator of our differences in this behalf, these public debates would be of singular use.

Chapter III

Being a survey of Mr. Woodbridge's Title Page, wherein the opinion he opposeth, is cleared from the aspersion of Antinomianism.

It is a common saying, *Fronti nulla fides*, {no reliance can be placed on appearance.} We may no more judge of books by their titles than of strumpets by their foreheads; or of apothecaries drugs by the inscriptions of the pots which do contain them, whose outsides many times are remedies, when the inside is stark poison. The natures of things do not always answer the names and inscriptions which are put upon them. We read of Pompey, that he built a Theater; and of Apollinaris the heretic,¹⁹ that he had a school. Nestorius,²⁰ also veiled himself. Montanus²¹ assumed unto himself the title of Paracletus; {possessing a higher degree of inspiration than the Apostles themselves;} nay, Apelles the painter²² drew his filthy strumpet, with the inscription of a Goddess, that so he might more easily bring men to the adoration of her. There is nothing more common, than for men to adorn their errors with the robe of truth,

¹⁹ Apollinaris of Laodicea, died 390, bishop of Laodicea in Syria.

²⁰ Nestorius was Archbishop of Constantinople from 428 until 431.

²¹ Montanus, flourished 2nd century, founder of Montanism.

²² Apelles of Kos was a renowned painter of ancient Greece, was court painter to Philip II of Macedonia and his son, Alexander the Great.

and to deform the truth with the rags of error. I hope therefore, that the reader will be more wary, than to judge of this man's doctrine by the specious title, which he gives his own, or that black mark wherewith he hath branded the opinion which he doth oppose.

He calls his own opinion Justification by Faith, and the doctrine he opposeth, an Antinomian error, both which may be understood *per antiphrasis*, {a word or be understood by the contrary,} for Justification by works, and an evangelical truth. As for his own opinion, he had more fitly styled it Justification by works, taking Faith as he doth, in a proper sense, and attributing no more to Faith than to other works of Sanctification and Salvation, {which in his sense is to morally qualify men for Justification,} and I cannot think him a hearty advocate for Justification by Faith, who holds that we are not justified till the day of judgment; which I am credibly informed this author hath publicly maintained, since he preached this sermon at Broughton before many ministers, &c. But how ill his book doth deserve this title, shall appear in discussing the parts of it.

2. And as for the imputation he hath cast on our Doctrine, {which he calls an Antinomian Error,} I doubt not, but it will redound more unto his shame, than unto ours. It hath been an old continued practice of Satan, to blast the truths and ways of God with odious nick-names, purposely to deter the simple from looking into them; as few men will come near to a house which is marked for the Plague. It were easy to fill a Volume with those opprobrious terms and titles, which in all ages have been cast upon the Truth, and the Professors of it. Sure I am, Satan hath gained no small advantage by these Hellish means. Tertullian observes that the Christians were hated and persecuted for no other crime, but the crime of their name; so there are many things in these days, generally decried, that are only guilty of an evil name. I doubt not but there will be found many a precious truth in those bundles of errors, which have been heaped together by some godly men in this last age. 'Tis but an easy confutation to cry out error and heresy, and this I have often observed, that

they who are most liberal with these loose invectives, are generally sparing of solid arguments.

Whether the opinion which Mr. Woodbridge opposeth be an error, *sub judice lis est*, {the case is still before the judge;} and how well he hath acquitted himself, in the proof of his charge, we shall see anon. For my own part, I dislike not his or any other man's zeal against errors and heresies, provided they will allow that liberty unto others, which they assume to themselves; to witness against that which they conceive erroneous. I cannot be persuaded by all that Mr. Woodbridge hath yet said, that this tenant of Justification *in Foro Dei*, {before God's tribunal,} without works or conditions performed by us, is in error, much less and Antinomian Error. If we may judge of it, by those general diagnostics, which divines have given us to discern between truth and error, I am sure it hath the complexion of a saving truth; that doctrine which gives most glory unto God in Christ, is certainly true, and the contrary is as certainly false. "Let that," says Bradwardine,²³ "be acknowledged for the true religion, which gives most glory unto God, and renders God most favorable and gracious unto man." Now let such as are least in the Church judge, which Opinion gives most glory unto God; Either {1} that which ascribes the whole Work of our Salvation to the Grace of God, and the meritorious purchase of Jesus Christ; or {2} that which makes men Moral causes of their own salvation; which ascribes no more unto Christ, than the purchasing of a new way, whereby we may be saved, if we perform the terms, and conditions required of us. If the former in his Judgment be Antinomianism, I shall freely profess, that by it alone {though he call it heresy} I have hope of Life and Salvation. "I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the prophets." {Acts 24:14}

²³ Thomas Bradwardine, 1290-1349, Archbishop of Canterbury, sometimes called Doctor Profundus, a medieval epithet, meaning "the Profound Doctor."

3. I am sure he is greatly mistaken, if he derives the descent of this doctrine from the Antinomians who were a sect of the Libertines, or carnal Gospellers, which appeared in Germany soon after the Reformation began to about the year 1538. The ring-leader whereof was Islibius Agricola, the compiler of the Interim; they merited this name of Antinomians by their loose opinions, and looser practices, against whom Luther wrote several books, and Calvin bitterly inveighed in his Institutes, opposing the Libertines,²⁴ who {as I shall show shortly} are no enemies to the doctrine which I do here maintain. That sort of Christians in former times were call Eunomians, from Eunomius their leader,²⁵ of whom Augustine gives us this character, "it is reported, that he was such an enemy to all goodness; that he affirmed, though a man did commit, or lie in any kind of sin, it should never hurt him, if he had but that Faith which be taught." Of the same strain were the Gnostics, who for their filthy lives, were called "the dirty sect." Augustine observes that there were many of this spirit in the Apostles days, as the Nicolaitans, the disciples of Simon Magus; Basilides,²⁶ Valentinus,²⁷ who abused some passages in the writings of Paul, to be as it were panders to the flesh; who because the Apostle had affirmed, that a man is justified by Faith without works, concluded, that if men did believe, though they lived

²⁴ In 1545, Calvin wrote his book entitled, "Against the Fantastic and Furious Sect of the Libertines who are Called Spirituals."

²⁵ Eunomius, died 393, one of the leaders of the Arians, who are sometimes accordingly called Eunomians; the Eunomian heresy was formally condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381; after Eunomius died, his books were burned.

²⁶ Basilides, the earliest of the Alexandrian Gnostics; he was a native of Alexandria and flourished under the Emperors Adrian and Antoninus Pius, about 120-140.

²⁷ Vanentinus; also spelled Valentinius, 100-160, was the best known and for a time most successful early Christian gnostic theologian, who founded a school in Rome, and according to Tertullian, Valentinus was a candidate for bishop of Rome.

ever so wickedly, they should be saved; which "filthy dreamers" {as Jude calls them} occasioned the Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude; the chief scope of which is to show the unsoundness of that Faith, which doth not work by love, and that they are not believers who do not bring forth the fruits of a holy life. Now methinks Mr. Woodbridge should have more charity, than to rank his antagonists with such filthy swine.

4. Mr. Woodbridge is not ignorant, I dare say, that many godly learned men have asserted the Justification of God's elect before Faith, who were never accounted Antinomians. I am sure Mr. Pemble²⁸ hath hitherto been known by another name; I mention him the rather, because he was divinity leader in that society {Magdalen Hall, Oxford} where I myself, and this author {for a while under me} had our education. In his book of the nature and properties of Grace and Faith, he delivers his judgment to this effect, "that the elect, even whilst they are unconverted, are then actually justified, and freed from all sin, by the death of Christ; and God so esteems of them as free; and having accepted of that satisfaction, is actually reconciled to them." {*Vindiciae Fidei*, pg.21} And a little after, "our Justification in God's sight was purchased for us by Christ long before we were born; for it is in vain to think with the Arminians, that Christ's merits have made God only placabilem, not placatum, procured a freedom, that God may be reconciled if he will; and other things concur, but not an actual Reconciliation; No, it is otherwise, full satisfaction to Divine Justice is given and taken; all the sins of the elect are actually pardoned. This was concluded upon and dispatched between God and Christ long before we had any being, either in nature or Grace; yet this benefit was ours, and belonged to us, though we knew not so much, till after that by Faith we did apprehend it, as

²⁸ William Pemble, 1591-1623, who wrote "*Vindiciae Fidei*, or A Treatise upon Justification by Faith," which was first published in 1625, in which he proclaims that the Protestant understanding of Justification is irreconcilable with Papist and Arminian positions.

lands may be purchased, the estate conveyed and settled on an infant, though he know nothing of it, till he come of Age." {Vindiciae Fidei, pg.23} Mr. Rutherford,²⁹ I dare say, was never suspected of being an Antinomian, yet in his "Exercitationes Apologetica pro Divina Gratia," a Book³⁰ which Mr. Woodbridge in my hearing heretofore, hath extolled to the skies, he hath said as much as any of us, against whom Mr. Woodbridge hath leveled this opprobrious name. "Verily," saith he, "before any of the Elect do believe, the wrath of God and all the effects of his Wrath are removed from their Persons by Virtue of Christ's Satisfaction." {pg.45} And near the same place he speaks to this purpose, "though we are not justified passively or terminatively, {that is, the gracious sentence of God is not terminated in our Consciences,} till we do believe, yet our Justification actively considered, as it is in God {who is the only Justifier} was complete and perfect, before we had a Being; and in this sense, Faith is not the Instrument of our Justification." {pg.43} Dr. Twisse's judgment in this point is sufficiently known. "The Righteousness of Christ" {saith he} "was ours before we did believe; ours, I say, in respect of right, because in the intention both of the Father and the Son, it was performed for us; though not in respect of possession and enjoyment, because we have not the sense and knowledge of it, whereunto we do attain by Faith." "For Faith coming {which the Spirit of God works in our Hearts} the love of God to us in Christ is then perceived and acknowledged. Whence it is

²⁹ Samuel Rutherford, 1600?-1661, was a Scottish Presbyterian pastor & theologian, who was chosen as one of the four main Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly in taking part in the formulation of the Westminster Confession of Faith, completed in 1647.

³⁰ This was Rutherford's elaborate work in Latin on the Arminian controversy first published at Amsterdam in 1636, a book according to one historian "did cut the sinews of Arminianism;" in consequence of this publication, he was accused by Thomas Sydserff, Bishop of Galloway, of Non-Conformity before a high commission court held the same year at Wigton, and deprived of his ministerial office.

that the Righteousness of Christ is said to be imputed unto us by Faith, because we cannot know and discern that it is imputed to us but by Faith; and then we are said to be justified with that kind of Justification and Absolution from Sin, which breedeth peace in our consciences." {Vindiciae Gratiae, Amsterdam, 1632} Where he also gives us two Arguments to prove that Justification goes before Faith. Was this famous Doctor an Antinomian? Of all Men Mr. Woodbridge {who is now entered upon his Labors, and reaps the Harvest of that Seed which the Doctor with much sweat and many prayers, hath sown at Newberry} hath least reason to account him so. I must needs tell him that he will not honor himself, by aspersing the name of this Blessed Man. If Mr. Woodbridge had consulted with the writings of his own Forefathers, I suppose he would have given the adherers to this Doctrine more civil language. Mr. Parker³¹ his Grandfather,³² a man whom his Enemies admired for his learning and piety; in his book, *De Descensu Domini nostri Jesu Christi ad inferos*, {published in 1611,} he hath this excellent passage, "Christ is said to be justified when he rose from the dead, {I Tim.3:16,} and we to be then justified in him, because of that discharge; namely, His Father's raising him from the Dead, was an actual Justification of him from the sins of others, for which he had satisfied; and of us from our own sins, for which he became a Surety." It doth not a little justify them that drove away this Reverend man from his native soil,³³ that a grand-child of his own, a minister, and a minister in these times, should brand him with heresy.

³¹ Robert Parker, 1569–1614, an English theologian & scholar, who became minister of a separatist congregation in Holland where he died while in exile. Cotton Mather wrote of Parker as "one of the greatest scholars in the English Nation, and in some sort the father of all Nonconformists of our day."

³² Woodbridge's wife Sarah, 1593–1663, was the daughter of Robert Parker.

³³ In 1607, Parker was forced to leave England to avoid prosecution.

5. To these might be added many more who have not hitherto been known by the name of Antinomians. Mr. Calvin³⁴ saith, "that our Justification, in respect of God, doth precede our Faith."³⁵ Zanchius³⁶ in his Explication of the Epistle to the Ephesians, upon those words, Chap.2:5, {"he hath quickened us together with Christ,"} says, "that all the Elect, who are the Members of Christ, when he by his death had expiated their Sins, were freed from the guilt of eternal death, and obtained a right to eternal Life." Chamier³⁷ hath much to this purpose, "we are most certainly persuaded, that our sins are pardoned before we do believe; for we deny that infants do believe, and yet infants have their sins forgiven." {Panstratia Catholica, seu Corpus Controversiarum adversus Pontificios, Geneva, 1606.} And a little before, {chap. 6 of the same book,} "I deny" {saith he} "that Faith is the cause of our Justification, for then our Justification would not be of Grace, but of our selves; but Faith is said to justify, not because it effecteth Justification, but because it is effected in the justified person." And in another place to the same purpose, "Faith does neither merit, obtain, nor begin our Justification; for if it did, then Faith should go before Justification, both in nature and time; which may in no way be granted, for Faith itself is part of Sanctification;

³⁴ John Calvin, 1509-1564, a highly influential French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. A principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology later called Calvinism. Originally trained as a lawyer, he broke from the Roman Catholic Church around 1530. After religious tensions provoked a violent uprising against Protestants in France, Calvin fled to Basel, Switzerland, where he published the first edition of his pivotal work entitled Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536.

³⁵ Antidote to the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent on the Doctrine of Justification by John Calvin, 1547.

³⁶ Hieronymus Zanchius, 1516-1590, Protestant Reformer, one of the most learned theologians of the second half of the 16th Century, a follower of John Calvin.

³⁷ Daniel Chamier, 1564-1621, a Huguenot minister in France, studied at the University of Orange and at Geneva under Theodore Beza, who was a disciple of John Calvin.

now there is no Sanctification but after Justification, which is really and in its own nature before it." Alstedius³⁸ in his supplement to Chamier saith, "that Faith concurs no otherwise to Justification, than in respect of the passive application, whereby a man applies the Righteousness of Christ unto himself; but not in respect of the active application, whereby God applieth unto Man the Righteousness of Christ, which application is in the mind of God, and consequently from eternity." {Johannes Alstedius, Supplement to Chamier} Dr. Maccovius,³⁹ Professor of Divinity at Franeker in the Netherlands, hath a whole Determination to this purpose to prove that Justification actively considered, or as it is the act of God, blotting out our sins, and imputing the Righteousness of Christ unto us, goes before Faith. Indeed he makes it to be, not an immanent, but a transient declared act, which the Lord did, when he first promised to send his Son to be our Mediator. {Gen.3:15}

Though one of our late writers, {Richard Baxter,} mentions this Doctors Opinion with much contempt and oscitancy, calling his Assertions, strange, senseless, and abhorred; which is the less to be regarded, seeing he usually metes out the same measure unto all men else, whose notions do not square with his own mold; as to Dr. Twisse, Mr. Walker,⁴⁰ and those that hold the Imputation of Christ's Active Righteousness, whom he calls "a sort of ignorant and unstudied divines, &c." Yet, as he hath merited fairer usage amongst Christians for his other labours; so I dare say, his Arguments in this

³⁸ Johann Heinrich Alsted, known as Alstedius, 1588-1638, was a German theologian.

³⁹ Johannes Maccovius, 1588-1644, was a Polish Reformed theologian.

⁴⁰ George Walker, 1581-1651, an English theologian, imprisoned for Non-Conformity in 1638 by William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, and became a member of the Westminster Assembly in 1643; who in 1641 published his work entitled, "Socinianism in the Fundamental Point of Justification Discovered & Confuted," directed against the Arminian John Goodwin.

particular will not seem so weak and ridiculous as Mr. Baxter makes them to an indifferent reader that shall compare them with the exceptions which he hath shaped unto them; sharp censures are but dull answers. Dr. Ames⁴¹ says no less, who in his Marrow of Divinity, having defined Justification to be the gracious Sentence of God, by which he doth acquit us from sin and death, and account us righteous unto life, says, "that this sentence was long before in the mind of God, and was pronounced when Christ our Head arose from the dead." {II Cor.5:19} And in another place, "all they for whom Christ in the intention of God, hath made satisfaction, are reconciled unto God." I might produce many others that are of eminent note, who have asserted that all the Elect are reconciled and justified before they believe. Now were all these champions of Truth, a pack of Antinomians and Libertines? Hath Mr. Woodbridge's humanity no better language to bestow upon them? If he shall say, he doth not mean them, yet his reproaches do fall upon them; for if we be an Antinomian, for saying, that the Elect are justified before they do believe, then Twisse, &c., is an Antinomian, who affirms the same.

6. Mr. Burgess {Anthony Burgess,} a man somewhat profuse in this kind of rhetoric, seems willing to excuse some of those fore-mentioned divines, who have asserted the Remission of sins before Faith, {Burgess, "Justification," 1651, pg.177,} because they did it in a particular sense to oppose the Arminians, who maintain a reconcilability, and not a reconciliation by the death of Christ. But I believe he is not ignorant, that divine Truths are not to be measured by men's intentions; let men's ends be never so good, they cannot make Error to be Truth; or if they are never so corrupt they cannot make Truth to be Error. Nor do

⁴¹ William Ames, 1576-1633, an English Protestant theologian, who spent much time in the Netherlands, and is noted for his involvement in the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians; who wrote his "Marrow of Sacred Theology" a manual of Calvinistic doctrine, in 1627.

they, whom he calls Antinomians, assert Justification before Faith, in any other sense than in respect of the absolute and immutable will of God, not to deal with his people according to their sins; and in respect of the full Satisfaction of Jesus Christ, who by that one offering of himself, has perfected forever them that are sanctified; {Heb.10:14;} that is, them whose sins are purged by his Blood. I could show how frequently he and others have wounded some of our most eminent divines, both for learning and piety, with the labels of Antinomians. Mr. Burgess in his Book of Justification {pg.219} calls it an Antinomian Similitude, to say that as a man looking on the wall through red glass, conceives the wall to be of the same color; so God looking upon us in Christ sees nothing but the righteousness of Christ in us, and no Sin at all; which similitude is used by Dr. Reynolds in his excellent Treatise on the 110 Psalm,⁴² where he doth plainly assert that Doctrine which Mr. Burgess condemns for Antinomianism. Mr. Baxter's Character of an Antinomian, will bring all our Protestant Writers under this Censure; for with him they are Antinomians, who hold, {1} that our Evangelical Righteousness is without us in Christ, or performed by Him, and not by ourselves; or {2} that Justification is a free act of God, without any condition on our part, for the obtaining of it; or else {3} that Justification is an Immanent act, and consequently from eternity, which was the Judgment of Pemble, Twisse, Rutherford, &c; or {4} that we must not perform duty for Life and Salvation, but from Life and Salvation; or that we must not make the attaining of Justification or Salvation, the end of our endeavors, but obey in thankfulness, and because we are justified and saved, &c. Now let any man who is moderately versed in our Protestant Writers, but speak on whom this arrow

⁴² Edward Reynolds, "An Explication of the Hundredth and Tenth Psalm; wherein the several heads of Christian Religion therein contained, touching the exaltation of Christ, the Scepter of his Kingdom, the Character of his subjects, his Priesthood, Victories, Sufferings, and Resurrection, are largely explained and applied; being the substance of several sermons preached at Lincolns Inne, 1642."

falls. I might instance in many others, but I will not put the Reader unto so much trouble.

7. My business at the present is to acquit this Doctrine of Justification in *Foro Dei*, before Faith, from Mr. Woodbridge's charge of Antinomianism; and truly I wonder that he should give it this name; for: 1. It hath not the least affinity with the Antinomian Tenants; which were, that the Law is not to be preached to bring men to Repentance, or unto the sight of their sins; that whatever a man's life be, though it be never so impure and wicked, yet he is justified for all, if he doth believe the Promises of the Gospel; so that they held the necessity of Faith {such as it was} they made it {as our Adversaries do} the condition of Justification. 2. Antinomianism is such an Error as doth oppose, or is contrary to the Law of God; but surely, our doctrine is not such, as it offers no manner of injury unto the Law; seeing that whensoever the Elect are justified, they are not justified without Righteousness, and such a Righteousness, as doth fully answer the Law of God, in respect both of the satisfaction and obedience which it doth require. We say that God cannot justify a person without Righteousness, for then he should do that Himself which he forbids to us, and profeseth his detestation of. {Exod.23:7, Isa.5:23, Deut.25:1, Prov.17:15.} If God could have dispensed with his Law in this behalf, Christ needed not to have died; but the end of his coming was to bring in Everlasting Righteousness. Whomsoever God doth justify, they have justice one way or other; for otherwise, the God of Truth should call darkness light, and evil good; they whom he accounteth just, are just and righteous; but yet we say, that Faith is not that Righteousness, that makes them so, either in whole or in part; but the perfect Righteousness of Christ, which is put upon them. Now to say, that God imputes this Righteousness unto men before they believe, is no ways contrary to the Law, seeing the Law prescribes not the rules of this Imputation, for it is altogether besides the cognizance of the Law; so that if it prove an Error, it must be an Anti-Evangelical, and not an Antinomian Error; but I doubt

not, but I shall be able to acquit it from this, as well as from that other Imputation.

Chapter IV

Containing some Animadversions upon Mr. Cranford's Epistle to the Reader.

Mr. Woodbridge for the better Grace of his Book hath obtained a Commendatory Epistle from Mr. Cranford;⁴³ wherein some things are delivered contrary to truth, and most injurious to them, whom Mr. Woodbridge hath made his Adversaries. It's true, that he begins his Epistle with a deserved Commendation of the Doctrine of Justification, "that it exceedingly illustrates the glorious riches of God's Free-Grace, and magnifies his Justice; is the only support of comfort to a wounded conscience, takes away from man the cause of boastings, and is altogether above the invention and credulity of reason." Wherein I do cordially concur with him, accounting it {as Luther did} the Sun which enlightens the Church, the Paradise and Heaven of the Soul; therefore it was not without cause, that our first Reformers so earnestly contended for it, it being {as they have well observed} the sum of the Gospel, and of all the Benefits which we have by Christ; the principal point of the principal point of the Doctrine of Salvation, the pure knowledge whereof doth preserve the Church. How much short of them in this particular is the zeal of some amongst our late Reformers, who have scoffingly called it the Antinomians common place? Mr. Cranford's Testimony therefore to the singular excellency of this Doctrine is so much the more welcome, seeing there are so few that have it in a right esteem; though as he {and much more

⁴³ James Cranford, 1592?-1657; an English Presbyterian, who belonged to the heresy-hunting wing of the London Presbyterians, writing a preface to the Gangraena of Thomas Edwards.

as Mr. Woodbridge} hath stated it, the beauty and lustre of it is not a little obscured. It looseth all those praises which in Mr. Cranford's Parenthesis are ascribed unto it. For {1} how doth the riches of God's Grace appear if our Justification doth depend upon terms and conditions performed by us? For as Mr. Walker hath noted, "Whatsoever is covenanted and promised upon a condition to be performed is not absolutely free, nor freely given." {"Socinianism in the Fundamental Point of Justification Discovered & Confuted," pg.224} They are not justified by Grace who are justified upon the performance of Conditions. {2} What support is this for a wounded Conscience, to tell him that is conscious of his extreme weakness and inability that God will forgive his sins, if he do perform such and such conditions, which he is no more able to do than to remove a mountain? Mr. Calvin hath well observed, "that unless we would have our Faith to be always wavering and trembling, it ought to rest only upon the Free promise of Grace in Jesus Christ;" and he gives this reason for it, "because a conditional promise which sends us to our own works, promiseth us life no otherwise, than if it were placed in our own power." Nor {3} doth this take from men the cause of boasting. Boasting {saith the Apostle} is not excluded by works, call them by what name you will, either Legal or Evangelical; if they are our works, they give to us occasion of boasting; for to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt; a work of condition whensoever it is performed makes the thing covenanted a due Debt, which the performer may demand, and the promiser is bound to give. {Rom.3:27, 4:4} {4} It is not above the invention and credulity of reason that God should justify sinners, and merely upon the account of another's righteousness; as heretofore it seemed foolishness both to Jews and Gentiles, so ever since it has been a stumbling block to the wisdom of the flesh; it is such a mystery as will never contemper with the most rational principles of the natural man. Hence have arisen all those jarrings and contendings against this truth, in regard of its disproportion unto carnal Reason, which

believes no other Gospel, but *hoc fac et vives* {do this and you shall live.}

Secondly; "the Doctrine of the Gospel {says Mr. Cranford} concerning the Justification of a believing sinner is plainly delivered in the Scripture;" but by his reason, "the Scripture nowhere calls Believers sinners, nor yet makes Believers the adequate subjects of Justification." It is most true, that all Believers are justified, and it is as false that men are Believers before they are justified; for an unjustified Believer, and a justified Sinner are expressions palpably guilty of Self-contradiction. We read in Scripture of God's justifying the ungodly {Rom.4:5,} reconciling the world {II Cor.5:19} and enemies to himself, {Rom.5:8,10,} and of his quickening them that are dead in trespasses and sins. {Eph.2:1,5} Now Believers {as hath been hinted} are never called ungodly or enemies to God; they are nowhere said to be dead in trespasses and sins; they have their name from their better part, and from that esteem that God hath of them, who beholds them holy and righteous, without any spot or blemish of sin in Christ. {Song.4:7, Psa.51:7, Col.1:22, Eph.5:27}

Thirdly, in the next place, Mr. Cranford gives us in a list of all the causes which do concur unto our Justification; in the enumeration whereof, he will find the Author he commends at a greater distance from him, than those whom he opposes. He may, if he pleases, compare his Doctrine with Mr. Baxter's Notions, {whom Mr. Woodbridge follows at the very heels,} in his Aphorisms,⁴⁴ who denies, that Christ's Obedience is the material; the Imputation of his Righteousness, the formal cause of our Justification, or that Faith is the instrument by which we do receive it; for he plainly ascribes the same kind of causality unto Christ and Faith, making them to differ only *secundum magis et minus* {more or less;} that Christ is the *sine qua non principalis* {something absolutely indispensable or essential;} and Faith the *sine qua non minus principalis*

⁴⁴ Baxter, "Aphorisms of Justification," 1649, – Thesis 56, 26, 73, &c.,

{without which or no less important;} he might have lifted sin in the same rank, which too is a *sine qua non* {something that is absolutely needed} of our Justification; so that Faith and works in a larger sense are meritorious causes of Life and Blessedness. Now we say with Mr. Cranford {1} that God is the efficient Cause or the only Justifier; that he hath no motive or inducement but his own Grace and Love to will not to punish us, and to give to us his Son, through whom we have Redemption and Deliverance from the Curse of the Law. {Deut.7:7, Rom.3:25, Jn.3:16} We say too {2} that Christ is the only meritorious cause of our Justification, that Jesus Christ hath by his Death and Satisfaction fully procured and merited our discharge and absolution from the penalty of the Law, which we deserved by sin; for which cause, he is said to have purged our sins by himself; that is, without the help and assistance of other means. {Heb.1:3} There are many who *ore tenus* {verbally} in word do acknowledge that Christ is the meritorious cause of our Justification that indeed do deny it. The Papists in the Council of Trent say, "that God is the efficient, the glory of God the final, the death of Christ the meritorious cause of our Justification." But yet we know that they allow not this effect unto it, unless other things do concur on our part. They say, that Faith, Charity, &c., do obtain and after a sort merit forgiveness, though not by their own worth and dignity, yet by virtue of God's Covenant and promise. Too many of our Protestants {setting aside the word merit, which yet Mr. Baxter thinks may be admitted} do tread directly in their steps; they ascribe as much unto works as the Papists do. It is a poor requital unto Jesus Christ, to call him the meritorious cause of our Justification, and in the mean while to deny the merit of his death, as to the immediate purchases thereof, and to ascribe at least a partial meritoriousness to other things. {3} I shall go further with Mr. Cranford; for I freely grant that Faith is the Instrument by which we receive and apply the Righteousness of Christ unto ourselves, whereby the gracious sentence of God, acquitting us from our sins is conveyed and

terminated in our Consciences. We say indeed, that Faith doth not concur to our Justification, as a proper physical instrument, which is a less principal efficient cause. Mr. Rutherford saith well, "that Faith is not the Organical or Instrumental cause, either of Christ's satisfaction, or of God's acceptation thereof on our behalf." By believing we do not cause, either our Saviour to satisfy for our sins, or God to accept of his satisfaction. Every true Believer is persuaded that God hath laid aside his wrath and displeasure towards him for his sins, having received a sufficient ransom and satisfaction for them in the death of his Son. Faith is a Receptive, not an Effective Instrument; an Instrument not to procure, but to receive Justification and Salvation, which is freely given us in Jesus Christ. It is called an Instrumental cause of our Justification, taking Justification passively, not actively; or in reference to that passive Application, whereby a man applies the Righteousness of Christ to himself, but not to that active Application, whereby God applies it to a man, which is only in the mind of God. Therefore Calvin calls Faith 'opus passivum' - a passive work.

Fourthly, Mr. Cranford proceeds, "this Doctrine {saith he} hath in all Ages been opposed and obscured, sometimes by open Enemies, sometimes by professed Friends, and such as would be accounted the great pleaders for Free Grace." It is most true that this Article of Free Justification hath, and will be a Bone of Contention to the worlds end. It is the chief cause of all those Contests and Quarrels, which have arisen between the Children of the Free Woman and the Children of the Bond-Woman. Luther hath well observed; "it is so strange to carnal Reason, so dark to the World; it hath so many enemies that except the Spirit of God from above do reveal it, learning cannot reach it. Wisdom is offended, nature is astonished; devils do not know it, men do but persecute it." {Luther "Commentary on Galatians"} Satan labors for nothing more, than that he may either quite bereave men of the knowledge of this truth, or else corrupt the simplicity of it. It is not unknown what batteries were raised against it, in the

very infancy of the Church, how the Wits and Passions of men conspired to hinder it; what monstrous consequences, were charged upon the Doctrine; and what odious practices, were fathered upon them, that did profess it; for never was any truth opposed with so much malice and bitterness as this hath been, and by them especially that were most devout and zealous; {Acts 13:50, Rom.10:2;} but when it could not be withstood and stifled, Satan endeavored then to deprave and adulterate it, by mixing of the Law with the Gospel, and our own Righteousness with Christ's; which corruption the Apostle hath strenuously opposed in all his Epistles, and more especially in that to the Romans and Galatians; where he excludes all and singular works of ours, from sharing in the matter of our Justification; for the eluding of whose Authority, carnal Reason hath found out sundry shifts and distinctions; as that the Apostle excludes only works of Nature, but not of Grace; Legal, but not Evangelical works; and that our works though they are not Physical, yet they may come in as Moral causes of our Justification. It is certain, that the most dangerous attempts against this Doctrine, have been within the Church, and by such as Mr. Cranford calls professed Friends, who have done so much the more mischief, in regard they were least apt to be suspected. Justification by works was generally exploded amongst us, whilst it appeared under the names of Popery and Arminianism, which since hath found an easy admittance, being vented by some of better note, such as would be accounted pleaders for Free-Grace.

Fifthly, Mr. Woodbridge's Discourse {according to Mr. C.} deals not with the Errors of Papists, Socinians or Arminians, but with Antinomian Error. How unjustly our Doctrine is called Antinomian, hath been shown before; and Mr. Cranford may be pleased to take notice, that Mr. Rutherford accounts the Opinion we oppose, the very chief of the Arminians, Socinians, and Papists Errors, about Justification; namely, that no Man hath his sins remitted before he doth actually believe. As for his

Allegation out of Mr. Shepard,⁴⁵ "mark those Men that deny the Use of the Law to lead unto Christ, if they do not fall in time to oppose some main point of the Gospel, &c." {Shepard, "Sound Believer," 1649} It doth not touch us, for we deny not the use of the Law to bring Men unto Christ; we look upon the Law as the Ordinance of God, to convince men of their sin and misery, and thereby to endear to them the Grace of the Gospel. {Gal.3:22,24} We say with the Apostle, "the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully;" {I Tim.1:8;} that is, in a way of subserviency, and attendance upon the Gospel, the better to advance and make effectual the ends thereof. And as we deny not this use of the Law, so neither doth our asserting "that all the Elect before their Conversion and Faith stand actually reconciled to God, and justified before him, obscure the Gospel." I doubt not but the judicious Reader will expect a better proof of this charge than Cranford's word. Have all those reverend divines before mentioned obscured the Gospel? What is the Gospel, but the glad tidings that Christ is come into the world to save sinners; that by his subjecting himself to the curse of the Law, he hath freed them from the curse, who were given him by the Father? How is this truth obscured, by our saying, that God did everlastingly will not to punish his Elect; and that in Christ he beholds them just and righteous, even whilst they are sinful, and wicked in themselves? Do not they much more obscure the Grace of the Gospel who make it to depend upon terms and conditions performed by us, than we that affirm it to be free and absolute? They that assign no certain and actual effect to the death of Christ; or we, that say {according to the

⁴⁵ Thomas Shepard, 1605-1649, graduated from Oxford in 1627, ordained in the Established Church, and in 1630 silenced for Non-conformity by Church of England Archbishop William Laud; he left England in 1635 with wife and younger son for Massachusetts in colonial America where he became minister of one of the leading churches in the Colonies. He left in manuscript numerous sermons that were subsequently printed in England, amongst them his work entitled, "The Parables of the Ten Virgins and other Sermons," printed in 1660.

Scripture} that all the Elect were thereby freed from the Law, delivered from the Curse, reconciled unto God, made perfect and complete in the sight of God? And therefore though Dr. Downname,⁴⁶ doth call it, "a strange assertion," I shall not be ashamed to own it; the Lord complains "that the great things of his Law were counted strange." {Hos.8:12} We read in Eusebius,⁴⁷ that the Christian Faith {though it were from the beginning} was called "new and strange." The multitude cast this aspersion upon our Saviour's Doctrine, {Mk.1:27,} and the Athenians upon Paul. {Acts 17:19,20} The imputation of novelty and new fangledness has been commonly cast upon the truths and ways of God. Many things are new in respect of Observation, which are not so in themselves. {See Samuel Bolton,⁴⁸ "Arraignment of Error," 1646.} We have known that godly men have looked upon some things as very strange, which in tract of time have been generally embraced. Dr. Downname, no doubt, thought it strange that any godly man should say that the angels of the Seven Churches were not Diocesan Bishops; and yet I believe Mr. Cranford is not of his Opinion. If it were the Doctors meaning that this Assertion of Justification before Faith, was never heard to come from the mouth of a godly man before Pemble; either his memory was very weak, or his charity was too much straitened. He could not be ignorant of what hath been alleged out of Calvin, Zanchius, Parker, Chamier; one of those passages in Chamier {before mentioned} is cited by the Doctor in that very Book, which Mr. Cranford quotes. He knew likewise, that all our old Protestant divines have defined Justifying Faith, to be a certain persuasion, and

⁴⁶ George Downname, 1560–1634, studied at Cambridge, elected fellow of Christ's College in 1585; became Lord Bishop of Derry, Chaplain to James I and King James VI.

⁴⁷ Eusebius, 260/265–339/340, a Roman historian, who in 290 began work on his book entitled "Ecclesiastical History," which was a narrative history of the 'Church' and 'Christian' community from the Apostolic Age to his own time.

⁴⁸ Samuel Bolton, 1606–1654, an English minister and scholar, a member of the Westminster Assembly.

full assurance of the pardon of our sins; from whence it must inevitably follow, that pardon of sin precedes our Faith, for every object is before its act. And as strange as it seemed unto this Doctor, he himself says little less; for in answer to Bellarmine,⁴⁹ he granteth that, "it is true in respect of our Justification in the sight of God; which special apprehension, or application of Christ {saith he} though scorned by Papists, yet it is of all graces the most comfortable, most profitable, most necessary, most comfortable; for the very life of this life is the assurance of a better life; most necessary, because without this special receiving of Christ, first by apprehension, and then by application we can have no other saving Grace. How can we love God, or our Neighbor for his sake? How can we hope and trust in him? How can we rejoice or be thankful to him, if we be not persuaded of his Love and Bounty towards us? Most profitable, because from it all other Graces do proceed, and according to the measure of it, is the measure of them, &c."⁵⁰ Doubtless, that Faith to which these properties do belong, doth best merit the name of Justifying Faith; so then according to this Doctors Judgment, the Assertion is not so strange as true.

Sixthly, Mr. Cranford goes on, and much faster than a good pace, "this Opinion {says he} that the Elect are actually reconciled to God before they believe, is confuted in this Treatise, and proved contradictory to Scripture, fit only to sow Pillows under the elbows of profane Men; and to overthrow the comfort of Believers, destroying the ground, nature, and end of Faith." How solidly it is confuted, the Reader will see anon, when the weight of his proofs shall come to be examined; for I doubt not, but an impartial Judge will acquit it, both from being contradictory to Scripture, or guilty of those horrid Consequences which he hath called upon it. I

⁴⁹ Robert Bellarmine, 1542- 1621, Italian Jesuit and a Cardinal of the Catholic Church; one of the most significant theologians in the Counter-Reformation.

⁵⁰ George Downname, "Treatise of Justification," 1634; Book 6, Chap.6, Section 9 or pg.366.

marvel that so rational a man, {as Mr. Cranford is held to be,} should say, "that all this charge is proved;" part of which is not so much as mentioned by Mr. Woodbridge {who is liberal enough of his criminations,} which makes me to think, that he wrote his Epistle before he read his Author, or at least, that he is a man that will be satisfied with slender Proofs against persons, and Doctrines which he doth not fancy. It is true, Mr. Woodbridge hath endeavored to obtrude upon us some ugly Consequences, which are as remote from our Doctrine, as earth is from heaven. Mr. Cranford is not ignorant, how much peaceable and prudent men have disliked this practice of wire-drawing men's Opinions, and raking absurdities out of them, *per nescio, quos ridiculas consequentiam*, {ignorance has ridiculous consequences,} as Bishop Davenant⁵¹, expresses it. "By small threds of consequences, which they themselves do disclaim, and abhor from their whole heart;" whereupon says that learned Bishop, "good Men ought to deal more fairly, than to fasten an Heretical sense on other men's words, when the writer's themselves, which are the best Expounders of their own Words, can, and use to reduce them to a Catholic sense." Mr. Cranford knows that the very same consequences are fathered upon the Doctrine of Absolute Election, Justification by Faith alone, and the certain Perseverance of true Believers. The Semi-Pelagians of old would have forced this inference from Augustine's Opinion of Absolute Predestination; and the Papists say, "it follows, that if we be justified by Faith alone, then we need not do good Works." The Remonstrants and their followers say, "that if a Believer cannot fall from Grace, then need he not fear to commit any sin whatsoever." Nor do the Consequences flow any whit more naturally from our Tenet than they do from these. Doth it follow, that because all the Elect are by means of Christ's death actually reconciled unto God, and freed from the condemnation of the Law, that

⁵¹ John Davenant, 1572 -1641, English Bishop of Salisbury from 1621; who also served as one of the British delegates to the Synod of Dort.

therefore men may live as they list; that they need not hear, believe, and obey the Gospel? How doth this sew pillows under men's elbows, or lull asleep in security, more than the Doctrine of Absolute Election? Seeing as all men are not elected, so neither are all men reconciled unto God; nor can any man know, that he is elected and reconciled unto God, but by and through Faith; which Faith is wrought in men by the preaching of the Word, and doth certainly produce a Holy Life.

Seventhly, I confess, I am yet to seek of the Reason of his other Deduction, that this Assertion of actual reconciliation before Faith, overthrows the comfort of true Believers, and destroys the ground, nature, use, and end of Faith. Is it an uncomfortable Doctrine to tell men, that we are not sharers with Christ in effecting of our peace with God, and in procuring the pardon of our sins; and that Christ hath finished this work before we knew of it? Is it not much more comfortable to poor souls that Christ hath absolutely, and by himself obtained forgiveness for sinners, than that he hath procured this Grace but conditionally, upon condition we perform such and such works, for which we have no strength or ability in ourselves? Whence have the Saints drawn all their comfort? Surely; not from Faith, or any other work of theirs, but by Faith from Christ, and from the perfection and all-sufficiency of his Sacrifice. Not only the Protestants but the Papists themselves, {though in their Schools they contend for the dignity and congruity of Works, that they are Moral Causes or Necessary Conditions of Justification and Salvation; yet on their Death-beds they utterly renounce them,} exhort men in distress of Conscience, to roll themselves wholly upon Jesus Christ. In a Form prescribed for visiting of the Sick, the Priest or Minister is enjoined to put these questions to the sick party. "Dost thou believe to come to glory not by thy own merits, but by the virtue and merit of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ? And dost thou believe, that our Lord Jesus Christ did die for our Salvation, and that none can be saved by his own merits, or by any other means, but

by the merit of his Passion?"⁵² Whereunto, when the Sick Person answered affirmatively, I do believe it; the priest is bid to exhort him in this wise, "Go to therefore, as long as thy Soul remaineth in thee, place thy whole confidence in his death only, have confidence in no other thing; commit thyself wholly to his death, with this alone cover thy self wholly, intermingle thy self wholly, wrap thy whole self in his death, &c." "Dangerous {saith Bernard} is the habitation of those that trust in their own works;" and in another place, "what safe rest or security can the weak soul find, but in the wounds of his Saviour? As he is mighty to save, so dwell I there with most safety."⁵³ Parisiensis in his Book of Divine Rhetoric,

⁵² Ussher, "Succession of Christian Churches," 1613, pg.194. James Ussher, 1581-1656, was a Church of Ireland Archbishop between 1625 and 1656. He was a prolific scholar, who most famously published a chronology that purported to establish the time and date of the creation as the night preceding Sunday, 23 October 4004 BC, according to the proleptic Julian calendar. Ussher was a staunch Protestant and viewed with alarm the prospect that people he regarded as anti-Christian Papists might achieve any sort of power. He called a secret meeting of the Irish Bishops in his house in November 1626, the result being the 'Judgment of the Arch-Bishops and Bishops of Ireland;' which begins, "the religion of the Papists is superstitious and idolatrous; their Faith and doctrine erroneous and heretical; their church in respect of both, apostate; to give them therefore a toleration, or to consent that they may freely exercise their religion, and profess their Faith and Doctrine is a grievous sin!"

⁵³ Bernard, "Sermons on Conversion; and on Psalm, Sermon 1, "Sermons on the Song of Songs," Sermon 61. Bernard of Clairvaux, 1090-1153, a French Abbot. Bernard held some doctrines which the Reformers would later rekindle at the beginnings of the Protestant movement. Some people have therefore equated him with a Protestant before there were Protestants. In truth he held a mixed creed. Of some significance to the Reformers would be Bernard's conception of Justification. Calvin quotes Bernard several times to show the historical validity of Sola Fide; that is, 'Faith alone,' which Luther described as the article upon which the Church stands or falls. Calvin also quotes him in setting forth his doctrine of a

"thou must beware" {saith he} "in thy striving with God, that thou dost not build upon a weak foundation, which he doth that trusts in his own works." {Episcopus Parisiensis, "Rhetorica Divina," 1492} Gerson often inculcates this, "that before the tribunal of God, we must only plead the merits of Christ."⁵⁴ Bishop Gardner⁵⁵, though he would not have this gap to be opened to the people, yet he acknowledged it to be "the most comfortable Doctrine to such as were in his condition," he being then on his death-bed; which is the more to be observed, because in his life time he had stickled so much for our Adversaries Conditional Justification. Bellarmine himself, when he had written divers Books for Justification by inherent Righteousness, in the end concludes, "that for fear of vain-glory, and by reason of the uncertainty of our own Works, *tutissimum est*, &c., it is the safest way to place all our trust in the Mercy of God and Merits of Jesus Christ; so that we may say as Moses, their Rock is not as our Rock, our Enemies themselves being Judges." {Deut.32:31}

Eighthly, Mr. Cranford has not the least reason to charge us with destroying the ground of Faith; for the ground of Faith is either *Fundamentum Quod*, {the Foundation,} or *Fundamentum Quo*, {a Foundation} Material and Personal, or else Doctrinal and Ministerial. We say with all true Christians, that the only material or personal Foundation whereupon a poor Soul can build securely for Life and Justification is Jesus Christ. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." {I Cor.3:11} Now the Doctrinal Foundation whereby our Faith is united to the former, we affirm with Calvin, {and many more,} that it is "the Free Promise of Mercy;" in opposition to those

forensic alien righteousness, or as it is commonly called Imputed Righteousness.

⁵⁴ Gerson, "De Consolatione Theologiae," 1418. Jean Gerson, 1363-1429, French Scholar, Educator & Reformer.

⁵⁵ Stephen Gardiner, 1483-1555, English Roman Catholic bishop and politician during the English Reformation period who served as Lord Chancellor during the reign of Queen Mary I of England.

Conditional Promises, which send men partly to Christ, and partly to their own works; and therefore our Adversaries are much more obnoxious to this censure of Destroying the Ground of Faith, who allow it no other support than Conditional Promises, whereby a man's hope and confidence is made to lean more upon himself, that it doth on Christ; much more upon his own works, than it doth upon the Righteousness of Christ. The fore-mentioned Author has well observed, "that if our Faith does rely never so little upon our own Works, it cannot possibly stand fast; that soul will never attain to any settled assurance of his Salvation that builds his Faith upon such a sandy Foundation."

Ninthly, the nature of Faith receives not the least prejudice by our Doctrine; for if we define it as most of our old Protestant divines {Melanchthon, P. Martyr, Calvin, Perkins, &c.,} have done; as a firm and certain persuasion of the favor of God, and the pardon of our sins, it confirms our Tenant; for men's sins must be pardoned before they can believe it, or else of necessity they must believe a lie. All men know that the object doth precede the act, unless it be when the act gives a being to the object; or if we make it to be the trust or reliance of the soul upon Jesus Christ, it receives no small encouragement from this consideration, that Christ hath finished whatsoever was necessary by Divine Appointment for the Justification of Sinners, not expecting the least condition to be performed by us for that end. Our Faith is never so impregnable, as when it rests entirely upon Jesus Christ. And as for the ends and uses of Faith {which are chiefly to give us boldness, and confidence towards God; to purify our hearts, and to work by love, &c.,} they are all of them promoted and furthered by the Doctrine we teach; for what is it, that gives us boldness towards God, but the merit and perfection of Christ's sacrifice? Whereby the mouth of the Law is stopped, the accusations of Satan are all answered, and the justice of God is fully satisfied. Again, what other means is there so effectual to purify our hearts, to constrain us to love Him, &c., as the freeness, absoluteness and immutability of his love to us; who

whilst we were sinners, and enemies, reconciled us to himself by the Blood of the Cross, and blotted out our sins, as if they had never been committed?

Tenth, Mr. Cranford censure of Curcellaei's Opinion is just and seasonable, who judgeth these Differences amongst Christians about Justification to be of so small concernment that they ought not to breed a Controversy.⁵⁶ For surely, they are none of those foolish Questions and Strivings, which we are bid to avoid; if there be any point in the whole Doctrine of Godliness, for which we ought to {as Jude speaks} to contend earnestly. This challenges our utmost zeal for the maintenance of it; seeing the glory of God's Grace, the Dignity of Christ's Blood, and comfort of our own Souls lie at stake in the issues thereof; our Life, Peace, and Everlasting Salvation are concerned herein. There is no truth that the Apostle doth so frequently press, and so earnestly contend for, as this Article of our Free Justification; that no works of ours do concur to the procuring of it. Mr. Calvin hath observed, that if we were accorded with the Church of Rome in all other Points, save in this one particular, the distance between them and us is so great, that it is impossible we should ever be reconciled; and I must needs say, that I see no material difference between them and our Adversaries about this matter.

Eleventh, Mr. Cranford in the close of his Prefatory Discourse, tells the Reader, "thou art beholding to the Learned Author for the penning of this Tract; but for the publishing of it to another." And Mr. Woodbridge hath framed it in the form of a Letter to a private Friend, that the Reader might guess that he had no hand at all in publishing of it; whereas a near kinsman of his assured me, that Mr. Woodbridge in a Letter to himself, had confessed that his Sermon came abroad by his own appointment; which I do rather believe, knowing his relation to the Stationer, for whom

⁵⁶ Stephani Curcellaei, leader of the Remonstrants, became chair of Arminian theology at the Remonstrant Seminary in Amsterdam after Episcopius, who founded the school in 1634.

it was Printed. However, I am glad that it is made public, that this point may be the better cleared by a deliberate examination of the utmost that can be said against it; only I wish that this task had lighted upon some other man, who hath more leisure and better abilities to undertake it; that so precious a truth might not suffer through the unskillfulness of a feeble Advocate. How much the Reader is beholding to Mr. Woodbridge for penning or printing of his Sermon, will appear in the issue of this Debate.

Chapter V

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's Introduction, Text, Doctrine, and Proofs, are briefly considered.

Having passed Mr. Woodbridge's out-works, we shall now proceed to survey the Fort itself, which {in his own conceit} is built so impregnable, "that nothing consistent with the Scriptures can be brought against it." However, I am not discouraged from attempting it, knowing, that strong holds more unlikely to be vanquished, have been laid flat and level with the ground. {Lam.4:12, II Cor.10:4,5}

In his Preface he tells the worthy Sir to whom he communicated his Notes, "that he will not trouble him with his Introduction to the Text, or the Applicatory part of his Sermon." It was very little that he spake in either; but I well remember that he began and concluded with a great mistake. In his Introduction he told us, that the scope of his Epistle was to prove "that we are justified by Faith;" that is, {as he explained it,} that we are not justified in the sight of God before we believe, and that Faith is the condition on our part to qualify us for Justification; whereas the scope of the Apostle {as shall be shown more largely hereafter} was not to assert the time of our Justification, but the matter of it; he intended not to show when, but wherewith we are justified; that is, not by Works or Righteousness in us,

but by the Righteousness of Christ freely imputed to us; which we apprehend and apply by Faith. By taking Faith in proper sense, as a condition required on our part, he accuses the Apostle of Self-contradiction, who all along denies, that we are justified by Works, seeing Faith considered as a Condition is a work of ours, no less than Love.

In that part of his Application where he addressed himself to Unbelievers, he told them, that Christ was not a High Priest or Advocate to them, and that they had no Court of Mercy to appeal unto; which was all one, as if he had said, Christ did not die for them; and that they had no more ground to believe in him, than the Devils themselves; and consequently that their case was desperate and irrecoverable; though final Unbelievers have not Christ for their High Priest, for he neither died nor prayed for them. {Jn.17:9} Yet he performed both Acts of his Priesthood, his Oblation and Intercession for all that were given to him by the Father, long before the Conversion of many of them. He laid down his life, not only for those Sheep that were called, but for those also that were not then gathered into his Fold. {Jn.10:15,16} And in the seventeenth of John, he says expressly that he prayed not only for them that did believe, but for them also that should believe in him. {vs.20} Though it be true, that Christ shed not his Blood for Reprobates, yet we know not who are reprobated, until it shall be made manifest by their final Unbelief. Indeed, we cannot say to an Unbeliever, that Christ did die for him; and we have as little reason to say, that Christ did not die for him, seeing the Word doth reveal neither; and by affirming the latter, we do quite bar up the door of Hope, which ought to be held open to the worst of Sinners. Our duty is to declare, that Christ is come into the world to save Sinners, and to exhort all men everywhere to believe in him. We may with equal appeals bid the Devils to believe, as those for whom Christ is not a High Priest; it is in vain for any to believe in Christ, if he never prayed nor offered up himself a Sacrifice unto God for them; but seeing Mr. Woodbridge

hath not troubled his Friend with these passages, I shall not trouble the Reader any longer about them.

Secondly, "that the Saints, or true Believers {under which notion Paul writes to the Romans,} are justified by Faith;" we do readily yield it to be a truth, it being *in terminis* {in terms} in the Text. I dare say, no man that is called a Christian, did ever deny it; and therefore he might have spared his pains in transcribing any more places of Scripture for confirmation of it. But I do much marvel, that so learned a man as Mr. Woodbridge who pretends to be more than ordinarily accurate, should take in hand a controverted Text, and never open the Terms, nor state the Question which he meant to handle; for though it be a sinful curiosity for men by Divisions and Subdivisions, to mince and crumble the Scriptures, till it hath lost the sense; yet surely, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, ought rightly to divide the Word of Truth, and explain things that are obscure and dubious; and where divers senses are given {as he knows there are of his Text} to disprove the false, and confirm that which he conceives is true.

Thirdly, there is a vast distance between the Apostle's proposition, {a man is justified by Faith,} and Mr. Woodbridge's Inference that Justification doth in no sense precede Faith. Justification by Faith and Justification before Faith, are not opposite but diverse; though they differ, yet they are not contradictory to each other. The Scriptures which prove the former, intend no strife or quarrel against the latter; in a word, the proof of the one doth not disprove the other. The Scripture which he made his theme is Romans 5:1. "Therefore being justified by Faith, we have peace with God, &c," concludes nothing at all against Justification before Faith; for we may without any violence to the Text, place the Comma after justified, {as thus,} "being justified, by Faith we have peace with God." This reading is agreeable both to the Apostles scope, and to the context. His scope here was not to show the efficacy of Faith in our Justification, but what benefits we have by the death of Christ; the first of which is Justification, and

the consequent thereof is peace with God. Again, the illative particle {'therefore'} shows, that this place is a Corollary or Deduction from the words immediately foregoing, which ascribed our Justification wholly to the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. {Chap.4} The Apostle thence infers, being justified - seeing we are justified freely, without works, by the death of Christ, by Faith we have peace with God; the Lord powerfully drawing our hearts to believe this, we have boldness and confidence towards God, the cause of fear being taken away; or as the Syriac and vulgar Latin read it, "let us have peace with God;" let us by Faith improve this Grace, for the establishing of our hearts in perfect peace. Now according to this reading, his own text will give in evidence against him, that Faith is not the cause or antecedent, but an effect and consequent of our Justification, procured and obtained by the death of Christ. But; if we take the words, as commonly they are read, the sense comes all to one; that being justified by Christ {who is the sole object of our Faith} we have peace with God; who by the Faith which he creates in us, causeth us to enjoy this reconciliation; by virtue whereof, our Conscience is so firmly grounded, that we are not moved by any temptation, or beaten down by any terror. The Work of Faith is not to procure our Justification, but to beget peace in our Consciences. So then, the words being rightly understood, they neither deny Justification before Faith, nor assert Justification by the act or habit of Faith, which Mr. Woodbridge would conclude from thence.

Fourthly, the next Scripture, whose suffrage is desired against us is Galatians 2:16. "We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ." "Where {says Mr. Woodbridge} Justification is expressly made a consequent of Faith." To which I answer, {1} that this doth no more infer that we are not justified before we believe, than the words of our Saviour, who saith, "love your Enemies, &c., that ye may be the children of your Father in Heaven," {Mt.5:44,45,} infers that works do go before Adoption, contrary to Eph.1:5,6, I Jn.3:3 & I Pet.2:9. The phrase

"that ye may be" there is as much, as that ye may be manifested and declared; that ye may show yourselves; or, that all men may know, that ye are the Children of God, by practicing a duty so much above the reach of Nature and Morality. A like place we have in Romans 3:26. God set forth his Son to declare his Righteousness, "that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Now shall we hence infer that God was not just before? Or that God's Justice was a consequent of his sending Christ? Now, if we can understand that clause {"that he might be just,"} in the sense that he might be known and acknowledged to be just; why may we not as well take this of the Apostle, "that we might be justified" in the same construction; that is, that we might know that we are justified, and live in the comfort and enjoyment of it. So that, not the being of our Justification, but the Knowledge and the Feeling of it is a consequent of Faith. Things in Scripture are then said to be when they are known to be. So John 15:8. Our Saviour tells the disciples, that if they did bear much fruit, they should be his Disciples; that is, they should be known and manifested to be his Disciples, as chapter 13:35. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Our Saviour is said at his Resurrection, to have become the Son of God; {Acts 13:33;} because then {as the Apostle speaks} he was powerfully declared to be the Son of God. {Rom.1:3} Again, things are said not to be which do not appear, as Melchisedec is said to be without Father and Mother, &c., {Heb.7:3,} because his Linage and Pedigree is not known; so we are said to be justified or not justified according as this Grace is revealed to us. But {2} in the Text it is, "we have believed that we may be justified by Faith;" so that from hence it can be inferred only, that we are not justified by Faith before believing, and that the sentence of Justification is not terminated in our Consciences, before we do believe.

Fifthly, his next proof is grounded upon the order of the words of Romans 8:30. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called,

them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." As "glory {saith he} follows Justification, so doth Justification follow Vocation unto Faith." Whereunto, I answer, {1} that the order of words in Scripture doth not show the order and dependence of the things themselves. The Jews have a Proverb, *non effe prius aut posterius in Scriptura*, {before or after will not affect the Scripture.} The first and last must not be strictly urged in Scripture; for that is not always set first which is first in Nature. If we should reason from the order of words in Scripture, we should make many absurdities. As in I Sam.6:14, where it is said that "they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the Lord;" and then in the next verse it follows that the Levites took down the Ark out of the Cart, as if they had clave the Cart before the Ark was taken down, which could not be. In II Tim.1:9, it is said, "God hath saved us, and called us;" yet I suppose Mr. Woodbridge will not say that men are saved before they are called. So though Vocation be set before Justification, yet it doth not follow that it precedes it in order of Nature. {2} The Apostles scope here is not to show in what order these Benefits are bestowed upon us, but how inseparably they are linked unto our Predestination; and that it is impossible that either sin or affliction should make them miserable, whom God hath chosen. {3} I see no inconvenience at all, in saying, that the Apostle here speaks of Justification, as it is declared and terminated in our Consciences, which some learned men {as Mr. Owen,⁵⁷ Mr. Kendall⁵⁸ against

⁵⁷ John Owen, 1616-1683, was an English Nonconformist church leader, theologian, and academic administrator at the University of Oxford. His first publication, "The Display of Arminianism," 1642, was a spirited defense of the Doctrines of God's Sovereign Grace in Christ. In 1647 he again argued against Arminianism in "The Death of Death in the Death of Christ," which drew him into long debate with Richard Baxter. At the outbreak of the English Civil War he sided with the Parliament; and was chosen to preach to Parliament on the day after the execution of King Charles I, which task he fulfilled without directly mentioning that event. Became

Goodwin, chapter 4; pgs. 138, 145} do make the formal of Justification; and in this respect I shall grant him, that Justification is a consequent of Vocation.

Sixthly, Mr. Woodbridge's next Allegation is from Romans 4:24. "To whom it {righteousness} shall be

Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, who took Owen to Ireland, that he might order the affairs of Trinity College, Dublin. In 1650 he accompanied Cromwell on his Scottish campaign. In 1651, Cromwell, as Chancellor of Oxford University, made him the Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University in 1652. Upon Cromwell's death in 1658 Owen lost his Vice-chancellorship and took a leading part in the Conference of Independents which drew up the Savoy Declaration, the doctrinal standard of Congregationalism, which was based upon the Westminster Confession of Faith. Died in 1683, and was buried in the Non-Conformist burial ground Bunhill Fields, London, that same year.

⁵⁸ George Kendall, 1610–1663, theologian, who in 1643 was presented by the crown, in spite of his strong Presbyterian sympathies and his agreement with Parliament, to the Rectory of Blisland, near Bodmin in Cornwall. After resigning, he took up his residence in London, supposedly that he might watch John Goodwin's movements, and "be in a better capacity to oppose him and his doctrine." His book, a "Vindication of the Doctrine concerning God's Intentions of Special Grace and Favor to his Elect from the Attempts of Master John Goodwin," 1653, and another work, entitled "Sancti Sanciti, or the Common Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints through Faith unto Salvation, vindicated from Mr. John Goodwin," led him into much controversy. Kendall, like his friend Dr. John Owen, wrote also with great warmth and eagerness against Richard Baxter; whose theological opinions he identified with those of the Arminian John Goodwin. The full title of the work referenced is, "Theokratia; or, a Vindication of the Doctrine Commonly Received in the Reformed Churches Concerning God's Intentions of Special Grace and Favour to his Elect in the Death of Christ; as also His Prerogative, Power, Prescience, Providence, the Immutability of his Nature and Counsels, &c., from the attempts lately made against it, by Master John Goodwin in his book entitled Redemption Redeemed; together with some digressions concerning the Impossibility of New Immanent Acts in God, the Possibility of Faith being an Instrument of Justification, and the Nature of the Covenants of Works and Grace," 1653.

imputed, if we believe;" therefore it {according to Mr. W.,} was not imputed before we believe. I answer, that the consequence is not necessary, for this particle "if" is used sometimes declaratively; it doth not always propound the condition, by which a Benefit is obtained, but sometimes it serves to describe the person to whom the Benefit doth belong.⁵⁹ Descriptions are taken from Effects and Consequences, as well as from the Causes or Antecedent conditions; as for instance, "if a Man {saith the Apostle} purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor." {II Tim.2:21} The Papists infer that a man is made a vessel of honor by purging himself &c. Our Protestant divines do answer that the place proves not that a man is hereby made, or becomes a vessel of honor, but that hereby he is manifested and known to be a vessel of honor. {See Sutcliffe⁶⁰ on Romans 11} So likewise in Hebrews 3:6; "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Which we are not to understand, as if these things did make us to be the house of God, but that hereby we appear and approve ourselves to be the house of God. {George Downname, "Treatise of Justification," 1634; pg.473, on the difference between the Law & the Gospel.} {William Jones⁶¹, "A

⁵⁹ See Walker, "Socinianism in the Fundamental Point of Justification Discovered & Confuted," pg.224.

⁶⁰ Matthew Sutcliffe, 1550? – 1629, was an English Minister, Academic and Lawyer. He became Dean of Exeter, and wrote extensively on religious matters as a controversialist. He served as Chaplain to King James I of England. Sutcliffe, an Anglican, adhered to a Reformed Protestant theology, and hoped to advance Reformation within the Anglican Church. He was the founder of Chelsea College, a center for the writing of theological literature which backed theologians engaged principally in religious studies against Arminianism and Roman Catholicism, which was closed at the request of Charles I. Sutcliffe wrote affectionately against Romanism in all its diabolical schemes.

⁶¹ William Jones, 1561–1636, Biblical commentator, born in 1561; taught at Cambridge for some years, and obtained a D.D. in 1597. In 1592 obtained the living of East Bergholt, Suffolk, where he ministered for forty-four years, and died, as

Commentary upon the Epistles of St. Paul to Philemon and the Hebrews, London, 1636, pg.121.} This Conjunction "if" is many times annexed unto the Marks and Cognizance of such as shall be saved, or are happy, which do show, *non propter quid sunt, vel converso, sed quales, beati sunt, quales*, {not because of what they are, or what they are not; but of what kind are blessed, what manner of persons.} Not upon what Conditions, but what manner of persons are finally saved. I see no reason but it may be so understood in this place; his Righteousness is imputed to us, if we believe; or, hereby we may know, and be assured that Christ's Righteousness is imputed to us, that we, whether Jews or Gentiles, are the persons to whom this Grace belongs; if God hath drawn our hearts to believe and obey the Gospel, in regard that none do or can believe, but such as are ordained to life and to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ. "When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." {Acts 13:48} "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." {Acts 2:47} The Lord works Faith in none, but in them, to whom he hath Imputed the Righteousness of his Son.

Seventhly, the other Scriptures he hath brought, conclude as weakly against us, as any of the former, as Acts 10:43; "through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins;" and Acts 26:18; "that they may receive forgiveness of sins – who are sanctified by Faith;" with Acts 13:39, "by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses." To which {says Mr. Woodbridge} might be added multitudes of other places. I confess that his Concordance would have furnished him with many such places, but no more to the purpose that these he hath cited; which though they affirm, that believers are justified, yet they deny not the Justification of the Elect before Believing. In the former

he says, 'spent with sickness, age, and labour,' on 12 Dec. 1636.

it is, "whosoever believeth, shall receive remission of sins;" it is not, by believing that we obtain remission of sins, or that God doth not remit men's sins unto them till they do believe. The giving of remission and the receiving of remission are two things; the former is God's Act, who is the only Justifier, the latter is ours; though it be called so in a passive and improper sense. We know that a prince pardons a Malefactor when he gives his consent, that the sentence of the Law should be reversed, and confirms it with his Hand and Seal. This Pardon is valid in Law, and secures the Offender from punishment, though it come not to his hands for a good while after. So a Father gives, and bequeaths an Estate to his child that is an infant; which be the donation of the Father, belongs to the Child, though the Child did not receive and enjoy it, till he comes to Age. So, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." {II Cor.5:19} Though no man doth receive and enjoy this Grace, till he doth believe; we obtain remission of our sins by Christ alone, but we receive it by Faith.

Eighthly, in Acts 13:39, the Apostle shows the excellency of the Gospel above the Law, or the privilege of the Saints in the New Testament, above them that lived under the Old Administration; "who {saith he} are justified from all things, &c." There was a cleansing and purgation of sin provided in the Law, but not like unto that which is revealed in the Gospel. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." {Zech.13:1} For {1} the Law did not cleanse them from all sins, for some sins it allowed no Sacrifice at all; as for Blasphemy, sins of Presumption, & etc. But now the Blood of that Sacrifice which is exhibited in the Gospel, cleanseth us from all sin. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." {I Jn.1:7} {Mk.8:38} {2} Those Sacrifices made them clean, but in an external and typical manner, as to the purifying of the flesh, {Heb.9:13,} they could not make them perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience. {Heb.10:14} Whereas the cleansing which is made by

the Blood of Christ is spiritual and internal, as it purgeth men's consciences from dead works. {Heb.9:14} They that are purged herewith, have no more conscience of sin, *de jure*, {by Law,} if not *de facto*, {in fact.} "The worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins." {Heb.10:2} They have the answer of a good conscience toward God; they can plead not guilty. {I Pet.3:21} {3} The legal cleansing was by Sacrifice after Sacrifice. {Heb.10:3} Whereas Christ by one Sacrifice once offered, hath taken away all the sins of his people; or as it is in Daniel, hath made an end of sin; so that here is nothing at all of the time of our Justification, though he affirms, that they that believe are thus perfectly justified; yet it follows not from this, or any other Text, that the Elect are not justified before they believe; and much less, that a man is justified by the gracious act or habit of Faith.

Ninthly, Mr. Woodbridge, {pg.2,} gives his Reader our sense of these Scriptures. "The only answer {saith he} which is given to these, and the like Texts, is this, that by Justification we are to understand a Justification in the court of Conscience, or the Evidence or Declaration of a Justification already passed before God; so that Faith is said to justify us, not because it doth justify us before God, but because it doth declare to our consciences that we are justified." Now because this Report is very imperfect, I shall crave the patience of the Reader, whilst I declare our Judgment a little more fully concerning this matter, together with the Grounds and Reasons that do uphold it; and then I shall return to secure this Answer against the Exceptions that Mr. Woodbridge hath made against it. But first, I shall show the several Explications which divines have given of his Proposition that "a man is justified by Faith."

Chapter VI

The Several Opinions of divines touching the meaning of this Position, that a Man is Justified by Faith.

The Question in contention between me and Mr. Woodbridge is not whether we are justified by Faith, which the Scripture frequently affirms, and no man that I know denies it; Papists and Protestants, Orthodox and Socinians, Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants do all unanimously consent, that we are justified by Faith. All the difference is about the sense and meaning of this Proposition that "a Man is justified by Faith." Whether Faith therein is to be taken properly or metaphorically? For though there be great variety in Expression amongst divines, concerning this matter, yet all their several Opinions and Explications may be reduced unto these two Heads. The first takes Faith in *sensu proprio*, {in its proper sense,} for the act or habit of Faith; the other takes Faith *metonymice*, {as a figure of speech,} and relative, for the Object of Faith; that is, the Obedience and Satisfaction of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, our Protestant divines {who have hitherto be counted Orthodox} do take Faith in this proposition {"a Man is Justified by Faith"} in a metaphorical and figurative Sense; as thus; a man is justified in the sight of God, from all sin and punishment by Faith; that is, by the Obedience and Righteousness of Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, and upon whom we rely for Life and Righteousness. Nor is this any unusual trope, either in Scripture, or in other Authors, to put, *habitum, vel actum pro objecto*, {habit, or act as an objective,} as in Rom.8:24, "hope that is seen, is not hope;" that is, the thing that is seen, is not hoped for. Christ is often times called our Hope, our Joy, our Love, &c., because he is the Object of these Acts and Affections; when the same thing is attributed distinctly both to the Act and the Object, it must needs be attributed to one in a proper, and to the other in an improper sense; and therefore, {says Dr. Downame,} "when Justification is attributed to Faith, it cannot be

attributed in the same sense, as to the death and obedience of Christ in propriety of speech; but of necessity it is to be understood by a metonymy; Faith being put for the object of faith, which is the Righteousness of Christ, &c." {George Downname, "Treatise of Justification," 1634; Book 6, Chap.15, Section 2 or pg.415} And holy Pemble, "if we list not to be contentious, it is plain enough {saith he} that in those places where the Apostle treats of Justification by Faith, he means the Grace of God in Jesus Christ, opposing Works and Faith; that is, the Law and the Gospel, the Righteousness of the Law to the Righteousness of the Gospel, which is no other but the Righteousness of Christ." "Thus {saith he} Faith is taken, {Gal.3:23,} before Faith came;" namely, before Christ came, and the clear exhibition of his Righteousness; and in this sense {as another hath observed} it is used at least thirteen times in this chapter, where the Apostle expressly treats of our Justification before God. {William Pemble, "A Treatise upon Justification by Faith," 1625} Albertus Pigbius⁶², though a Papist, was so far convinced of this Truth, by reading of Calvin's Institutions, that he acknowledged, "if we speak formally and properly, we are justified neither by Faith nor Charity, but by the only Righteousness of Christ communicated to us, and by the only mercy of God, forgiving our Sins."

Thirdly, some of our divines, who do utterly deny, that Faith in this Question is taken *sensu proprio*, {in its proper sense,} or that the act of believing is imputed to us for Righteousness, do yet ascribe an instrumentality or inferior causality unto Faith itself in our Justification before God. They say, that we are

⁶² Albertus Pighius, 1490–1542, Dutch humanist and Catholic theologian; though a faithful adherent of the Roman Catholic Church, he deviated from her doctrine on the point of Justification, in which he made many concessions to the Protestants; as he held to the concept that the imputed righteousness of Christ is the formal cause of the Justification of man before God, while the individual righteousness inherent in man is always imperfect and therefore insufficient.

justified by Faith instrumentally and relatively, which terms, I confess, sound harshly in my ears; but I hope I shall be excused, if I do not understand them, seeing a far more learned man than myself hath professed; {Henry Hammond, 1605-1660;} that "they were not very intelligible to him." That Faith is taken relatively in this Question of Justification; namely, for the Object it relates unto; Christ and his Righteousness, I do readily grant; but that it justifies us Relatively, I cannot assent to it; for it seems to me, to carry this sense with it, either, {1} that Faith doth produce our own Justification though not by its own worth and dignity; yet through the virtue and merit of its Object. As the Papists say of Works, that they do justify and save us being dipped in the Blood of Christ. Or, {2} that Faith, together with Christ its object, doth make us just in the sight of God; whereby it is made a joint cause with the Blood of Christ, which shall be sufficiently disproved soon. Again, that Faith is a passive Instrument of our Justification; namely, such an Instrument whereby we receive and apply this benefit to ourselves, was shown before; but that it is an active efficacious Instrument to make us just and righteous in the sight of God, is no part of my Creed. For; {1} it seems to me a contradiction to say, that Faith is not to be taken in its proper sense, but as a figure of speech for the object thereof, and yet say, that we are justified by Faith instrumentally; for it is not the Object, but the act of Faith which is an Instrument. Faith considered as an Instrument is taken in its proper sense and consequently the belief which they disclaim must be said to justify. 2. Even Mr. Baxter in my judgment disputes rationally against this Notion. "If Faith {saith he} be the Instrument of our Justification, it is the Instrument either of God or Man; not of man, for Justification is God's Act, he is the sole Justifier, {Rom.3:26,} man doth not justify himself; not of God, for it is not God that believeth." {Baxter, "Aphorisms of Justification," 1649, pg.219} To which I add, that God neither needs, nor is capable of using an instrument in the act of justifying; for though he uses Instruments to declare and reveal this Grace to sinners, yet not to will it

to particular persons; the acts of his will are not wrought by any Organ or Instrument, without himself. {3} By making Faith the Instrument of our Justification, Justification is made the Effect, and Faith the Cause; and so consequently, a man shall be said to justify himself; whereas the Scripture everywhere ascribes our Justification unto God and Christ, making us totally passive in this work. {Rom.3:24,26, Rom.8:33; Eph.2:8} We can no more justify ourselves, than raise ourselves from the dead, {Eph.2:1,5,} or then we could give ourselves a Being, when as yet we were not. {verse 10} Man is so far from being the total or principal Cause of his Justification, that he is no cause at all; and by ascribing the least causality or efficiency to man in his Justification we derogate from the Grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, others do take Faith in a proper sense, as the Papists, Socinians and Arminians; amongst whom, though there be some difference in Expression, yet they all agree in this, that by Faith in this Proposition {a Man is justified by Faith} is meant the Act or Habit of Faith, or such a Faith as is accompanied with faithful Actions. The Papists say that Faith and other inherent Graces, though in their own nature they do not deserve Justification, yet through the merits of Christ and God's gracious acceptance, they do procure and obtain forgiveness of our sins. Though they ascribe a meritoriousness to Faith, it is but in a qualified sense. "Faith {saith Bellarmine} doth but after a manner merit remission; by virtue of God's Promise and Covenant, who hath annexed forgiveness unto this condition." "If a King" {saith he} doth promise a Beggar a thousand pound a year upon no condition, then indeed the Beggar doth not deserve it; but if it be upon condition, that he do some small matter, as to come and fetch it, or bring him a posy of Flowers, then he doth deserve it, because the promiser is bound unto performance." And in this sense Mr. Baxter ascribes meritoriousness to Works. But the chief difference between them and us lies in this; we say that a man is justified by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness; they, that we are justified, by inherent

Righteousness, or by doing of Righteous Actions, such as are Faith, Love, Fear, &c. "Faith itself is our righteousness; {saith Bellarmine,} and that it doth justify us." Arminius⁶³ and the Remonstrants, though they have exploded the word 'merit,' yet they attribute as much to Faith and faithful Actions as the Papists themselves. "I affirm {saith Arminius} that the act of Faith itself is imputed for righteousness, and that in its proper sense, and not as a figure of speech." The very same is affirmed by Vorstius, Bertius, Episcopius, Simon Episcopius,⁶⁴ and the rest of the Remonstrants. Their Opinion in brief is this, that God in the Legal Covenant required the exact obedience of all his Commandments, but now in the Covenant of Grace he requires Faith, which in his gracious acceptation stands instead of that obedience to the Moral Law, which we ought to perform; "which, {say they,} is procured by the merit of Christ, for whose sake God accounts our imperfect Faith to be perfect Righteousness."

Fifthly, some of our late divines {who seem to disclaim the Doctrine of the Papists and Arminians} say the very same; who explain themselves to this effect, "that Faith doth justify as a condition or antecedent

⁶³ Jacobus Arminius, 1560-1609, the Latinized name of the Dutch theologian Jakob Hermanszoon from the Protestant Reformation period, served from 1603 as professor in theology at the University of Leiden. He wrote many books and treatises on theology, and his views became the basis of Arminianism and the Dutch Remonstrant movement. In attempting to defend Calvinistic predestination against the teachings of Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert, Arminius began to doubt aspects of Calvinism and modified some parts of his own view. He attempted to reform Calvinism, which lent his name to a movement – Arminianism – which resisted some of the Calvinist tenets, as unconditional election, limited or effectual atonement, and irresistible grace, &c. The early Dutch followers of his teaching became known as Remonstrants after they issued a document containing five points of disagreement with mainstream Calvinism in 1610.

⁶⁴ Conrad Vorstius, Petrus Bertius and brothers Rembert and Simon Episcopius, all close friends, students and supporters of Arminius.

qualification; by which we are made capable of being justified according to the order and constitution of God; the fulfilling of which condition {say they} is our Evangelical Righteousness, whereby we are justified in the sight of God. Mr. Baxter is so fond of this Notion, that although in one place {Epistle to the Reader, before his "Saints Rest," on page, 7, 1650,} he finds fault with the length of our Creeds and Confessions; yet he would have this made "an Article of our Creed, a part of our Children's Catechisms, and to be believed by every Man that is a Christian" {Baxter, "Aphorisms of Justification," 1649, pg. 109;} so apt are we to smile upon our own Babes. Though I honour Mr. Baxter for his excellent parts, yet I must suspend my assent to his new Creed. I shall prove hereafter that Faith is not said to justify, as an antecedent condition, which qualifies us for Justification; but at present, I shall only render him the Reasons for my disbelief; why I cannot look upon Faith as that Evangelical Righteousness, by which we are justified. I shall not insist upon it, though it be not altogether inconsiderable, that this Notion is guilty of too much confederacy which the afore-named Enemies of the Christian Faith; for though it is no good Argument to say, that Papists, Socinians, Arminians, &c., do hold this, or that; and therefore it is not true; yet it will follow, that such and such Tenants have been held by Papists, &c., and unanimously opposed by our Protestant Writers; therefore they ought to be the more suspected, and especially such Tenants of theirs, as are the chief points in difference between us and them, as this is. Our Brethren that have started this Notion, do take Faith as others do, in a proper sense; they attribute as much to the belief, as Bellarmine, Arminius, or any other. "Faith itself {says Mr. Baxter} is our Righteousness." There was never any Papist so absurd, as to say, that our Faith, Love, &c., are perfect Legal Righteousness, but that God *judicio misericordiae, non justitiae*, {judgment according to mere mercy, and not justice,} doth account and accept of it instead of perfect Righteousness. For my part I must confess, that I can see no difference between them, but in expression. The

Papists do acknowledge the Satisfaction of Christ, and that he is the meritorious cause of our Justification. {Council of Trent, Canons Concerning Justification, Session 6.} They say indeed, "that we are not justified by the Righteousness of Christ imputed, but by a righteousness inherent in us, or righteous actions performed by us." And what do these antagonists to grace say less than this? But I shall not follow the Parallel, any further.

Sixthly, the Reasons which turn the Scales of my Judgment against this Notion, that our Faith, or Faithful Actions, are that Evangelical Righteousness, by which we are justified, are; if we are not justified by our own works, then our believing, &c., is not that Evangelical Righteousness by which we are justified; but we are not justified by our own works; therefore, the Assumption is written with a Sun beam, throughout the Scripture. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." {Tit.3:5} "And if by Grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise Grace is no more Grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more Grace, otherwise work is no more work." {Rom.11:6} It is the chief scope of the Apostle throughout this, and the Epistle to the Galatians, to prove that we are not justified by Works. The sequel of the Proposition is as evident, because Faith and Obedience to Gospel Precepts are our Works. It is man that believes and obeys, and not God, though we do them by his help and assistance, yet they are our acts or works; so that consequently we are not justified by them in the sight of God. The Papists do elude the force of this Argument say, "that the mind of the Apostle was only to exclude from Justification, works of Nature, and not of Grace, without the help of Grace, and not those works which we do by the aid of Grace." But Mr. Pemble answers well, "this definition of Works done without Grace, and works done by Grace, was devised by one that had neither wit nor grace, being a mere trick to elude the force of such Scriptures, as do indefinitely exclude all works from our Justification, without distinguishing either of the time when they are done,

whether before or after; or in the aid and help whereby they are done; whether by Nature or by Grace.” {Pemble, “Treatise upon Justification,” 1625, pg.37} Others say, that when the Apostle denies that we are justified by works, “he means that we are not justified by the works of the Law; but yet by works required in the Gospel, such as are Faith and Faithful actions, by which we may be justified.” To which I answer, {1} that the Apostle speaks indefinitely; now the rule is that an indefinite Proposition is equivalent to a universal. A man is not justified by works, is as much as if he had said that a man is not justified by any works of his own. {2} The Apostle excludes all works from our Justification, which do make the reward to be a due debt. {Rom.4:4,5} Now the works required in the Gospel {supposing it to be a Conditional Covenant} when they are performed, do make the thing covenanted a due debt, which the promiser is bound to give, no less than works required in the Law. {3} The apostle denies expressly that Abraham was justified by faithful actions, which he performed by the help and assistance of God’s Spirit. {Rom.4:2} {4} They are the same works for the substance, which are commanded in the Law and the Gospel; for there is no Precept enjoined us in the New Testament, which is not also commanded us in the Moral Law; though the Law doth not expressly command us to believe in Christ, yet virtually and by consequence it doth; the Law requires us to believe whatsoever God shall reveal, or propose to us to be believed; and consequently to believe in Christ, when God in his Gospel shall reveal him to us. There is no reason therefore to interpret this proposition that a man is not justified by Works, to imply that he is not justified by Legal, but by Evangelical works, seeing they are for substance one and the same. {5} There would be no such opposition between Justification by Works and Justification by Faith, as the Apostle makes, if we were justified by Evangelical works of our own performing. All his disputing about Justification would amount but to mere logomachy, or strife of words; for there was never any man so sottish, as to think that a sinner can be

justified by Legal works, unless the Law be mitigated, and the rigor thereof be in part remitted. The Apostle doth not dispute against Justification by works which we cannot perform; but by works which men presume they are able to perform; and therefore excludes not only perfect works, but all manner of works that are wrought by us.

Seventhly, if the Righteousness whereby we are justified, be a perfect Righteousness, then we are not justified by our Obedience to Gospel Precepts; but the Righteousness by which we are justified is a perfect Righteousness; therefore, the sequel is evident, because our Obedience to Gospel Precepts is imperfect and defective, as least in degrees; for we do not believe, love, and obey so perfectly as we ought, the best of us may say with him in the Gospel, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." {Mk.9:24} And when we have done our utmost that we are but unprofitable Servants. {Lk.17:10} Now this imperfection and defect in our Faith, and other virtues being defective is sinful and culpable, for which cause our Saviour often times sharply reproveth it; {Mat.8:26; 14:31; 16:8, &c.;} and we are oftentimes exhorted to increase our Faith, to abound in duties of Obedience, and to perfect holiness. {Lk.17:5; I Thes.4:1; II Cor.7:1} In this last place the Apostle hints, that the imperfections of our holiness ariseth from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and consequently it is a defiled and sinful imperfection. The Assumption {that we are not justified by an imperfect Righteousness} needs not I suppose any long proof; for surely God will not count that for perfect justice, which is not so indeed; for as the Apostle says well, "the judgment of God is according to truth." {Rom.2:2} It is certain, that God will not justify any man without Righteousness; and it is as certain, that God will not account that to be perfect Righteousness, which is imperfect and sinful; to say, that God doth not account our imperfect holiness to be Righteousness, *judicio justitiae*, {judgment according to Justice,} but only *judicio misericordiae*, {judgment according to Mercy,} is a mere shift, which serves but to set the attributes of

God at variance between themselves, which in the Justification of a sinner do kiss and embrace each other. {Ps.85:10} When God judgeth according to mercy, he judgeth according to Truth; his merciful judgment is a just and a righteous judgment; the mercy of God is shown, not in accounting a sinner perfectly righteous, for that Righteousness which is imperfect; but in accounting to him that Righteousness, which is not his own, the perfect Righteousness of the Mediator in this judgment of God. Justice and Mercy do both meet; Justice, in that he will not justify a sinner without a perfect Righteousness; Mercy, in that he will accept him for such a Righteousness, which is neither in him, nor performed by him, but by his Surety the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of our Protestant divines do call inherent holiness, Evangelical Righteousness, in respect of the principle from whence it flows, a heart purified by Faith; and to distinguish it from that Legal Righteousness which Reprobates and Unbelievers have attained to, being but the fruit of a Natural Conscience. I am sure it is no Protestant Doctrine, that Inherent Sanctification {which on all hands is acknowledged to be imperfect and defective} is that Evangelical Righteousness, whereby we are justified in the sight of God; which must needs be such a Righteousness, as God himself sitting on the Throne of his Justice can find no fault with at all, but doth present the person that hath it, just and perfect before God's Tribunal.

Eighthly, if that Righteousness whereby we are justified be the Righteousness of God, then we are not justified by our Obedience to Gospel Precepts; but the Righteousness whereby we are justified is the Righteousness of God; therefore, the sequel is clear, because our Obedience to Gospel precepts is not that Righteousness which the Scripture calls the Righteousness of God. For though we receive it from God, it being the gift of his Grace, yet it is everywhere called ours; as our Faith, {Mat.9:2,22; Rom.1:8; Hab.2:4; Jam.1:3;} our Charity, {II Cor.8:8,24; I Cor.16:24;} our Hope, {Phil.1:20; I Thes.2:19;} our Good Works, {Mat.5:16; Rev.2:2,} our Patience,

{Lk.21:19; II Thes.1:4; Rev.2:2, 3:10, 13:10, &c.} Now the Scripture doth not call these Inherent Graces ours, to exclude the Divine assistance in the working of them, as if they proceeded only from ourselves, the strength of nature in us, or the towardliness of our own wills. The Jews who went about to establish their own Righteousness or Justification by their own works, did not deny that these works were a gift of God; the Pharisee expressly acknowledgeth as much, therefore gives thanks unto God for them. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." {Lk.18:11} But they are called ours, because they are subjectively in us, and instrumentally wrought by us; and in opposition to the Righteousness of Christ, which is neither in us nor performed by us; but is {as the Scripture rightly terms it} the Righteousness of God; not the Essential Righteousness of God, as Osiander⁶⁵ supposed; but the Righteousness of our Mediator, God-Man; which though it be inherent in the Human Nature, and performed by it, yet is it truly called the Righteousness of God, because it is the Righteousness of that Person, who is perfect God; and thus the blood by which we are redeemed is called the blood of God, {Acts 20:28;} or which is all one, the blood of the Son of God. {I Jn.1:7} The life which was laid down for us was the life of God. {I Jn.3:16} The death by which we are reconciled to God is the death of his Son. {Rom.5:10} The Obedience by which we are constituted just, {Rom.5:19,} is the Obedience of the same Son of God. {Gal.4:4,5} Christ's Mediatorial Righteousness is called the Righteousness of God to show the dignity and perfection of it, it being the Righteousness of so great a Person, who is not only Man, but God; and that we should not think it to be anything in us from God, it is sometimes called his

⁶⁵ Andreas Osiander, 1498-1552; a German Lutheran theologian; who believed that Justification for a believer resulted by the indwelling of Christ, which was contrary to Luther's assertion that Justification was imputed by God's free Grace; thus, according to Osiander, God finds one righteous because Christ is in that person; which was directly opposed to the Scriptural view of Justification at the cross.

blood, {Rom.5:9,} sometimes his obedience, {vs.19;} by the Imputation whereof we are made the Righteousness of God in him, as he by the Imputation of our sins, was made sin for us. {II Cor.5:21} And thus the godly learned, yea and some of the Popish Doctors have expounded the Righteousness of God, {mentioned in the 1st, 3rd, and 10th chapters to the Romans,} of Christ and his Righteousness, which says Cajetan⁶⁶; is called the Righteousness of God, "because it is personally in God, as also, because at God's tribunal it is accounted Righteousness, and to distinguish it from our Righteousness, which in the sight of God, is as filthy Rags." {See George Downname, "Treatise of Justification," 1634; pg.130} There is nothing more clear than that our Obedience to Evangelical Precepts is not that Righteousness of God the Scripture mentions; which is not inherent in us, but imputed to us, being without us in Christ, God-man. The assertion that the Righteousness whereby we are justified is the Righteousness of God is undeniably proved from Rom.1:17, 3:21 & 10:3; in which last place, the Apostle shows that there is such an opposition betwixt God's Righteousness and ours, in the point of Justification, that whosoever seeks to be justified by his own Righteousness, cannot be justified by the Righteousness of God; and therefore he himself professeth, that in the Question of Justification he utterly renounceth his own righteousness, desiring to be found in Christ's Righteousness alone. {Phil.3:9} This Righteousness of Christ which is out of us in Him, and is properly called Evangelical Righteousness, because it is the matter or substance of the whole Gospel. The Gospel doth reveal it and not the Law. {Rom.1:17} If the act of believing were that Evangelical Righteousness by which we are

⁶⁶ Thomas Cajetan, otherwise known as Cardinal Tommaso de Vio Cajetan, 1469-1534; a Popish theologian & cardinal, from 1517 until his death; a leading theologian of his day who is now best known as the spokesman for Catholic opposition to the teachings of Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation, as he was the Papal Ambassador during the Diet of Augsburg, in October 1518.

justified, this Scripture would be guilty of gross tautology, "the Righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith;" for then the meaning must be, our Evangelical Righteousness is revealed from Evangelical Righteousness to Evangelical Righteousness, which is absurd.

Ninthly, if we are not justified by two Righteousnesses, existing in two distinct subjects, then our Obedience to Gospel Precepts is not that Righteousness whereby we are justified. But we are not justified by two Righteousnesses existing in two distinct subjects; therefore the Sequel is manifest; in regard to the Righteousness of Christ, it is inherent in him; and the obedience to Gospel precepts is a Righteousness inherent in us. The Scripture sundry times declares, that we are justified by Christ and his Righteousness. {Rom.3:24, 5:9,19} Now if we were likewise justified by our Obedience to Gospel Precepts, it would follow, that we are justified by two Righteousnesses existing in two distinct Subjects. But this is gain-said in the Assumption, which will be secured by this proof; for if by Christ's Righteousness alone, we are made perfectly just and righteous in the sight of God, then there is no other Righteousness which concurs with his righteousness to our Justification; for what needs an addition to that which is perfect? But by Christ's Righteousness alone, we are made perfectly just and righteous in the sight of God; as these and many other Scriptures do witness. {Heb.1:3; 10:14, Col.1:22, 2:10,13} Again, if we are justified partly by Christ's Righteousness and partly by our own, our Faith for Justification must rely partly upon Christ, and partly upon ourselves. Paul might have desired to be found in his own Righteousness; but our Faith and Trust for Justification may not in any part rely upon ourselves. {Jer.17:5; Phil.3:3; Gal.5:2-4} The Adversaries of Grace {as we showed before} acknowledge, that it is the safest course to trust and rely upon Christ alone, and to fetch the comfort of our Justification from his perfect Obedience only.

Tenth, that which overthrows the main difference between the Law and the Gospel ought not to be

admitted; for the confounding of them will open an inlet to innumerable Errors; nay, by this means the Gospel itself will become a mere Cipher. The Apostle, we see, was exceedingly careful to keep these Doctrines distinct each from other; and therefore throughout all his Writings, he still opposeth the Law and Grace, Works and Faith, our Righteousness and Christ's Righteousness, instructing us thereby, how needful it is they should be kept asunder. But the making our Obedience to Gospel Precepts, the Righteousness whereby we are justified, overthrows the main difference between the Law and the Gospel. For herein {as Bishop Downname well observes: "Treatise of Justification," 1634; Book 1, Chap.4, Section 7,} standeth the chief Agreement and Difference between the Law and the Gospel; they agree in this, that unto Justification both do require the perfect fulfilling of the Law; but herein they differ, that the Law requireth to Justification a Righteousness inherent in us, and perfect Obedience to be performed in our own persons; whereas, the Gospel reveals for our Justification the perfect Righteousness of another, even of Christ, which is accepted in their behalf that do believe in him, as if it had been performed in their own persons. Now if Faith and new Obedience be that Evangelical Righteousness whereby we are justified, then doth the Gospel also propound for our Justification a Righteousness inherent in us, and performed by us; and so consequently there remains no material difference between the Law and the Gospel, especially seeing the same Duties are prescribed in both. If any shall say, that the Gospel Precepts do not require such exact and perfect Obedience, as those in the Law, their Assertion will want a Proof; nay, these and such like Scripture do prove it to be utterly false. {Mat.5:48; I Pet.1:15,16} A defect in degrees is sin against the Gospel as well as against Legal Precepts. To these I might add all those Arguments which our divines have used against Justification by Inherent Righteousness; but this may suffice to show that Faith and Obedience to other Gospel Precepts, is not that

Righteousness whereby we are justified in the sight of God.

Eleventh, now briefly my sense of this proposition {that we are justified by Faith} is no other than that which hath been given by all our Ancient Protestant divines, who take Faith herein Objectively, not Properly and explain themselves to this effect: "We are justified from all sin and death, by the Satisfaction and Obedience of Jesus Christ; who is the sole Object or Foundation of our Faith, or whose Righteousness we receive and apply unto ourselves by Faith." Yet I say, it doth not follow, that it was not applied to us by God; or that God did not impute Righteousness to us before we had Faith. We that believe are justified by the Righteousness of Christ; it is no good Consequence therefore, we were not justified in the sight of God before we did believe; but now that we may "speak the Truth in Love," I shall give the Reader a clearer account of my Judgment concerning this matter, in the following Chapter.

Chapter VII

Wherein the Question about the time of our Justification is distinctly stated, and these two Propositions: A man is justified before Faith; and a man is justified by Faith are reconciled.

That we may avoid mistakes, I shall briefly declare, {1} what we do understand by Justification; {2} what by being justified in the sight of God; and {3} when we are justified in the sight of God. As touching the first of these, it would be but a needless expense of time to enter upon a large Discourse concerning the signification of the word, and the difference between Justification and Sanctification. We all know that Justification in general is the making of one just and righteous. Now there are two

ways whereby a person is made or constituted righteous; which is, either by Infusion or by Imputation.

1. By Infusion, when the Habitual Qualities of Righteousness are wrought in a person by any means whatsoever; and these Habits are put forth in a universal and perfect Conformity to the rule of Righteousness; and thus no man was ever justified since the Fall; for as the Apostle speaks, "there is none righteous, no not one;" {Rom.3:10,} no man, whether regenerate or unregenerate, is righteous with Inherent Righteousness, neither his Internal Habits or External Actions are exactly commensurate to the rule of Righteousness; the Church acknowledgeth, that her Righteousness {that is, her best, most complete and exact righteousness} is as filthy Rags, {Isa 64:6;} and the Apostle accounted his own Righteousness but loss and dung, in reference to his Justification. {Phil.3:8,9}

2. By Imputation or gracious Acceptation; as when God doth not account or charge a man's sins upon him, but accepts him as just and righteous, deals with him as a righteous person, or as if he had never sinned. This latter is that Justification which we are now treating of. God justifies a man, when he accounts and esteems him righteous.

Secondly, the next thing propounded was, what is meant by the sight of God? This phrase is variously used. {1} Sometimes it relates to the thoughts or knowledge of God. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." {Heb.4:13} All things are naked and manifested in his sight; therefore God hath a clear and distinct knowledge of all things whatsoever; and thus a Man is justified in the sight of God, when God knows and esteems him to be just and righteous. {2} The sight of God relates more peculiarly to his Legal Justice; for although in the doctrine of Divine Providence, seeing and knowing are all one, as in Job 28:24, "for he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;" that is, the Lord knows and takes notice of all things both in Heaven and earth; yet in the doctrine of Justification,

they are constantly distinguished throughout the Scripture, and never promiscuously used one for the other. God is never said to cover, blot out, or wash away the sins of his people out of his knowledge, but out of his sight. {Lev.16:30, Psal.32:2, Rom.4:7, Psal.51:9} God sees their sins, for whom his Law is not satisfied; {Neh.4:5, Jer.18:2;} in regard that his truth and justice doth oblige him to take notice of, and punish them for their sins. Again, the Lord sees not their sins, for whom he hath received a full compensation; because it is contrary to justice to enter into judgment against a person, who either by himself, or surety, hath made satisfaction for his offence; and in this respect God is said, not to see the sins of his people, which yet he knows to be in them; which doth not detract from his Omniscience, but exceedingly magnifies his Justice, and that perfect atonement which Christ hath made in their behalf; so that all that are clothed with the Innocency, Righteousness and Satisfaction of Christ are justified in the sight of God. Divine Justice cannot charge them with any of their sins, nor inflict upon them the least of those punishments which their sins deserve; but contrariwise he beholds them, as persons perfectly righteous, and accordingly deals with them, as such, who have no sin at all in his sight. {3} A late divine⁶⁷ of singular worth hath another construction of this phrase, {in the sight of God,} who observes that the word {sight} though it be for the Form active, yet for the Substance of it, it is rather passive; and therefore it is not attributable to God as it is to us, but in God it signifies his making of us to see; and we are said to be justified in his sight, when he makes it as it were, evident to our sight, that we are justified. But with due respect to that Learned man {whom I highly honor for his worthy Labors} I conceive this phrase must have some other meaning in this Debate; for else, that distinction of Justification in God's sight, and in the forum of our conscience, {which hath

⁶⁷ George Kendall, "Vindication of the Doctrine concerning God's Intentions of Special Grace and Favor to his Elect from the Attempts of Master John Goodwin," 1653, pg.138.

been made use of by all our Protestant divines, and whereof there is great need in this present Controversy} would be but a mere Tautology; for though it be the same Justification, wherewith we are justified in the sight of God, and in the Court of Conscience; yet the terms are not equivalent and convertible, but do admit of distinct considerations; though he that is justified in the Court of Conscience, is also justified in the sight of God; yet every one that is justified in God's sight, is not necessarily justified in his own conscience.

Thirdly, now according to these several Senses which are given of this fore-mentioned phrase, it will be easy to resolve the third Query, concerning the time of our Justification; or in other words, when we are justified in the sight of God? {1} If we take in this last Construction, {Justification perceived in the conscience,} I shall grant, that we are not justified in the sight of God before we believe; we do not know, nor can we plead the Benefits and Comforts of this Blessed Privilege until we do believe; for it is by Faith that the Righteousness of God is revealed to us; and it is by his knowledge {perceptive information} that Christ doth justify us; {Rom.1:17; Isa.53:11; I Pet.3:21;} or enables us to plead not guilty to all the Indictments and Menaces of the Law. But, {2} if we refer it to the justice of God {which I conceive to be the most proper and genuine use of it} we were justified in the sight of God when Christ exhibited and God accepted the full Satisfaction of his Blood for all our sins, that Ransom of his set them, for whom he died, free from the curse of the Law, cleansed them from all their sins, and presented them holy, blameless and unreprieveable in the sight of God; {Gal.3:13; I Jn.1:7; Col.1:22; Eph.5:27;} so that the eye of Divine Justice cannot behold in them the least spot of sin. This perfect cleansing is the sole and immediate effect of the death of Christ, in regard that no other cause concurs therewith, in producing of it. {3} If we refer it to the knowledge of God, we were justified in his sight, when he willed or determined in himself, not to impute to us our sins, or to inflict those punishments upon us which

our sins deserve; but contrariwise to deal with us as righteous persons, having given us the Righteousness of his own Son. God doth certainly know whatsoever he wills. Now God having from all eternity, absolutely and immutably willed the Righteousness of his Son to all his Elect; he saw, or knew them to be righteous in his Righteousness, even when he willed it.

Fourthly, for the clearer understanding of this Point in question, I shall give in my Judgment concerning it, as distinctly as I can, in three Propositions. The first shall be this, that Justification taken variously in the Scripture, but more especially, *pro volitione divina* {the will of God,} and *pro re volita* {effect of God's will.} {1} For the will of God, not to punish or impute sin unto his people; and, {2} for the effect of God's will; namely, his not punishing or setting of them free from the Curse of the Law. That Justification is put for the effect of God's will, or the thing willed by that Internal Act; namely, our discharge from the Law and deliverance from punishment, I suppose there is none who will question; the only Scruple that can arise is, whether the will of God not to punish or charge sin upon a person, is, or may be called Justification? I confess to the end that I might not offend the weak, I have been sparing of calling this Immanent act of God by the name of Justification; and the rather, because of some gross mistakes have sought for shelter under the wings of this Expression. As, {1} that absurd conceit, that Christ came not to satisfy the Justice, but only to manifest the Love of God; which yet hath not the least countenance from our Doctrine, seeing that notwithstanding the will of God, not to punish his Elect, we say, that the Law must needs be satisfied for their sins, no less than for the sins of others. And, {2} their notion, who upon this ground have asserted the eternal being of the Creature, whereunto they were driven, because they could not answer the consequence of a Justification which holds no limitations, whether as considered in reference to God's will, as election; or in regards to Justification by Christ's blood at the cross. I look upon Dr. Twisse, and his Judgment in this point as

most accurate, who places the very essence and quiddity of Justification in the will of God not to punish sin. "What is it that the remission of sins, and our acceptation, signify, if not inward and immanent acts in God; acts of which kind do not arise in God anew?" "Justification and absolution, as they signify an immanent act of the divine will, are from eternity; but the external notification of the same will and manner of a judicial and forensic absolution, which is made by the Word and Spirit, at the tribunal of every one's conscience, is that Imputation of Christ's righteousness, remission of sins, Justification and absolution, which follow Faith. For hereupon absolution is pronounced, as it were by the mouth of a judge, and so that internal purpose of absolving, which was from eternity, is made manifest." {Twise, "Vindiciae Gratiae," 1632.} Though Mr. Kendal makes Justification to be a declared Sentence or transient Act of God, yet he grants, that "God's will or Decree to remit our sins, carries in it a remission of them tantamount; for who shall charge them on us, if God decree to remit them?" And again, "this Decree hath so much in it that looks so well, like unto Justification, that it may be called so without Blasphemy." {Kendall, "Vindication of Special Grace, &c.," 1653, pgs.134 & 145} But I see no inconvenience at all, but rather very much reason to adhere unto the Doctor's definition that Justification is the will of God not to punish. {1} Because the definition which the Holy Ghost gives us of Justification, is most properly applied to this Act of God. It is a certain rule, *definitum est, cui convenit definitio*; {the definite one is that to whom it belongs in its definition} that is Justification whereunto the definition of Justification doth agree. The definition which the Psalmist, and from him the Apostle gives of Justification, is that of God's non-imputing of sin, and his imputing of righteousness unto a person. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." {Ps.32:1,2} "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth

righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." {Rom.4:6-8} Now when God willet not to punish a person; he doth not impute sin to him. The original words, both in the Old and New Testament, whereby Imputation is signified, do make it more clear; for both of them do signify an act of the mind, or will; *chashab* {which is used by the Psalmist} is properly to think, repute, esteem, or account; and *logizomai* {which is used by the Apostle} hath the same signification; as it is usually applied to Accountants, who when they have cast up many sums, do set down at the foot, what they do amount unto; so when a Man hath accounted with himself the loss and benefit, conveniences and inconveniencies that may accrue unto him, the result and issue of his deliberation, is significantly expressed by this word, it noting a steadfast purpose and resolution; which is opposed unto a doubtful and uncertain opinion. It notes either the purpose or determination of one alone, or the consent and agreement of two between themselves, whereof Camerarius⁶⁸ gives us an instance out of Zenophon, {Comments on Romans 4:4,} where this word {*logizomai*} is fitly used to signify this immanent act of God; for though he doth not purpose and resolve, in that manner as men do, by comparing things together; or by reasoning and concluding one thing out of another, yet are his purposes much more firm and immutable. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." {Mal.3:6; also Jam.1:17, Num.23:19} The Lord therefore did non-impute sin to his people, when he purposed in himself, not to deal with them according to their sins, when the Father and the Son agreed upon that Sure and Everlasting Covenant that his elect should not bear the punishment

⁶⁸ Joachim Camerarius, 1500-1574, a German scholar; who studied at Leipzig, Erfurt and Wittenberg, where he became intimate with Philipp Melanchthon, whom he helped in drawing up the Augsburg Confession of Faith.

which their sins would deserve. The Remonstrants do acknowledge that non-Imputation or remission of sin is an immanent act in God, which God in his own mind effects. We are commanded to forgive one another, as God hath forgiven us; now we know that our forgiveness is principally an act of the heart, as when a man purposes in himself not to take revenge he doth then forgive. But of this we shall have occasion to speak more largely in our answer to Mr. Woodbridge's first argument.

2. That which doth secure men from wrath, and whereby they are discharged and acquitted from their sins, is Justification; but by this immanent act of God, all the elect are discharged and acquitted from their sins, and secured from wrath and destruction; therefore, the assumption only will need to be proved, which is abundantly confirmed, {1} by those places which make mention of God's unspeakable Grace and love towards them, from everlasting; for what is the love of God, but his fixed and immutable will, to bestow upon them the greatest good that they are capable of. Now when God set his love upon them, he said unto them, "live." "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." {Ezek.16:6} This will of God did secure them from death and destruction; it was a real discharge from condemnation, But {2} more plainly from the words of the Apostle, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." {Rom.8:33} The proposition is either a universal negative, in that no elect person can be justly charged with sin; or an universal affirmative, in that all elect persons are free from the charge of sin. Which way soever we take, it is evident, that the proposition is universal. Now if this privilege did belong only to elect believers {as some – see Burgess, "Justification," 1651, pg.186 – would limit the text} the proposition were false; for though all true believers are elect persons, yet all the elect are not believers. It is as if one should say, *omne animal is rationale*, {every animal is rational,} and to excuse it,

say, that by every animal, he meant *omnis homo* {every man;} and to prove the expression legitimate, should allege that *homo* is often called animal, which is true, but very impertinent to prove, that *omne animal* {every animal} may be put for *omnis homo* {every man.}

Fifthly, all that I have yet seen alleged against this member of the distinction, that God's will not to punish, is not Justification, is of little moment.

Objection#1. It is objected that hereby Justification and Election are confounded.

I answer, that it follows not they may be both of them immanent, eternal acts, and yet not confounded; for Election and Reprobation are Eternal and Immanent Acts in God, yet they are not confounded. Indeed, all different immanent Acts, are but one simple Act in God, in whose Decree there is no Priority or Posteriority; {as Hilary speaks} *omnia penes Deum aequabili aeternitatis infinitate consistent* {the infinity consisting of eternity with God - all things are uniform} yet in our consideration they receive sufficient distinction from their various Objects, and our various Application of them; and thus Election and Justification are distinguished. Election includes both the end, which is the glory of God's Grace, and all the means from the beginning to the end, conducing thereunto. His will not to punish, includes precisely, and formally, only some part of the means.

Objection#2. That Justification imports a change of the persons state; namely, *ab injusto ad justum*, {from unjust to just,} which cannot be attributed to the simple and unchangeable Decree of God.

I answer, that if Justification be taken for the thing willed; namely, the delivery of a sinner from the curse of the Law, then there is a great change made thereby; for he that was a child of wrath by nature, hath peace and reconciliation with God. But if we take it for the will of God, not to punish, and then we say that Justification doth not suppose any such change; as if God had first a will to punish his elect, but afterwards he altered his will to a will not to punish them. The change therefore of a person's state *ab injusto ad justum* {from

injustice to justice} ariseth from the Law, and the consideration of man in reference thereunto; by whose sentence the transgressor is unjust; but being considered at the Tribunal of Grace, and clothed with the Righteousness of Christ, he is just and righteous; which is not properly a different state before God, but a different consideration of one and the same person. God may be said at the same time to look upon a person, both as sinful and as righteous; as sinful in reference to his state by Nature, and as righteous in reference to his state by Grace. Now this change being but imputed, not inherent, it supposeth not the being of the creature, much less any inherent difference in the state of the creature; no more than electing love makes any inherent present change. Though the state of the loved and hated are different in the mind of God, yet not in the persons themselves, till the different effects of love and hatred are put forth.

Objection#3. Others have objected that hereby we make void the death of Christ; for if Justification be an immanent act in God, it is Antecedent, not only to Faith, but to the merits of Christ; which is contrary to many Scriptures, that do ascribe our Justification unto his blood, as the meritorious cause.

To which I answer, that although God's will not to punish be Antecedent to the death of Christ; yet for all that, we may be said to be justified in Him, because the whole effect of that will, is by, and for the sake of Christ. As electing Love precede the consideration of Christ, {Jn.3:16,} yet are we said to be chosen in Him, {Eph.1:4,} because all the effects of that love, are given by, and through, and for Him. God's non-punishing of us is the fruit of his death, yet his will, not to punish, is Antecedent thereunto.

Objection#4. Others say that we may as well call his will to create, creation; and his will to call, calling; and to glorify, glorification; as his will to justify, Justification.

We answer that there is not the same reason for creating, calling and glorifying; all which do import an inherent change in the person created, called, glorified;

which forgiveness doth not, it being perfect and complete in the mind of God.

Sixthly, these things being weighed in the balances of an equal judgment, I suppose the phrase would not sound so harsh as it doth to many; however were the thing itself granted, that there was in God from Everlasting, an absolute fixed and immutable will, never to deal with his people according to their sins, but to deal with them as righteous persons; this controversy were ended. For {1} God's non-Imputation of sin to his elect, is not purely negative; as the non-Imputation of sin unto a stone, or other creatures, which are not capable of sinning; but privative, being the non-Imputation of sin and the Imputation of Righteousness. The difference between these is as great, as between a man's will not to require that debt that shall or is about to be contracted, and his will not to require anything of one that never did nor will owe him anything. {2} This non-Imputation of sin is actual, though the sin not to be imputed be not in actual being; in like manner, the Imputation of Righteousness is actual, though the righteousness to be imputed is not actual. Man whose thoughts arise *de novo* {anew,} doth non-impute, usually after the commission of a fault; but for God {who is without any shadow of change and turning} so to do, is absolutely impossible; for as much as there cannot arise any new will, or new thought in the heart of God. {See Kendall's Vindication, pg.134} {3} This act of justifying is complete in itself, for God by his eternal and unchangeable will, not imputing sin to his elect, none can impute it; and he in like manner imputing righteousness, none can hinder it. Neither doth this render the death of Christ useless, which is necessary by the ordinance of God, as a meritorious cause of all the effects of this Justification; even as the eternal love of God is complete in itself, but yet is Christ the meritorious cause of all the effects of it. {Eph.1:3,4}

Seventhly, and therefore we say, that if Justification be taken {as most commonly it is} not for the will of God, but for the thing willed by this Immanent Act of his; namely, our discharge from the Law and

deliverance from punishment; so it hath for its adequate cause and principle, the Death and Satisfaction of Jesus Christ. Though there be no cause of the former out of God himself; for the merits of Christ do not move God to will not to punish or impute sin unto us; yet is Christ the meritorious cause of the latter. It is from the virtue of his Sacrifice that the obligation of the Law is made void, and the punishments therein threatened, do not fall upon us. By his death he obtained in behalf of all the elect, not a remote, possible, or conditional reconciliation, but an Actual, Absolute, and Immediate Reconciliation, as shall be proved shortly. And in this respect, all that were given unto Christ by the Father may be said to be justified at his death, not only virtually, but formally; for the discharge of a debt is formally the discharge of the debtor. Their discharge from the Law was not to be at the end of the term, but present and immediate, it being impossible that a debt should be discharged, and due at the same time. We acknowledge, that the effects of this discharge from the Law, may be said to be from that full Satisfaction and perfect Righteousness which Christ hath performed, as there ariseth these two things; one is, the non-execution of the punishment of sin {which we continually commit} upon us; that whereas the reprobate sin, and upon their sin the curse, with all the evils included in it, is upon them. The elect likewise sinning, yet for Christ's sake the curse, or evil of suffering, is not inflicted upon them; which non-punishing in effect is forgiving, and not imputing sin; and in this sense, God is frequently said to forgive, when he doth not inflict punishment; and in this sense also, he is said often to forgive. The other is, the Imputation of Righteousness in the effects of it, whereby the effects of a true and perfect righteousness come upon the people of God; that is, all good things both for this life and that which is to come; yea, those things which seem to be evil and hurtful {as their falls and afflictions} are ordered by the over-ruling hand of a wise and powerful Providence, to work together for good unto them. These effects are immediate in respect of causality, though not of time; for though God doth not

presently bestow them, but as he sees fit, both for his own glory and for their good; yet do they immediately flow from the merit of Christ, in regard there is no other meritorious cause that intervenes and concurs therewith in procuring of them. Notwithstanding, we say, that our discharge from the Law, must needs be immediate and present, with the price or satisfaction that was paid for it, in regard, that it implies a contradiction, a debt should be paid and discharged, and yet justly chargeable. But of this we shall have occasion to speak more hereafter.

Eighthly, Justification is taken for the declared sentence of Absolution and Forgiveness; and thus God is said to justify men, when he reveals and makes known to them his Grace and Kindness within himself. And in this sense do most of our divines take Justification, defining it as the declared sense of Absolution; and not improperly. For in Scripture phrase, {as we noted before,} things are then said to be, when they are declared and manifested; the declaring of things is expressed in such wise, as if it made them to be; whereof many instances might be given. A very plain one there is in Genesis, {41:13,} where Pharaoh's chief Butler, speaking of Joseph's interpretation, "me {says he} he restored, and him, {the baker,} he hanged;" whereas he did but declare these successes unto them. So God is said to justify his people, when he manifests and reveals to them that mercy and forgiveness, which before was hidden in his own heart; namely, that he doth not impute their sins, but contrariwise, doth impute righteousness unto them.

Now the Lord at sundry times and diverse ways hath, and doth declare, and manifest this precious Grace unto his people; more generally, {1} towards all his elect; and {2} more particularly, to individuals, or numerical persons; the former is done {1} in the Word of God; and {2} in his works and actions.

Ninthly, God hath declared his immutable will not to impute sin to his people in his Word. The gospel, or New Covenant {being an absolute promise, as we shall show soon,} may be fitly termed a Declarative Sentence

of Absolution unto all the elect, to whom alone it doth belong; the publication of the New Covenant is their Justification. For which cause Maccovius makes Justification to commence from the first promise, which was pronounced before the curse; so that if Adam had not been a public person, including both the elect and reprobate, there had been no curse at all pronounced, save only upon the serpent, or Satan; in reference to this promise it was, that the Apostle saith, "the Grace of God," {II Tim.1:9,} and "eternal life," {Tit.1:2,} was given to us "before the world began" which doth not signify eternity, {as our translators carry it,} but the beginning of time; it is of the same latitude with "from the beginning," {II Thes.2:13,} as some learned men have observed; that the phrase is most properly rendered *ante tempora secularia*, i.e. *ante multa secula*, {ahead of time, i.e. many centuries ago;} namely, in that famous promise of the woman's seed. {Gen.3:15} Now what was that Grace and Life; which was given us in the beginning of times, but the Grace of Free Justification, whereby we are made to stand just and righteous in the sight of God? This Grace was revealed more clearly and distinctly in after ages, as it shined brighter and brighter, till the day spring on high did visit us. {Lk.1:78} Whose coming made it perfect day, in comparison whereof, former times were obscure darkness. {Jn.3:19; Eph.3:5; II Cor.3:18, &c.} And therefore Grace and Life are peculiarly ascribed to the times of the New Testament, or the clear exhibition of the New Covenant at the coming of Jesus Christ. "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." {II Tim.1:10} And the Gospel is said to cleanse and sanctify men; that is, to justify them, or to purge them from an evil conscience. {Jn.15:3; 17:17}

Tenth, God hath declared his gracious sentence of the non-Imputation of sin, and the Imputation of Righteousness unto his people in his works and actions, both towards Christ, and towards themselves. In his actions or dealing with Jesus Christ, two ways. {1} In

charging or transacting all their sins and iniquities upon him, {Isa.53:6; II Cor.5:21; I Pet.3:24,} the Lord thereby declared his will and purpose, not to charge sin upon them, for whom Christ interposed himself a Surety. His imputing our sins to Christ, was formerly the non-imputing of them to us; God's accounting of them unto him, was a discounting of them unto us; for they could not be accounted, or charged upon both, without a manifest contradiction in the thing itself, and in the Justice of God; as it is that a debt should be wholly accounted to, and discharged by the Surety, and yet the same debt afterward be justly accounted to and charged upon him that first contracted it. I confess a debt may be charged both upon the Principal and Surety, before it be discharged, though afterwards to neither. But the case was not so between Christ and us; for God did not take his elect and Christ jointly to make satisfaction; or him upon our failing; or us upon his; but transacted the whole debt upon him alone. Now I say the Lord laying our iniquities in such a manner upon Christ, singly, absolutely and irrevocably, he plainly declared thereby, that it was his will never to lay them to our charge.

{2} In that public discharge or Acquittance, which he gave unto Christ at his Resurrection; the Lord by raising him from the dead, and {as it were} setting him free out of prison, openly declared that He had received full satisfaction for all those sins which Christ as a Surety had taken upon him; namely, for all the sins of all the Elect. And for this reason {as an eminent divine observes,} {Reynolds on Psalm 110, 1642, pg.524} the Lord sent an Angel to remove the stone from the mouth of the Sepulcher, not to supply any want of power in Christ, who could himself have rolled it away with one of his fingers; but as a Judge, when the Law is satisfied, sendeth an Officer to set open the prison unto him, who hath made that satisfaction; so the Father to testify that his Justice was fully satisfied, with the price which his Son had paid, sent an Officer of Heaven to open the prison doors, and to set him free. Christ's Resurrection was a solemn judicial act, whereby God the Supreme Judge justified both him and us. {1} Him, from all those

sins which he had undertaken, whereunto our divines {see Goodwin⁶⁹, "Christ Set Forth," 1642, chapter 3, section 4,} do apply these following Scriptures. {Is.50:8,9; I Tim.3:16; Acts 13:35; Heb.9:21} {2} Us from our own sins. The Resurrection of Christ was an actual Justification of all them for whom he became a Surety; for he was not justified from any sins of his own, being in himself just and innocent, but from those sins which were charged upon him in his death, which {saith the Prophet} were the iniquities of us all. {Isa.53:6} If a debt be discharged, it cannot without manifest injustice be charged again; the discharge of the Surety is the discharge of the principal. God by acquitting Christ from the guilt of our sins did also fully acquit us from the same. {2} Christ in his Death and Resurrection was a common person; as in his death he was condemned for our sins, so in his resurrection he was justified from our sins. All the elect were justified in his Justification; there is the same reason for their Justification in Christ, as there is for the condemnation of mankind in Adam. Therefore {says the Apostle,} "as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so {or in like manner} by the righteousness of one {Man Christ} the free gift came upon all men, {that is, All in Christ,} unto Justification of Life." {Rom.5:18}

Eleventh, besides the General Declaration of Forgiveness unto all the elect, this gracious sentence is also declared to particular persons.

{1} Externally, in *foro Ecclesiae*, {in the Church or Assembly,} by the ordinance of baptism, the Minister of Christ standing in his stead, {II Cor.5:20,} by dipping or pouring water upon a person, doth in his Name, or by his Authority, declare and publish the washing away his sins by the blood of Christ. The principal thing which baptism holds forth is our Justification; it being ordained

⁶⁹ Thomas Goodwin, 1600-1680, Independent Minister of the Gospel, tutored by Richard Sibbes, chosen a member of the Westminster Assembly in 1643, chaplain to Oliver Cromwell; from 1660 until his death, he lived in London, and devoted himself exclusively to theological study and to the pastoral charge of the Fetter Lane Independent Church.

for the remission of sins, {Lk.3:3 & Acts 2:38,} not to obtain or procure this benefit, *ex opere operato*, {by the work done,} but to declare and obsignate {seal or ratify} unto men their interest therein. In Romans 6:3-5, we are said to be buried with Christ in baptism; and to be implanted thereby into the similitude of his Death and Resurrection. The meaning is that our communion in the benefits of both is hereby ratified and confirmed to us. Upon this ground, I conceive it was, that in the old liturgy, persons baptized are said to be regenerated, or born again; that is, Translated into a new state; namely, from the old Adam, into the new Adam; from the power of darkness to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, {Col.1:13,} which baptism doth not effect, but declare and seal; it having no other cause, but the Grace of God, and the merits of Christ. {Tit.3:5; I Pet.3:21; I Jn.1:7} The late Assembly in their Directory, say as much; "that it {baptism} is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ. That it is a seal of the Covenant of Grace, of our engrafting into Christ, and of our union with him, of remission of sins, regeneration, adoption, and life eternal." {Westminster Directory of Public Worship, 1645} It is strange to me, that they who say baptism is a seal of our Justification, and hold that infants {who have not Faith} ought to be baptized, should deny, that Justification precedes Faith. Now though this Declarative Sentence be but ministerial, and merely of Church Order, {like the power of loosing, Jn.20:23, applied to hypocrites} to the greatest part of them that are baptized, whether they be infants or adults; yet to all the elect {to whom the effects of the Covenant and Seals do only and really belong} it is real and absolute. It is no other than the Sentence of God himself, declaring his non-Imputation of sin unto them, and their deliverance from death by Jesus Christ.

Twelfth, as considered internally, *in foro conscientiae*, {in the court of conscience} at their effectual Vocation, when the Lord by the Preaching of the Gospel doth powerfully persuade their hearts to believe in Christ; for the Elect themselves, before Faith, have no knowledge or comfort, either of God's gracious volitions towards them, or of Christ's undertakings and

purchases in their behalf; in which respect, they are said to be without Christ, and without God in the world. {Eph.2:12; Gal.4:1} They are compared to an heir under age, who differs nothing from a Servant, though he be the lord of all. By Faith we come to see that everlasting Love, wherewith we were loved; and that plenteous Redemption which Christ hath wrought for us; for which cause, Faith is called the evidence of things not seen, {Heb.11:1;} and God is said thereby to reveal his Righteousness from Heaven to us, {Rom.1:17;} and to reveal his Son in us. {Gal.1:16} "Now in this sense men are said to be justified by the act of Faith, in regard Faith is the Medium or Instrument, whereby the Sentence of Forgiveness is terminated in their Consciences; which is daily made more plain, and legible, by the operation of the Spirit, sealing, and witnessing unto them their peace and reconciliation with God." {William Ames, Marrow of Theology, Book 1, chapter 27, section 9} Whereas unbelievers look on God as their Enemy, and consequently all their life time are held in bondage through the fear of wrath. A true believer hath peace, liberty, and boldness towards God; he looks upon all the Promises as his own Inheritance; interprets the Providences of God {even those which reason would construe in another sense} to be fruits of love, and not of wrath. {Eph.1:13, 4:30; Rom.8:16, 5:5}

Thirteenth, now because this Declarative Sentence by Faith is like the name written in the white stone, "which no man knoweth, saving he that hath it," {Rev.2:17,} many whom the Lord doth justify, are accounted by the world to be but hypocrites; others again are justified of men, who are not justified in the sight of God; {Lk.16:15;} the Lord therefore hath another way of justifying his people; that is *in foro Mundi*, {in the Forum of the world,} when he shall publicly, and in the hearing of the whole world, pronounce that gracious sentence, "Come ye blessed of my Father, &c." {Matt.25:34} Whereunto some have referred those words of the Apostle, {Acts 3:19,} "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins

may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." But whoso pleaseth to consult with Erasmus,⁷⁰ Beza,⁷¹ and Ludovicus de Dieu⁷² upon the place, shall find there is a great mistake in our English translators, and that no such thing was intended there by the Holy Ghost. I grant, that the sins of the elect may be said to be then blotted out, not that the remission of their sins shall be put off, or is not complete, till the last day, and till they have performed all the conditions required of them; but because this gracious sentence shall be then publicly declared, and shall bring forth its Eternal Effect of Life and Glory; and in this sense, I conceive those Scriptures may be understood, which speak of our Justification, as a future thing. {Rom.3:30; 2:13, &c.}

Thirteenth, now though we have ascribed Justification unto several times or periods, yet do we not make many Justifications. Declared Justification, {whether it be in the Church, the conscience, or the world,} is not another from that in the mind of God, but the same variously revealed; as an Acquittance in the

⁷⁰ Desiderius Erasmus, 1466-1536, known as Erasmus of Rotterdam, Bible Translator, Catholic Priest and Theologian. Erasmus lived against the backdrop of the growing European religious Reformation; but while he was critical of the abuses within the Church, he remained committed to reforming the Church from within, and so kept his distance from Luther and Melanchthon, whilst continuing to recognize the authority of the pope. Erasmus embarked on a project to produce and publish the first Greek New Testament in the West in over a 1000 years and the first to be marketed. It was printed in 1516. A 2nd Edition of Erasmus Greek and Latin Text was published in 1519 correcting numerous typographical errors. Martin Luther used Erasmus's 2nd edition to translate a German New Testament in 1522. A 3rd Edition Erasmus' Text was published in 1522. William Tyndale utilized Erasmus's 3rd edition in translating the first English New Testament from the original language.

⁷¹ Theodore Beza, 1519-1605, French Protestant Theologian; Disciple of John Calvin, and his successor at Geneva, Switzerland.

⁷² Ludovicus de Dieu, 1590-1642, Dutch Protestant minister.

heart of the Creditor, and on Paper; a Pardon in the heart of a Prince, and enrolled; is one and the same; this manifested, and the other secret; and though there are never so many copies written forth in several hands, they do not make many acquittances, or many pardons, being but the transcripts of one Original. So though God doth at sundry times, and in divers manners declare his well-pleasedness towards his people; yet is their Justification but one and the same, which is perfect and complete at once, being his fixed and immutable will, not to deal with them according to their sins, but as just and righteous persons. By that which hath been said, it doth appear in what sense we assert, the Justification of God's elect, before they believe. Now what little weight there is in those objections, which are commonly brought against this assertion, will be more manifest when we have examined Mr. Woodbridge's treatise; whose first quarrel against us, is for that, {as he conceives} we give too little unto Faith. But as it is no disparagement to the Blood of Christ, that it doth not move and incline God to love us, or to will not to punish us; so it is no disparagement to Faith, to say, that it doth not concur with the blood of Christ in obtaining our Justification; but that by apprehending the Gospel it reveals and evidenceth to us that Justification which we have in Christ, the proof whereof, is the task of the next chapter; wherein I doubt not, but I shall be able, through the help of God, to put by all those wretched consequences, which Mr. Woodbridge hath endeavored to father upon this position, that Faith serves to evidence to us our Justification.

Chapter VIII

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's Exceptions against our saying that Faith or the act of believing, doth justify no otherwise, than as it reveals, and evidenceth our Justification, are answered.

The first charge which he brings against this gloss {as he calls it,} is that "it is guilty of a contradiction to the Holy Ghost." "It is well known {says he} that the Apostle in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, sets himself on purpose to assert the doctrine of Justification by Faith, in opposition to works. The question between him and the Jews was not, whether we are declared to be justified by Faith or works; but, whether we are justified by Faith or works in the sight of God, or before God." And he concludes, "that it is by Faith and not by works, &c." Though all this be granted, yet it proves no contradiction to the Holy Ghost in our assertion; as we acknowledge that the question between the Apostle and the Jews, was not about the declaring of our Justification, nor about the time when we are Justified; no, nor about the condition, upon which we are Justified; but concerning the matter of our Justification, or the Righteousness whereby we are justified, or by which we are accounted righteous. Now the result of his dispute is, that we are justified by Faith and not by works; but then the question will be, how Faith is to be taken, whether *sensu proprio*, {in the strict & proper sense,} or *metonymico*, {metaphorically;} whether we are to understand it of the Act, or of the Object of Faith? We have showed before, that the Apostle in his disputes about Justification in these fore-mentioned Epistles, where he opposeth Faith to Works, takes Faith in a metaphorical sense for the Object, and not the Act of Faith; for else, there had been no ground for him to make any opposition at all between Faith and works; and in affirming, that we are justified by Faith, he had contradicted himself in saying, that we are not justified

by works, seeing Faith or the act of believing is a work of ours no less than love. And therefore it is evident, that the Apostle when he concludes, that we are justified by Faith and not by works, understands by Faith the Object thereof; namely, Righteousness Imputed and not Inherent; which by way of distinction and opposition to the other, he calls the Righteousness of God, because it is out of us, in Christ, God-man. The reason why the Apostle calls the Object by the name of the act, Christ's righteousness by the name of Faith {besides the elegancy of the trope} is, because Faith ascribes all unto Christ, it being an act of self-dereliction, a kind of holy despair, a denying and renouncing of all fitness, and worthiness in ourselves; a going unto Christ, looking towards him, and a rolling of ourselves upon his All Sufficiency; so that in the Apostolic sense, we deny not, that Faith justifieth in the sight of God; Faith {I say} taken objectively; namely, for Christ and his Righteousness; it is for his Merits and Satisfaction alone, that we are accounted Just and Righteous at God's Tribunal. But if Faith be taken properly for the Act of Believing, we say indeed, that it only evidenceth that Justification which we have in Christ; nor is this any contradiction to the Holy Ghost, who ascribes our Justification in the sight of God to Christ alone.

Secondly, next he calls it, "a most unsound assertion, that Faith doth evidence our Justification before Faith." Is the Apostle's definition of Faith, Heb.11:1, "faith is the evidence of things not seen;" an unsound assertion? Though some do ascribe more to Faith than an act of evidencing, yet I never met with anyone before, that did totally deny this use thereof. All the knowledge that we have of our Justification, is only by Faith, seeing it cannot be discerned by sense or reason; either we have no evidence of our Justification, and consequently do live without hope; or, if we have, it is Faith that doth evidence it to our souls. Now let our Justification be when it will, if Faith doth evidence it, it will follow, that our Justification was before that evidencing act of Faith; for *actus pendet ab objecto*, {an

act depends on the object,} the Object is before the act. But I will not anticipate Mr. Woodbridge's reasons.

Thirdly, "if {says he} Faith doth evidence our Justification; it is either improperly, as an effect doth argue the cause, as laughing and crying may be said to evidence reason in a child, &c., or else properly, and thus, either immediately and axiomatically, or remotely and syllogistically."

{1} "Faith doth not evidence Justification improperly, as the effect doth argue the cause." I shall readily grant him, that Faith doth not justify evidentially, as a mark, sign, or token; but as a knowledge, and adherence unto Christ our Justifier; as that organ or instrument whereby we look not upon our Faith, but upon Christ our Righteousness; and by the same Faith do cleave unto him. {Is.53:11; Jn.17:3; Phil.3:10} They that make Faith a condition of our Justification, use it but as a sign, or as an argument affected to prove, that a person is justified; seeing, that where one is, the other is also; where there is Faith, there is Justification; and for this cause innumerable other signs and marks are brought in to evidence this sign; which are more obscure and difficult to be known than Faith itself; nay, which cannot be known to be effects of blessedness, but by Faith; whereby poor souls either walk in darkness, live in a doubting and uncertain condition all their days, or else compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, and walk in the light of their own fire; {Is.50:11,12,} fetching their comfort from Faith, and not by Faith from Christ. Though I might fairly pass by this branch of his dilemma, it being none of my tenant, and favored more by his own than my opinion; yet I shall briefly give my sense of his reasons, that Faith doth not evidence Justification as a sign.

Fourthly, his first reason is because then "Justification by Faith, would not necessarily be so much as Justification in our consciences; a Christian may have Faith, and yet not have the evidence that he himself is justified; many Christians have that in them, which would prove them justified, whiles yet their consciences do accuse and condemn them." To which I answer, {1,}

that Mr. Woodbridge may be pleased to consider, how well this agrees with that passage of his, {pg.15,} where he allegeth the words of the Apostle to prove, "that if our hearts do condemn us, God doth much more condemn us." {I Jn.3:20} {2} I should grant him, that if Faith did evidence our Justification only as a sign, or some remote effect thereof, like other works of Sanctification, it would be but a dark and unsatisfying evidence. {3} Whereas he says, that doubting Christians have something in them that would prove them justified; either it is something that precedes Faith, or something that follows Faith, or else Faith itself. First, nothing that precedes Faith, doth prove a man justified; secondly, nothing that follows Faith, is so apt to prove it, as Faith itself, because it is the first of all inherent graces; it is by Faith, that we know our love, patience, &c., to be fruits unto God; whereas some make doubting to be a sign of Faith, they may as well make darkness a sign of light, it being in its own nature contrary thereunto, and therefore it must be proved by Faith itself. {4} Though a true Christian may have a doubting, accusing conscience {as doubtless there is flesh and corruption in their consciences, as well as in their other faculties; and there is no sin whereunto we have more and stronger temptations than to unbelief;} yet wheresoever there is Faith, there is some evidence of this Grace, as in the least spark of fire there is light, though not so much as in a flame; and the least twinkling star gives us some light, though not enough to dispel the darkness, or to make it day. There are several degrees of Faith; there is a strong Faith and a weak Faith. Now the least degree of Faith carries some light and evidence therewith; and according to the measure of Faith, it is the evidence and persuasion of our Justification.

Fifthly, he urges, "if Faith did evidence Justification, as an effect of it, then we might as truly be said to be 'faithed' by our Justification, as to be justified by our Faith." I see no absurdity at all to say, that Faith is from Justification causally, and Justification by Faith evidentially; that Grace which justifies us, is the cause

and fountain of all good things whatsoever, both of spiritual and temporal blessings, and more especially of Faith. {II Pet.1:1; Phil.1:29} Yet doth it not follow, that we must invert the order of the Gospel, and instead of saying, 'Believe, and thou shalt be justified;' we must say hence forward, 'thou art justified, therefore believe.' {1} Because it is not the privilege of all men to whom we preach, but only of the elect of God; and {2} because we know not who are justified, no more than who are elected; for though Faith be an effect or sign of Election, yet it doth not follow, that we must say to any, 'thou art elected, therefore believe.' {3} When the cause is not *notior effectu*, {better known for its effect,} we must ascend from the effect to the cause, as in the present case.

Sixthly, he loads it with this seeming absurdity, "that then it will unavoidably follow, that we are justified by works as well as by Faith; for works are an effect of Justification, as well as Faith." {1} It follows unavoidably from his own opinion; for if Faith be taken in a proper sense for the act of believing, it follows, that we are justified by a work of our own; or, if Faith be the condition of Justification, it will follow likewise, that we are no more justified by Faith than by other works, as repentance, charity, &c., which Mr. Woodbridge and others of his strain, {Dr. Hammond, Mr. Baxter, &c.} do make the conditions of their supposed Justification; so that he is like to father the child, which he hath sought to lay at our doors. {2} It is not denied, that works do declare and evidence our Justification; for where the Apostle denies our Justification to be by works, he speaks of our real and formal Justification in the sight of God, which he affirms is by Faith, objectively taken, and not of the declaring or evidencing of our Justification, which James in his Epistle attributes to works, in reference to men; and other Scriptures to Faith in reference to the conscience of the person justified. {Rom.1:17; Gal.2:16} {3} Though works be the effect of Justification as well as Faith, yet it will not follow, that works do evidence our Justification as well as Faith doth, because every effect is not apt to evidence it's cause;

especially when the same effect may proceed from several causes; as smoke is not so certain an evidence of fire, as light and heat is; because steams and mists are so like to smoke; so works do not evidence our Justification so clearly and certainly as Faith doth, because works may proceed from principles of natural ingenuity and morality, &c., as those which even heathens have performed; and because every effect doth not evidence to every faculty alike, but this to one, and that to another; as for instance physiognomy doth evidence a man to sense, but yet reason requires another manner of evidence; so conscience requires a better evidence of our Justification than works can give. Works do evidence it in the judgment of charity, and before men; but they do not evidence it in the judgment of infallibility, or with that clearness and demonstrative certainty, which the conscience requires; as conscience will need a better evidence than works can give. Paul could plead his works before men, {II Cor.1:12,} which yet he never mentions in the pleas of his conscience towards God, and that which conscience dares not plead before God, can be no good evidence unto conscience.

Seventhly, the other horn of his dilemma will be sunk as easily as the former. "Faith {saith he} doth not evidence Justification properly; for then it must do it either immediately and axiomatically, as it is an assent to this proposition, that I am justified, or else remotely and syllogistically, by drawing a particular conclusion of our own Justification out of general propositions. But Faith doth not evidence our Justification axiomatically, &c., for there is no such thing written, the Scripture doth nowhere say, thou Paul, thou Peter, or thou Thomas are justified; therefore, Justification cannot be evidenced by Faith immediately."

Mr. Woodbridge here mistakes the nature of true justifying Faith, who {it seems} conceives it to be a bare intellectual Assent to the truth of a proposition; {such as devils and reprobates may attain unto} contrary to all Orthodox divines, who do place Faith more in the will than in the understanding. {See, Downame, "Treatise of Justification," 1634; Book 6, Chap.5, Section 3 or

pg.357} Faith essentially includes an assent of the understanding to the truth of the Scriptures, revealing the sole-sufficiency of Christ for the Reconciliation of sinners, and the non-Imputation of sin; as also the will and command of God, that all men should believe in Him alone for life and salvation; and a fiducial adherence and reliance of the will upon the same Christ, the understanding being made effectually to assent and subscribe to the fore-mentioned propositions, the will also powerfully drawn to accept, embrace, and adhere unto Christ. Our divines do include both these acts in the definition of Faith, making it to be such an assent unto the truths of the Gospel, as that withal, the soul tastes an ineffable sweetness in the same; and thereupon rests and relies upon Christ for all the Benefits of his Death. They make the principal Act of Faith to be the reliance of the heart and will upon Jesus Christ, and therefore they determine, that the object of justifying Faith is not a proposition or axiom, but Christ, and the mercy of God in Christ, on whom whosoever rests and rolls himself upon the call of the Gospel, hath a certain evidence of his interest in Christ, and in all the treasures of Righteousness and Remission that are in him; according to the degree of his affiance, or his taste of sweetness in Christ, is his evidence or assurance of his own interest and propriety in him. There is no sense that doth apprehend it's object with more certainty than that of tasting; as he that tastes honey, knows both the sweetness thereof, and that he himself enjoys it; so he that tastes the sweetness of the Gospel Promises, and of that precious Grace which is therein revealed, knows his interest and propriety therein. It is observed of Jonathan that when he tasted a little honey, his eyes were enlightened; and the Psalmist exhorts us to taste and see how good the Lord is. {I Sam.14:27; Ps.34:8} The soul that tastes; that is, believes the Gospel, and the goodness of God therein revealed to sinners, sees and knows his interest therein; for all manner of sweetness is a consequent and effect of some propriety, which we have in that good that causeth it, unto which the nearer our interest is, the greater is the sweetness which we

find in it. The soul cannot taste any real sweetness in Christ and the Gospel, but must need have some evidence of his interest, propriety, and title to him. Now because {as Dr. Ames observes,} by this act of Faith, wherewith we rest and rely upon Christ, proposed to us in the Gospel, we do immediately attain to the assurance of this Truth {that my sins in particular are pardoned by Jesus Christ,} therefore some have seemed to speak as if this proposition, {I am justified, my sins are forgiven me,} were the proper object of justifying Faith. I shall not stand to defend this expression, though the Doctor doth highly approve of it; nor will I quarrel with Mr. Woodbridge about his expression, though I conceive his term axiomatical, and is somewhat too narrow; for Faith may be said to evidence our Justification immediately, though it doth it not axiomatically, but organically; namely, as it is the organ or instrument whereby we do apprehend and adhere unto Christ, by whom we are justified in the sight of God. The latter term is more adequate to the nature of Faith, which is not only the assent of the mind, but the adhesion of the will to the Object believed. But I shall yield him his term, and do say, that Faith may be said to evidence our Justification axiomatically, yet not by assenting to that which is not revealed; but by assenting to, and withal tasting and relishing those indefinite and general propositions, invitations, and promises that are held forth to us in the Gospel, which by a secret and inscrutable work of the Holy Spirit, are applied and made particular to the soul of a true believer, for otherwise he could never taste any sweetness in them. {See Thomas Shepherd⁷³, "Sound Believer; or, A Treatise of Evangelical Conversion," 1653, pg.222} {Also see, Thomas Jackson⁷⁴, "Justifying Faith; or the

⁷³ Thomas Shepard, 1605-1649, American Puritan Minister. Shepherd's Sermons drew the wrath of Church of England Archbishop William Laud, and he was forbidden to preach. Left for America in 1635; and became a significant figure in early colonial New England.

⁷⁴ Thomas Jackson, 1579-1640, Theologian, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. His views were at first

Faith by which the Just do Live," 1615. Section 1, Chapter 9} So that Mr. Woodbridge's exclamation against a carnal, presumptuous, and soul-damning Faith, is altogether impertinent, seeing we do not say, that a man is justified by his assent to written, and therefore much less to unwritten verities. If Justifying Faith were no more than an axiomatical assent, {as Mr. Woodbridge seems to intimate it is,} I see no reason why all they that have such a Faith, as devils and reprobates, who believe with an historical assent, should not be justified; this is really, the carnal, presumptuous, damning faith of the world.

Eighthly, his second reason against Faith's evidencing our Justification axiomatically, is nothing to the purpose. "The Faith {saith he} by which we are justified, is the Faith which the Apostles and ministers of the Gospel are to preach to the whole world, and to press it upon their consciences. Acts 20:21; 13:38,39. But we cannot press upon every man in the world to believe that he is justified, &c." Seeing we do not press every man to believe that he is justified, though {according to our commission given us from Christ} we do press all men to believe: {1} *Assensa intellectus*, {intellectual assent,} to acknowledge that there is a sufficiency of merit in Christ for the Justification of sinners; that they themselves are such, and that it is impossible for them to escape the curse by any other means. {2} *Amplexu, vel motu voluntatis*, {voluntary embrace of the will,} to consent, embrace and cleave unto Jesus Christ, being infinitely better for them than

decidedly puritanical, but they changed under the influence of Neile and Laud, and he ultimately incurred the wrath of the Presbyterians, and especially of Prynne, who attacked him in 'Anti-Arminianism' and 'Canterburie's Doome.' At Laud's trial Dr. Featley described Jackson as 'a known Arminian,' and Dr. Seth Ward similarly characterized his religious position. 'An Historical Narration' by Jackson, apparently of extreme Arminian tendency, was licensed by Laud's chaplain while Laud was bishop of London, but was afterwards called in and suppressed, by order, according to Prynne, of Archbishop Abbot.

all the world besides. By this it will appear, what little reason Mr. Woodbridge hath to charge us with pressing men to believe a lie, seeing we require no man's assent to anything which is not true. We do not press every man to believe that he is justified, but to believe, that there is a Sufficiency in Christ for his Justification, and to rely upon him, and him alone, for this benefit.

Ninthly, so that there will be "no need for Mr. Eyre to retract his sermons as falsehoods, which he hath formerly preached against universal redemption;" for though the command of believing is to be pressed upon all men, {in that manner as hath been shown,} yet it will not follow, that Christ died for all men. It seems Mr. Woodbridge is offended at those sermons of mine, since he hath had a smack of Mr. Baxter's notions, that Christ died conditionally for all men; yea, for the reprobates themselves; which though it be countenanced with the names of Cameron, Testardus, and Amyraldus, and of some others, who are of great note amongst our own; yet {may I have leave to speak my mind} I conceive it to be very unsound; for {1} to say that Christ died for any upon an impossible condition, is to say, that he died in vain, at least so far, or in respect of them, which the Apostle looks upon as a gross absurdity. {Gal.2:21} {2} For those whom Christ died, he without doubt purchased Faith and all necessary good things. This the Apostle accounts unquestionable. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" {Rom.8:32} What is Mr. Woodbridge's judgment in this point, I cannot tell, nor doth it much matter that I should enquire. I need not inform him what advantage they that are for universal redemption in the grossest sense, do make of his doctrine of a conditional Justification, impetrated by the death of Christ. It is the only false refuge that they have to shelter their heads withal; when they are pressed, that if Christ died for all, then all shall be saved, because it must needs be, that Christ must have the purchases of his death. {Jn.10:16; Isa.53:11} "No {say they} it will not follow, because some do not perform the condition required on their

parts." "These two propositions, Christ redeemed all men, and yet the impenitent, unbelieving, and reprobate world, shall never be saved by him, may be easily reconciled; because the benefits of Christ's death are given upon condition, not absolutely; and therefore they that do not perform the condition, shall never be saved by his death." It would be easy to show that this salvability or conditional salvation is the very corner stone in the Remonstrants {Arminian} building.

Tenth, this passage puts me in mind of two absurdities, which Mr. John Woodbridge⁷⁵, my antagonists brother {who a while after came and preached over his brothers arguments, with some small additions} charged upon our doctrine. The first was, "that it doth necessarily infer universal redemption." Will it follow that because the elect are justified in God's sight before they believe; therefore all men are redeemed and justified? One may as well reason that some men were elected before they believed, and therefore all men were elected. Perhaps he will say that we cannot press or exhort every man to believe that he is justified unless all men are justified? There is no more necessity, that we should press every man to believe that he is justified, than that he is elected; for this is pitifully inconsequent. The second was, "that it raises the foundation of all actions, tending to the gathering and reforming of Churches; for why should any be excluded from Church ordinances, if they are justified?" {1} I must tell him, that I cannot think him an hearty friend to the gathering and reforming of Churches, who deserted a congregation in New England, whereof he

⁷⁵ John Woodbridge VI, 1613–1696, an English nonconformist, who emigrated to New England. Son of John Woodbridge V, 1582–1637, and Sarah Parker. John was sixth in a line of men by the same name - all ministers - the first of whom, John Woodbridge I, was a follower of John Wycliffe, the 14th-century translator of the Bible. He studied at the University of Oxford, but, objecting to the oath of conformity left the university, and immigrated to America in 1634.

was pastor,⁷⁶ to become a parish parson in the Old Country; and not only so, but hath stood to maintain that parishes are true Churches. {In a sermon at an irregular ordination in Sarum, where ministers are ordained, not fixed to any Church; and some an hundred miles distant from the place of their ministry.} It is like Barford in Old England is {if not a purer Church} yet a better parsonage than Andover in the New. We are not much beholding to New England for such Reformers. {2} If we may judge of a man's principles by his practice, we should then believe, that he himself holds universal Justification, at least within the bounds of his own parish; for, as I am informed, he makes no distinction at all in this behalf. I am ashamed to hear men to talk of Reformation, who tread Antipodes to it; especially, when they have liberty to follow the dictates of their consciences. But {3} I had thought that he had known that Election and Justification are not the rule of admitting persons into Church Communion, but their sound profession and suitable conversation. A reprobate or unjustified person may lawfully be admitted into, and an elect person may as lawfully be excluded out of a Church. I dare not say that the excommunicated person at Corinth, and others under that censure, were not justified. The evidence we have of men's Justification, is but the judgment of rational charity, and not of infallibility. But enough of this; I shall return again to his Brother Benjamin, who I suppose will not own such irrational consequences.

Eleventh, the other part of his contradiction is "that Faith cannot evidence Justification syllogistically; that is, by the discourse of conscience after this, or the like manner, he that believeth is justified, but I believe; therefore, I am justified." "Now {says Mr. Woodbridge magisterially enough} I affirm, that it is impossible for a man by Faith to evidence syllogistically that he is justified before Faith." Though I honor him highly, I

⁷⁶ John Woodbridge was ordained at Andover, Massachusetts in 1645 and was chosen teacher of a congregation at Newbury; in 1647 he returned to England.

cannot rest satisfied with his deduction, but what reason doth he bring for his confident affirmation? "Because there cannot be found a medium before Faith itself." Answer; nor is it needful there should. {1} It is sufficient, that Faith itself is the medium; as thus, he that believeth was justified before Faith; but I do believe, therefore, &c. The major is proved, because his sins were laid on Christ, and thereby non-imputed to him. {2} To imagine any other medium before Faith is frivolous; for that were to require, that Faith should evidence before Faith had a being. {3} Why may not Faith be a medium to evidence our Justification before Faith, as well as our Election before Faith; seeing the same word which affirms, that all believers were elected before the foundations of the world, affirms also, that the elect without exception are discharged and acquitted of their sins. {Rom.8:33} Shall we reason thus, our Election cannot be evidenced before Faith; therefore, we were not elected before Faith? Mr. Woodbridge's arguing makes as much against evidencing Election before Faith, as against the evidencing of our Justification before Faith; {because there is no sort of persons, of whom ELECTION can be affirmed universally, but only such as do believe; seeing all the world is distributed into believers, and unbelievers; but ELECTION cannot be affirmed of unbelievers universally.} It proves indeed, that neither Election, nor Justification are evident to us, before we believe; it doth not prove, that by Faith we cannot evidence syllogistically, that we were both elected and justified before we did believe. As for that mad syllogism {as he calls it} which follows; "all believers are justified, but I am an unbeliever, therefore &c." It is the offspring of his own brain, hatched on purpose to make the matter ridiculous. But we must excuse the luxuriousness of his wit, seeing *nullum est magnum ingenium fine mixtura insaniae* {there is no great genius at the end of a mixture of self-infatuation.} His other syllogism which he hath framed to evidence Justification by Election, as thus, "all the elect are justified, but I am elected; therefore &c.," was framed in the same mold. A mere man of clouts, which he himself

created, to show his valor in beating of him. We do not teach men to evidence Justification by election, but both Election and Justification by their Faith, proceeding from the effect to the cause, as we needs must, when the effect is more evident than the cause. Though I like not the argument, yet by his leave, the major is so far from being utterly false, that it is justified by the express testimony of the Apostle. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." {Rom.8:33} But this is besides the purpose. That miserable circle into which he pretends the poor, restless, doubting soul is conjured by our doctrine is but a vertigo, and whimsy in his own pericrany. We do neither bid men evidence their Justification by their Election, nor their Election by their Justification; but both Election and Justification, by a steadfast adherence and reliance upon Jesus Christ; and from thence, to reason out our particular interest in these blessed privileges, as we do the being of causes, by the proper effects which flow from them.

Twelfth, his next argument, against Faith's evidencing Justification syllogistically, if it be put into the scale of an impartial judgment, will appear as light as the former. It runs thus, "if we are said to be justified by Faith, because Faith doth evidence Justification syllogistically, then we may be said to be justified by sense and reason, as well as by Faith, which is absurd." This consequence indeed is very absurd; for the conclusion is of Faith, and so adjudged by the schools, if the major be of Faith; else this conclusion {I shall rise again from the dead,} were not of Faith, because it is inferred partly by sense and reason, as thus, all men shall rise again, I am a man; therefore, I shall rise again. Here the major only is of Faith, the minor is of sense; and yet the conclusion is an act of Faith, and not of sense. So in this syllogism, he that believes is justified; but I do believe; therefore, I am justified. Though the assumption be an act of sense or spiritual experience, yet the conclusion is an act of Faith, because the major is of Faith; for though in both these deductions, sense and reason are made use of, yet they

are but subservient instruments, and not the authors of the conclusion.

Thirteenth, Mr. Woodbridge hath added a third argument, to prove, that Justification by Faith is not merely a Justification in our consciences, which I question not, will prove as unsuccessful as the rest. But by the way, I cannot choose but take notice, that his spirit of contradiction is somewhat allayed; for hitherto he hath contended, that Justification by Faith is not in any sense a Justification in conscience; but now he tells us, it is not merely a Justification in conscience; and if this will satisfy him, it is like we shall agree; for, before we have shown, that when Faith is objectively taken, Justification by Faith is Justification by Christ, and in the sight of God, and not only in the conscience. And therefore his suggestion in the minor proposition, "that we interpret the phrase of Justification by Faith, merely of Justification in conscience," is false and groundless. But let us weigh the force of his argument a little more distinctly; the sum of it then is this, "Justification by Faith is not Justification in our consciences; for then we should be concurrent causes with God, in the formal act of our Justification; the formal act of pronouncing us just, must be attributed unto us, which the Scripture attributes unto God alone, making us but passive therein." {Rom.8:33 & Rom.4:6,8} To which I answer, that the pronouncing of us just, is not the formal act of Justification, but the Imputing of Righteousness, and the non-imputing of Sin, which is the act of God alone; whereas the pronouncing of us just and righteous, is in Scripture attributed to others besides God, and yet no robbery is done to God. As for instance, the minister of Christ pronounceth the word of Grace and Forgiveness, and therefore is said to remit and forgive sin, "whoso sins ye remit, they are remitted." {Jn.20:23} Is he therefore joined with God in the formal act of Justification? Yet all Protestants grant him the office of pronouncing remission, though they deny him the power of giving real remission, which would make him arrogate that which is peculiar unto God; So, though we say, that Faith doth declare and reveal to our consciences the

sentence of absolution, yet we do not thereby derogate from God, or attribute that to Faith which belongs to God. We grant, that as to our Justification in the sight of God, {which is properly Justification} we are merely passive; we contribute nothing at all either physically or morally, by way of merit or motive, that God should account us righteous, and not impute to us our sins. This work was done without us, and for us, by Christ with his Father; it hath no other cause but the Grace of God, and the Merit of Christ. {See Arthur Hildersham⁷⁷, "Lectures upon Psalm Fifty One, 1632," Lecture 128} He and he alone purged and washed us from our sins in his own blood. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." {Rev.1:5 & Heb.1:3} Now in regard of our passiveness in this act of our Justification, we say, that Faith hath no hand at all in procuring, obtaining and instating us in this Grace; for if we did anything though never so little, in order to this end, we were not passive but active; yet we say, that as this gracious sentence of our Justification is revealed and terminated in our own consciences, so Faith hath an instrumental efficacy; we are therein agents with God, {II Cor.6:1,} and the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits. {Rom.8:16} And therefore though we are nowhere exhorted to justify or to make ourselves righteous in the sight of God, yet we are oftentimes bid to grow in Faith, and to press forward to more assurance in believing our peace and reconciliation with God. {II Pet.1:5, 3:18}

Fourteenth, this concession of Mr. Woodbridge {that a man is wholly passive in his Justification,} gave occasion to the first argument I offered to his consideration; it being, as I conceive, a flat contradiction to the chief scope and intendment of his sermon, which was to ascribe to Faith, at least a federal or moral causality in our Justification. I am sorry that I should have so much cause to complain of his injurious dealing, not only in that unworthy language he is pleased to give

⁷⁷ Arthur Hildersham, 1563–1632, an English Puritan Minister and Non-Conformist.

me, but in casting my argument into another form, then that wherein I proposed it. In his report it runs thus, "if we are altogether passive in being justified, then we are justified before we believe;" in which form, I confess it is obnoxious to more exceptions than one; for, besides the grammatical part, which is very harsh, the logical consequence may be justly blamed; though the consequent be true, yet it is not a true consequence, as it is not rightly inferred from the antecedent. Though we are passive in our Justification, yet it doth not follow from thence, that we were justified before we believed. A man is passive in the first act of his Conversion, yet it were absurd to conclude; therefore a man was converted before he had a being or ever heard of the Gospel. But the argument as I proposed it was as follows: If we are wholly passive in our Justification, then our Faith doth not concur to the obtaining of it, or we are not justified by the act of Faith in the sight of God. But we are wholly passive in our Justification; therefore, Faith doth not coincide with our Justification, or we are not justified by the act of Faith. His answer hereunto I could not very well heed by reason of my distance from him, and the rudeness of some people {who do go for professors} that stood about me; but as I conceived it was to this effect, that Faith doth necessarily concur to the application of this privilege, whereunto I replied, but the application of this benefit is not Justification; the one being God's act, the other being our act. His answer in print, we are sure, is authentic; let us see therefore, how well he hath now quitted himself from the guilt of this contradiction. 1. He calls the argument a childish exception, a piece of witchery, and wonders it should proceed out of my mouth. I must confess, I cannot but wonder to hear such language from a civil man, much more from a minister and more especially from one, who hath sometimes owed me more respect. Let the prudent judge whether there be any ground for this hideous clamor. 2. He shapes some kind of answer to the sequel, "that though Faith be a formal, vital act of the soul, yet the use of it in Justification, is but to qualify us

passively, that we may be morally capable of being justified by God." And again, "faith is required on our part; which though physically it be an act, yet morally it is but a passive condition, by which we are made capable of being justified, according to the order and constitution of God." Now here I shall desire the reader to observe how much Mr. Woodbridge is beholding to a Popish tenant {opposed by all our Protestant writers} to support his cause, which is, that Faith goes before Justification, to dispose us for it, &c. {Documents of the Council of Trent, 1547, Section 6, Chapter 6 &c.} Bellarmine undertakes to prove that Faith doth not justify alone; because there are other things; namely, fear, hope, love, penitence, a desire of the sacraments, and a purpose of amendment of life; all which {says the Jesuit} do prepare and dispose a man for Justification as well as Faith. {Bellarmine "De Justificatione," Book 1, Section 1, chapter 12 &c.} Against whom all our Protestant divines {Chamier, Ames, Willet, Downname, Pemble, &c.} which my little library hath obtained, do unanimously affirm, that Faith doth not dispose or prepare us for Justification. Now were they all bewitched as well as we, who would not subscribe to this Popish dictate? I shall leave it to the reader to judge, whether my argument or his answer doth deserve this censure, when he hath weighed the reasons I shall give, that Faith cannot be said to justify by way of disposition, or as a passive condition, morally disposing us for Justification.

Chapter IX

That Faith doth not justify as a Condition required on our part to qualify us for Justification.

In regard, that the main point in difference between me and Mr. Woodbridge lies at the bottom of this answer, I shall make it appear we are not said to be justified by Faith in a scripture sense, because Faith is required of us as a passive condition, to qualify us for Justification in the sight of God.

First, that interpretation of the phrase, which gives no more to Faith in the business of our Justification, than to other works of Sanctification cannot be true; the reason is because the Scripture doth peculiarly attribute our Justification unto Faith, and in a way of opposition to other works of Sanctification {Rom.3:28; Gal.2:16, 3:11} But to interpret Justification by Faith merely thus, that Faith is a condition to qualify us for Justification, gives no more to Faith than to other works of Sanctification, as repentance, charity, and all other duties of new obedience; which Mr. Woodbridge and others of the same opinion, make to be necessary antecedent conditions of Justification. Mr. Baxter includes all works of obedience to evangelical precepts, in the definition of Faith, in which sense, I presume no Papist will deny that we are justified by Faith alone, taking it as he doth, for *fides formata*, {living faith,} or Faith animated with charity and other good works.

And therefore Bellarmine disputing against Justification by Faith alone, says, that "if we could be persuaded that Faith doth justify by obtaining and earning {which is granted him, if Faith be an antecedent, federal condition, disposing us for salvation} then we would never deny that love, fear, hope, &c., does justify as well as Faith." Dr. Hammond says expressly, "that neither Paul nor James do exclude or separate faithful actions, or the acts of Faith from Faith, or the condition of Justification, but absolutely

require them as the only things by which we are justified;" which in another place he goes about to prove by this argument, "that without which we are not justified, and by which, joined with Faith we are justified, is not by the Apostle excluded or separated from Faith, or the condition of our Justification; but required together with Faith as the only things, by which, as by a condition, a man is justified; and without acts of Faith, or faithful actions, we are not justified, and by them we are justified, and not by Faith only. Therefore faithful actions, or acts of Faith, are not by the Apostle excluded or separated from Faith, or the condition of our Justification; but required together with Faith, as the only things, by which as by a condition, a man is justified." It is evident, that he and other supporters of this notion attribute no more to Faith in our Justification, than to other works of Sanctification. Now this was witnessed against, as an unsound opinion, a pernicious error and utterly repugnant to the Sacred Scriptures, &c., by Mr. Cranford amongst the London Subscribers, Dec.14, 1647 and by Mr. Woodbridge himself {if I mistake not} amongst the subscribers in other counties. It seems {by Mr. Woodbridge} that they were bewitched when they gave their hands unto that testimony.

Secondly, that interpretation of this phrase, which gives no more to Faith than to works of nature, I mean such as may be found in natural and unregenerate men, is not true. The reason is, because a man may have such works, and yet not be justified. But to interpret Justification by Faith, that Faith is necessary antecedent condition of our Justification, gives no more to Faith than to works of nature, as to sight of sin, legal sorrow, &c., which have been found in natural and unregenerate men, as in Cain, Saul, Judas, &c. I presume that Mr. Woodbridge will say that these are necessary antecedent conditions in every one that is justified; for if these be conditions disposing us to Faith, and Faith a condition disposing us to Justification, then are they also conditions disposing us to Justification, for *causa causae*, {the cause of the cause,} *est causa*

causati {is the cause of the effect,} if these legal works are conditions of Faith, they must {according to Mr. Woodbridge's tenet} be conditions of Justification, and consequently they are in *eodem genere causae* {the same kind of cause} with Faith itself, {*quod erat demonstrandum*} is to be demonstrated.

Thirdly, that by which we are justified is the proper, efficient, meritorious cause of our Justification; but Faith considered as a mere passive condition, is not in the sense of our adversaries a proper, efficient and meritorious cause of Justification; therefore we are not said to be justified by Faith as a passive condition or qualification required, to make us capable of Justification. The assumption is granted by our opponents, at least in words, who do therefore call it a mere *fine qua non* {end by which it is not;} which Logicians make to be *nihil efficiens* {inefficient} and a passive condition to exclude it from all manner of causality in producing the effect; though for my own part I look upon conditions in contracts and covenants, as proper, efficient, meritorious causes of the things covenanted, which do produce their effects, though not by their innate worth, yet by virtue of the compact and agreement made between the parties covenanting. But of this we shall have occasion to speak more by and by. It remains only, that I should clear the major, that, that by which we are justified is the proper, efficient, meritorious cause of our Justification; which appears; {1} by the use of these propositions, *by* and *through*, in ordinary speech, which note that the thing to which they are attributed is either a meritorious or instrumental cause of the effect that follows; as when we say, a soldier was raised by his valour, it imports, that his valour was the meritorious cause of his preferment; and when we say, a tradesman lives by his trade, our meaning is, that his trade is the means or instrument by which he gets his living; so here in the case before us, when it is said a man is justified by Faith, it implies, that Faith is either the meritorious or instrumental cause of his Justification; as if it be taken objectively, for Christ and his merits, it is the meritorious cause of our

Justification in God's sight; or if it be taken properly for the act of believing, it is the instrumental cause of our Justification in the court of conscience. {2} From the contrary phrase, as when the Apostle denies, that a man is justified by works, and by the Law, without doubt his intent was to exclude works from any causal influx into our Justification. Now that which he denies to works, he ascribes to Faith; and therefore Justification by Faith implies that Faith in his sense, hath a true causality, or proper efficiency in our Justification. 3. From other parallel phrases in Holy Scripture, where we are said to be redeemed, justified, and saved, *per Christum, per sanguinem, per mortem, per vulnera*, {through Christ, by his blood, by his death, by his sufferings,} all which do signify that Christ and his sufferings, are the true, proper and meritorious cause of these benefits; and so it must be understood, when we are said to be justified by Faith; and not that Faith is but a mere cypher in our Justification. Faith objectively taken is a proper meritorious cause of our Justification.

Fourthly, I shall make use of my adversary's weapon, of that very medium which Mr. Woodbridge last alleged; that interpretation of the phrase which makes us at least concurrent causes with God and Christ in the formal act of our Justification is not true, because our Justification in respect of efficiency, is wholly attributed unto them. {Rom.8:33, 4:6-8, 3:24} The internal moving cause was his own Grace; and the only external procuring cause is the death of Christ; and there is no other efficient cause besides these. We can be no more said to justify ourselves than that we created ourselves; but to make Faith a condition, morally disposing us to Justification, makes us at least concurrent causes with God and Christ in our Justification.

I. We should not be justified freely by his Grace if any condition were required of us in order to our Justification, for, "a condition {as Mr. Walker observes well} whensoever it is performed, makes the thing covenanted a due debt, which the Promiser is bound to give," and then as he infers, "Justification should not be

of Grace but of debt, contrary to the Apostle in Romans Chapter 3 & 4."

II. If Faith were a condition morally disposing us for Justification, we should then be concurrent causes with the merits of Christ in procuring our Justification; for the merits of Christ are not a physical, but a moral cause, which obtain their effect, by virtue of that Covenant which was made between him and the Father. Now by ascribing unto Faith a moral, causal influx in our Justification, we do clearly put it in *eodem genere causae*, {same kind of cause,} with the blood of Christ, which I hope Mr. Woodbridge will better consider of, before he engages too far in Mr. Baxter's cause.

Fifthly, that interpretation of this phrase which makes works going before Justification, not only not sinful, but acceptable to God, and preparatory to the Grace of Justification, without controversy, is not according to the mind of the Holy Ghost. For as much as the Scripture frequently declares, that no man's works are acceptable to God before his person is accepted and justified; the tree must be good, or else the fruit cannot be good. {Lk.6:43,44; Matt.12:33} That phrase of Augustine is sufficiently known, *opera sequuntur justificatum, non praecedunt justificandum*, {works follow a man already justified, they go not before to Justification.} The old orthodox doctrine taught in these churches in England was that works before Justification are not pleasing unto God, neither do they make men meet {that is, do not qualify or morally dispose them} to receive Grace; and we doubt not but they have the nature of sin. I could muster up a legion of Orthodox writers to defend this tenant, that no qualification or act of ours before Justification doth prepare or dispose us for Justification. Nay, the Council of Trent itself {Trent: Section 6 – Chapter 8} confesseth, that none of those things which precede Justification, whether it be Faith, or other works, do obtain the Grace of Justification. But to interpret Justification by Faith in a manner which makes Faith a condition which doth qualify us for Justification, necessarily supposes a work, or works before Justification, which have not the nature of sin,

but are acceptable to God, and preparatory to Grace; namely, the Grace of Justification, which is most properly called Grace.

Sixthly, that interpretation of any phrase of Scripture which involves a contradiction is not to be admitted; but to say Faith is a passive condition that doth morally qualify us for Justification, implies a contradiction; therefore, the proposition is undeniable, and the assumption is to me as clear, to be both active and passive in reference to the same effect, is a flat contradiction. Now that is active which is effective, which contributes an efficacy whether more or less to the production of the effect. A condition, though in the logical notion of it, hath not the least efficiency; and therefore Aristotle never reckoned this *fine qua non*, {end by which it is not,} in the number of causes, yet in the use of the jurists {as we are now speaking of it} it is a moral efficient cause, which is effective of that which is promised upon condition. Chamier hath well observed, that "he that performs the least condition imaginable for having of any benefit, is active and passive, in obtaining of it." We will look after no other instance than that which Mr. Woodbridge hath set before us. An offender against our laws that is saved by his clergy, or by reading his neck-verse, is not passive, but active in saving of his life, as he may properly be said to have saved himself; his reading being not only a physical act, but a moral efficient cause, which makes that favorable Law to take effect. To say he is passive, because he made not the Law, nor sits as judge on the bench to absolve himself, is but a shift to blind the eyes of the simple, seeing that when more causes than one concur, to an effect, the effect may be denominated from the lowest, that which doth least is an active efficient cause; nay in this case the malefactor doth more in saving of his life, than either the Law or judge; for though he acknowledgeth the Grace of the state, and the courtesy of the judge unto him; yet as the Welshman that was bid to cry God bless the King, and the judge cried, God bless his Father and Mother, who taught him to read, intimated he was more beholding to his reading than to

the courtesy of the judge, for else the Judge would have been severe enough, his mercy would have deserved but little thanks.

I must needs tell my old friend, *non loquitur ut Clericus* {he does not speak as a clergyman.} We say such a man is passive in saving his life, who is not required to read or perform any other condition, but receives a pardon of mere Grace. In like manner he is passive in his Justification that doth nothing at all towards the procuring of it; for he that performs the least condition in order thereunto, is not only physically, but morally active in obtaining this privilege. For though he did not make the Law by and according to which he is justified; nor pronounce the sentence of absolution upon himself; yet he hath a subordinate, or less principal efficiency in producing the effect; nay, a learned man {whom I hope Mr. Woodbridge will not think more worthy to be derided, than disputed with} tells us, "that he that performs conditions for Justification, doth more to his Justification than God, who made only a conditional grant, notwithstanding which, he might have perished; but he by performing the condition, makes the grant to be absolute." "And truly, {says the same author} whosoever makes Faith the condition of the New Covenant, in such a sense as perfect obedience was the condition of the Old, cannot avoid it; but that man is justified chiefly by himself, and his own acts; not so much by God's Grace in imputing Christ's righteousness, but more by his own Faith, which is his own act, though of God's work." "God by making his supposed gracious conditional promise, doth not justify any man, for that makes no difference at all amongst persons." {George Kendall, "Vindication of the Doctrine concerning God's Intentions of Special Grace and Favor to his Elect from the Attempts of Master John Goodwin," 1653, chapter 4, pg.141} It remains therefore, that man must be said to justify himself; for where there is a promise of a reward made to all, upon condition of performing such a service, he that obtains the reward gets it by his own service; without which the promise would have brought him never a whit the nearer to the reward. Thus a man

justifies himself by believing more a great deal, than God justifies him by his promulgation of the conditional promise, which would have left him in his old condition, had not he better provided for himself by believing, than God by promising; as in the Old Covenant, it was not God's threat that brought death upon the world, just so in the New; {if it be a conditional promise;} it is not the promise that justifies a believer, but the believer himself.

Seventhly, Mr. Woodbridge may as well call the blood of Christ a passive condition, in our Justification, because it did not make the Law, nor pronounce the sentence of absolution. Let the indifferent reader consider, whether this be not {I will not say a childish, but} an impertinent answer, which draws his former concession quite aside from the matter now under debate; for the question is not, whether man did concur in making the Law the rule of his Justification; but whether he hath any causal influx in producing the effect; or whether before Justification, he can, or doth perform any condition, to which God hath infallibly promised this Grace? Which {if granted} will conclude, that he is not passive, but active in his Justification; when our Protestant divines say, that a man is passive in his first Conversion; their meaning is, that he can perform no condition at all, to which God hath inseparably annexed the Grace of conversion.

So Cameron⁷⁸; expresses their sense and meaning, "a man's works merit no promise of grace." For though a man before conversion does perform many natural acts, which have a remote tendency to this effect, as hearing, reading, meditating, &c., yet for all we say that he is passive therein, because these are not such conditions to which God hath promised saving Grace. So though a man doth never so many natural acts, or duties, whereunto God hath not immediately promised this privilege, he is but passive for all in his

⁷⁸ John Cameron; 1579?-1625; a Scottish theologian; though to an extent "Calvinistic," in his writings, did have strong leanings towards Pelagian conceptions of free will, &c.

Justification; but if he do perform any condition, to which Justification is promised, then he is active, and consequently may be said to justify himself.

8. But says Mr. Woodbridge, "we do no more justify ourselves, than we do glorify ourselves, it is God alone doth both, and we are passive in both." {pg.8} And again, "it is God that glorifies us, and not we ourselves; yet surely God doth not glorify us, before we believe." {pg.10}

First, I shall readily grant him, that we do neither justify, nor glorify ourselves; seeing that we obtain neither of these benefits by our own works. From the very beginning, to the end of our Salvation, nothing is primarily or causally Active, but Free-Grace; all that we receive from God is gift, and not debt. Glory itself is not wages, but Grace. For though it be called, the recompense of the reward, {Heb.11:26,} yet that is not to be understood in a proper sense, as when the reward is for the work, which may be two ways. First, when the work is proportional to the wages, as when a labourer receives a shilling for a day's work, here the work doth deserve the wages, because the work doth him that pays the wages as much good as the wages doth the worker. Now surely, no reward can come from the Creator, to the creature in this way, because no man can do any work that is profitable unto God. {Ps.16:2; Job 22:3; 35:8; Rom.11:35} The very Papists will not say, that glory is a reward in this sense. "Works {saith Bishop Gardner} do not deserve salvation, as a workman deserves his wages for his labor." Secondly, when the work is not answerable to the wages, but yet the wages is due by promise upon the performance of it; as when a poor man hath twenty shillings for an hours labour, though the work be not worth it, yet is it a due debt, and he may challenge it as such, because it was promised him. In this sense, neither is glory a reward; for under the New Covenant, blessedness is not to him that worketh, but to him that worketh not. Rom.4:5. We are saved by Grace, and not by works, Tit.3:5, Eph.2:5,8; and saith the Apostle, if by Grace, then it is no more of works, Rom.11:6; but when Glory is called a

Reward, we are to understand it improperly, as when a thing is called a Reward only by way of Analogy and Resemblance, because it comes after, and in the place of the work; as the nights rest may be called the Reward of the days labor, because it succeeds it. And thus the Heir inheriting his Father's Lands, hath a Recompense or Reward of all the labor and service he hath done for his Father; although he did not his service to that end, neither doth the enjoyment of that inheritance hang upon that condition. In this sense, Eternal Life and Glory may be called the Reward of our Works, because it is a consequent of them; not that our works have any influence, either Physical or Moral to obtain it; for all things being given us, in, and for Christ alone, Rom.8:32, Eph.1:3; and therefore it is called by the Apostle a reward of Inheritance, Col.3:24, which comes to us not by working, but by inheritance, as we are the heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. If Glory were a Reward in a proper sense, we might properly be said to save and glorify ourselves, because we concurred to the Production of this effect; but Mr. Woodbridge says well, "it is God that glorifies us; eternal life is called his gift in opposition to wages, {Rom.6:23; II Tim.4:8,} it is solely the effect of God's Grace, and Christ's purchase; though God doth glorify us after working yet not for any of those works which we have wrought though by the help and assistance of his own Spirit.

9. But yet secondly, though God doth not glorify us before we believe, yet it will not follow, that he doth not justify us before we believe. For first, if we take Justification *pro volitione Dei*, {the volition of God,} for the will of God not to punish, he cannot but know, there is not the same reason of an immanent act of God, which is eternal, and of a transient act which is in time; or secondly, if we take it *pro re volita*, {on behalf of the objects,} as it is the fruit and effect of Christ's death, it will not follow, that because we have not glorification before believing, we have not Justification; for though all the blessing of the Covenant are given us freely, and not upon conditions performed by us, yet God hath his order and method in bestowing of them. He first gives us

Grace imputed, then Grace inherent, and afterwards eternal glory. And thus some benefits of the Covenant are by some {though improperly} made conditions of the rest, because they are first enjoyed.

10. That which Mr. Woodbridge adds and wishes may be seriously considered, hath been considered already, more than once. "If {saith he,} Justification by Faith, must be understood of Justification in our consciences, then is not the word Justification taken properly for a Justification before God in all the Scriptures; from the beginning to the end, we read of no Justification in Scripture, but by Faith or works." Mr. Eyre {says he} "when the Scripture speaks of Justification by works, understands it of Justification before men; when it speaks of Justification by Faith, he understands it of Justification in our consciences. Now neither of these is Justification in the sight of God, and verily neither of them of much worth in the Apostles judgment. {I Cor.4:3} The Antinomians may read out their eyes, before they produce us one text, &c."

Had he reported my judgment truly, there had been no room for this exception. I have said indeed {and by all that Mr. Woodbridge hath said against it, I see no reason to change my mind} that when the Scripture attributeth our Justification to works {as in the Epistle of James} it is to be understood of our Justification before men; when it ascribes it to Faith, Faith is taken either properly, or metonymically; if it be taken properly for the act of believing, then it is to be understood of our Justification before God, terminated in our consciences, or as it is revealed and evidenced to ourselves. Justification in conscience is Justification before God, as an acquittance in the heart of the creditor, and in a paper is one and the same; this manifested, and the other secret. He that is justified in his conscience is justified before God; and Faith apprehends that which doth not only justify us in our consciences but before God. Or, if Faith be taken metonymically for its object, the Justification by Faith is Justification before God; for it is Justification by the merits of Christ, to whom alone without works or

conditions performed by us, the Holy Ghost ascribes all of our Justification in the sight of God, Rom.3:24; Eph.1:7, and in many other such places.

11. But, {says Mr. Woodbridge,} "Justification before men and in our consciences are neither of them of much worth in the judgment of the Apostles." {I Cor.4:3} 1. I wish that Justification with men were of less account with Mr. Woodbridge. He best knows, whether conscience of vindicating the truth or popular affectation, put him upon this engagement. I am sure, the former would not have tempted him to those incivilities he hath offered unto me and others, whom {I doubt not} but God will know by other names, than he is pleased to cast upon us. If the latter, or a desire of ingratiating himself with some of my opposers, did spur him forward, though he hath Justification before men, which yet I assure him is not universal, no not amongst many that do wish him well. I dare say, he is not justified in the court of conscience, and "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." {I Jn.3:20} 2. But doth the Apostle account neither of these justifications much worth? Let Mr. Woodbridge judge in what account he had Justification before men, by what he says, {II Cor.1:12,} and Justification in conscience, by those blessed effects he ascribes unto it. {Rom.5:1-3, I Jn.3:21} 3. It is true, he says, that he cares not to be judged of man's judgment, or of man's day. The meaning is, that he did not regard the sinister judgments and censures of carnal Christians, who praise and dispraise upon light and trivial inducements, like them who say, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." {I Cor.1:12} "Yea {saith Paul} I judge not mine own self;" {I Cor.4:3;} that is, I am not solicitous, nor do I enter into consideration what degree of honour or esteem I am worthy of, amongst, or above my fellows. Now, what is this to the purpose? What is this to the Justification of his person in the court of conscience by Faith, or the Justification of his Faith and sincerity towards men by works? I must needs say, {with a very worthy divine,} {John Owen, against Baxter,} "that no small portion of

favour consists in a sense and knowledge of the kindness of God in its actings, terminated upon the conscience;" however Mr. Woodbridge is pleased to value or diminish it.

12. In his next passage he gives us a youthful frolic, to show his gallantry, similar to Mr. Baxter's challenge, {Baxter, "Aphorisms of Justification," pg.93,} "Let the Antinomians show us one Scripture which speaks of Justification from eternity. The Antinomians {saith he, the Anti-Papists and Anti-Arminians, he means} may read their eyes out, before they produce us one text for any other Justification in Scripture, which is not by Faith or Works." 1. Though the Antinomians are so blind, that they cannot find one text for this purpose, yet he himself is such a quick-sighted Lynceus⁷⁹ that he hath discovered more than one. For on page 23 of his book, he tells us of a threefold Justification, and yet neither of them is by Faith or Works. I hope he hath not read out his eyes to find them out. 2. In what sense the Scripture asserts Justification before Faith or Works, hath been shown before; but, {if I may be so bold,} I would ask how long the Anti-Gospellers may read before they produce one plain text for any of those dictates that they would thrust upon us, "that Justification doth in no sense precede the act of Faith; that Christ purchased only a conditional, not an absolute Justification for God's elect; that our evangelical righteousness by which we are justified is in ourselves; and that the tenor of the New Covenant is, if thou believe, &c., also, that God hath made a Covenant with Christ, that none should have any benefit by his death till they do believe;" with many other matters that it would be tedious now to write in full.

13. Mr. Woodbridge thinks that he hath sufficiently cleared the coast of this exception, {which we profess,} that Faith in a proper sense is said to justify, in respect of its evidencing property, or because it declares and applies to our consciences that perfect

⁷⁹ In Greek Mythology, one Lynceus is famous for his extraordinary sight.

Justification which we have in Christ. But by his leave, it is like to be a bone for him to pick, till the Index Expurgatorius⁸⁰ hath ripped out those Scriptures which ascribe our Justification unto Christ alone. For my own part I see no such cause he hath to triumph, unless it be in the dejection of those feeble consequences which he himself hath devised to make our doctrine odious, which we have shown before, are as remote from our principles, as the East is from the West. I confess, neither he nor I are competent judges in our own cause; let the godly reader judge between us, and hold fast that which comes nearest to the analogy of Faith. I shall now address myself to scan the force of those arguments he hath brought to prove, that the elect are not justified in the sight of God before they believe.

Chapter X

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's first argument against Justification before Faith, taken from the nature of Justification, is answered.

His first argument is drawn from the nature of Justification, "which {says he} is the absolution of a sinner from condemnation by that gracious sentence and signal promise in the gospel, he that believes, shall not enter into condemnation." The argument he hath cast into this frame, "if there be no act of Grace declared and published in the Word, which may be a legal discharge of the sinner, while he is in unbelief, and then no unbelieving sinner is justified. But there is no act of Grace declared and published in the Word, which is a legal discharge of the sinner, whilst he remains in

⁸⁰ A list of books once separately published and now included in the Index Librorum Prohibitorum that gives the titles of works forbidden by Papist hierarchy to Roman Catholics pending revision or deletion of some sections.

unbelief." Whereunto I answer, that his assumption is false; for the Gospel or New Covenant is a published or declared discharge of all the Elect; the sum of which is, that God hath transacted all their sins upon Jesus Christ, and that Christ by that offering of his hath made a full and perfect atonement for them; whereby the whole spiritual Israel are really made clean from all their sins in the sight of God; as of old, carnal Israel were Typically clean, upon the atonement made by the High Priest. {Lev.16:30} Now though they cannot plead it before they believe; yet is it a real discharge, because it frees them from condemnation; as a Pardon granted by a Prince, is a legal discharge, though the Malefactor doth not know of it.

The sequel or consequence of his argument stands upon a sandy bottom, {a position assumed without any proof,} that will not be granted. Justification is the discharge of a sinner, by a published, declared act. We have showed before that Justification consists in the Non-Imputation of sin, and the Imputation of righteousness, which is an act of the mind or will of God. It is a gross *non sequitur*, {"it does not follow;" in formal logic, it is an argument in which its conclusion does not follow from its premises} that God doth not declare his non-imputing of sin to his elect, before they believe, and therefore, he doth account and esteem them sinners. The question is not, whether this gracious sentence of absolution be declared, but whether it be not in the breast of God, before it be declared? Or, whether this immanent act of God doth not secure the sinner from condemnation? If so, then there is Justification, though there be no published declared sentence. As God's saying in his heart, that he would never drown the world any more, {Gen.8:21,} did sufficiently secure the world from the danger of another deluge, though he had never declared it; so God's will not to punish, secures a person from condemnation, though this security be not declared. "And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and

the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." {Gen.8:20,21}

They are but feeble proofs, wherewith he hath backed his assertion that Justification is only by the promise, as a declared discharge. "We are not {says he, as if he sat in the logicians chair,} to conceive of Justification, as an internal, immanent act of God, resolving privately in his own breast, not to prosecute his right against a sinner; but it must be some declared, promulged act, &c." But why are we not to conceive of it as an internal immanent act of God? Instead of proofs he gives us illustrations, which may pass in a sermon, but are too weak for a dispute. As sin {saith he} is not imputed where this is no Law, {Rom.5:13,} so "neither is righteousness imputed without Law." Whereunto I answer, though men will not impute or charge sin upon themselves, where there is not a Law to convince them of it, "for by the Law is the knowledge of sin," {Rom.3:20, 7:9; Gal.3:19,} yet it follows not, but God did impute sin to men, before there was any Law promulged or before sin was actually committed. For what is God's hating of a person, but his imputing of sin, or his will to punish him for his sin? Now the Lord hated all that perish, before ever the Law was given. The scope of the Scripture alleged, {Rom.5:13,} is not to show when God begins to impute sin to a person, but that sin in being supposed a Law; and consequently, that there was a Law before the Law of Moses, else men could not have sinned, as it is confessed they did. As the Law itself had a being in the mind of God, so the issues thereof were determined by him, before it was declared.

There is not the same reason of our being sinners and being righteous, seeing that sin is our act, but righteousness is exclusively the gift of God in Christ. A man is not a sinner, before he does commit sin, either by himself, or in his representative, which necessarily supposeth a Law; "for sin is the transgression of the Law," {1 Jn.3:4,} but a man may be righteous before he

doth works of righteousness, and consequently before any Law is given him to obey. Indeed if we were made righteous by our own personal, inherent righteousness, then our Justification would necessarily require a Law; for as much as all our righteousness consists in a conformity to the Law. But seeing we are justified by the Imputation of another's righteousness, what need is there that a Law should first be given unto us?

Mr. Woodbridge goes on, "as our condemnation is no secret act, or resolution of God to condemn, but the very voice and sentence of the Law - cursed is he that sinneth; and therefore he whom God in his eternal decree, hath purposed to save, may yet for the present be under the sentence of condemnation; as the Ephesians, whom God had chosen to eternal life, {Eph.1:4,} were yet sometimes the children of wrath; {Eph.2:3;} so on the contrary, our Justification must be some declared promulged act or sentence of God, which may stand good in Law, for the discharge of the sinner against condemnation."

We say that condemnation; being taken, not for the will of God to punish, or to inflict upon the person the desert of his sin, but for the thing willed, or for the curse itself; comes upon men by virtue of that Law or Covenant which was made with the first Adam. So our Justification; being taken, not for the internal act of God's will, not to punish, but for the benefit willed to us by that internal act, to wit, our actual discharge from the Law; descends to us, by virtue of that Law or Covenant, which was made with Christ, {the second Adam,} he performing the terms of agreement between the Father and himself, made the Law of condemnation to be of no force against us, {Gal.3:13, 4:5;} which New Covenant, and not the conditional promise {as Mr. Woodbridge would have it} is called the "Law of Faith," {Rom.3:27,} and "the Law of righteousness." {Rom.9:31} "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." {Gal.3:13} "To redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." {Gal.4:5} This Law of righteousness is called a Law, because it is the fixed and

unalterable sanction of the Great God; or else by way of antithesis, or opposition to the Covenant of works. The Law of righteousness, it being the only means, whereby men do attain to righteousness, and are justified in the sight of God; and the Law of Faith, because it strips men of their own righteousness, to clothe them with Christ's righteousness; and thereby takes from men all occasion of boasting in themselves; whereas if men did attain to righteousness by virtue of this conditional promise, {he that believes shall be saved,} they would have as much cause of boasting in themselves, as if they had performed the Law of works. That saying of his, with which he closes this argument, is wide from truth, "that every man is then condemned, or stands condemned in the sight of the Lord, when the Law condemns him;" for then all men living are condemned, seeing the Law condemns or curses every one that sins; and there is none that lives without sin, and then the Apostle John will give him the lie, {I Jn.1:8,} or else, that believers are not justified; which is contrary to the Scripture last cited by himself, {Jn.5:24,} with a thousand more. In what sense the elect Ephesians were called "children of wrath," will more fitly be explained in the next chapter.

In the meantime we will add a few reasons against the main support of this argument, that Justification is the discharge of a sinner, by a declared published act; to wit, by that signal, conditional promise, he that believes, shall be saved; which, when a man hath performed the condition, he may plead for his discharge. Against this notion, I shall offer to the reader's serious consideration, these following arguments. First, if Justification be not by works, then it is not by this or any other conditional promise, which is a declared discharge only to him that performs the condition, that is, he that worketh; but Justification is not by works, {Rom.4:5,} which we have wrought, {Tit.3:5,} but an act of the freest Grace and bounty, {Col.2:13,} where the word which the Apostle uses to express the forgiveness of sin; ascribes it solely to the Grace of God, without works or conditions performed by us. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done,

but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his Grace." {Tit.3:5-7}

Secondly, if Justification be by that signal promise {he that believes shall be saved,} then none were justified, before that gracious sentence was published, which was not till our Saviour's ministry in the flesh; nor was there any sentence of divine revelation like it, which the people of God could plead for their discharge from the Law, from the fall of Adam, until the publication of that subservient Covenant, in Mount Sinai, {which is the tenor of the Law of works,} the Lord never made any conditional promise, which they could plead for this discharge, and absolution from sin; for the promises to Adam, Noah, Abraham, were not conditional, but absolute. Now if there were no Justification till God had made some conditional promise, which men upon performing the condition, might plead as their legal discharge, I marvel into what limbos Mr. Woodbridge will thrust the Fathers of the Old Testament; for they that were not justified, were not saved. But the Scripture gives us more hope, showing that they were saved by the same Grace, "as we are," {"but we believe that through the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Acts 15:11,} God accepting them as righteous in Jesus Christ; who in respect of the virtue and efficacy of his death, is called the "Lamb slain from the foundations of the world." {Rev.13:8} For though this rich Grace were not revealed to them so clearly, as unto us, {Eph.3:5; I Pet.1:12,} yet the Effects and Benefits thereof descended upon them unto Justification of life, no less than to the Faithful in the New Testament. The Argument in short is this. If the Fathers of the Old Testament were justified, who yet had not any such declared discharge; then Justification is not by a declared discharge; but the Fathers of the Old Testament were justified, &c., and so therefore, &c.

6. Thirdly, if Justification be only by a declared discharge, the elect infants insensible of this declaration,

and unable to plead their discharge from any such promise, have no Justification. I hope that Mr. Woodbridge is not such a *durus pater infantum*,⁸¹ as to exclude all those from Justification that die in their infancy, which he must necessarily do, if he makes Justification to consist in that which they are utterly incapable of.

7. Fourthly, the making of Justification a declared discharge, detracts from the Majesty and Sovereignty of God, for as much as it ascribes to him but the office of a notary, or subordinate minister, {whose work it is to declare and publish the sentence of the court,} rather than of a judge or supreme magistrate, whose will is a Law. And by this means Justification shall be opposed; not to condemnation, but to concealing or keeping secret.

8. Fifthly, if Justification were by a conditional promise, as a declared discharge, then it would not be God's act, but our own; God should not be our justifier, but we must be said to justify ourselves; for a conditional promise doth not declare one man justified more than another, but the performance of the condition; so that a man should be more beholding to himself, than to God for his Justification.

9. Sixthly, we may argue a *pari*, {an argument by similarity;} for if forgiveness amongst men is not necessarily by a declared discharge, therefore God is not; for there is the same reason for both; and therefore we are bid to forgive one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us, {Eph.4:32,} that is, heartily or from the heart, as the Apostle elsewhere explains it, "let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." {I Jn.3:18} Man's forgiveness is principally an act of the heart and mind. A man forgives an injury, when he lays aside all thoughts of revenge, and really intends his welfare that did the same; his heart is as much towards him, as if he had not done it; and

⁸¹ That is, the hard father of infants, a term that was pinned on Augustine, due to his apparent hard view in reference to the salvation of infants.

therefore God's forgiving of a sinner, is not necessarily a declared absolution. God may justify or acquit a person, though he doth not declare his reconciliation with him.

10. Mr. Woodbridge foresaw the force of this reason, and therefore hath wisely laid in this exception against it. "Indeed to our private forgiveness one of another, being merely an act of charity, there is no more required than a resolution within ourselves to lay aside our thoughts of revenge, &c., but the forgiveness of a magistrate being an act of authority, must be by some formal act of oblivion, &c., for a vote in the house is no legal security to a delinquent, so then, God's forgiveness being an act of authority, must neither be an hidden secret purpose in his own heart, &c., but a formal promulgated act."

Answer: I see no reason why God should not have as much power to forgive without a promulgated act, as man. It is a saying heretofore, that they that have supreme and absolute power, love not to have their hands tied. I wonder therefore, that Mr. Woodbridge should be so bold as to limit and to prescribe in what way and manner the Lord must forgive sinners. I am sure, the reason which he gives, is of little force; for God's forgiveness is no less an act of charity than the forgiveness of man; as these scriptures, {Rom.5:8; Eph.2:4,} with many others, do sufficiently show. And though God in the act of forgiveness, may be looked upon as a judge, yet is he such a judge as proceeds by no other Law, than his own determinate will. And therefore, we say, that though the forgiveness of magistrates may be by some published act of oblivion, yet it doth not follow, that God must proceed in the same manner; because the promulgation of an act of Grace, is for the direction and limitation of judges, and ministers of state, that they do not execute the sentence of the Law. Now in the Justification of a sinner, God hath no need of such an act, because he is the sole judge and justifier himself; and therefore the purpose of his will secures the person sufficiently, though his security be not declared, and makes the Law of condemnation {which depends wholly on the will of

God} to be of no force, in regard of the real execution of it, whether he do plead it or no; as in infants and doubting believers, whose hearts do condemn them; some of whom Mr. Woodbridge acknowledges to be justified. A judge that hath the legislative power in his own breast needs no published edict to absolve an offender. Now God is such a judge as doth not receive, but gives laws unto all.

The publishing of acts of Grace, is for the comfort of the offender, rather than for any need that the supreme magistrate hath thereof, as to the completing of his act; as for instance, the act of oblivion, was a real pardon, when is passed the house; for though delinquents had no knowledge of their immunity, from the penalties which they had incurred, before it was published in print, yet the vote or sanction of the house did secure them from danger, and invalidate the statutes that were in force against them; otherwise delinquents would be more beholding to the printer that published that act, than to the parliament that made it.⁸² So the publication of the New Covenant was for the comfort of God's elect, and not for their security, before God's tribunal.

⁸² Which seems to be – “seems to be,” as this work was first published in 1654, six years prior to this act - a reference to the Indemnity and Oblivion Act of 1660, which was an act of the Parliament of England, which act asked King Charles II to pardon everyone involved in the regicide of his father, Charles I, except those who had officiated in his execution.

Chapter XI

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's Second Argument against Justification before Faith, taken from our State by Nature, is answered.

His second argument seems to be most weighty, which if it be put into a just balance, will likewise be found guilty of a *minus babens*, {that is, far short of it.} The argument runs thus, "they that are under condemnation, cannot at the same time be justified; but all the world is under condemnation before Faith. Therefore, none of the world are justified before Faith." Here I shall enter a caveat against his argument, which notwithstanding his confident assertion, {that it must needs be true,} doth not appear so unto me, unless it be limited with this condition, that these seeming contraries do refer *ad idem*, {to the same thing,} I mean to the same court and judicatory; then I shall grant, that he who is under condemnation is not justified; otherwise we know, it often falls out, that he that is condemned, and hath a judgment against him in one court, may be justified and absolved in another; he that is cast at the common Law, may be quitted in a court of equity. Now the Law and the Gospel are, as it were, two several Courts and Judicatories; they that are condemned in the one, may be justified in the other; they that are sinners in the first Adam, may be looked upon as just and righteous in the Second. There is nothing more ordinary, than for Christians, at the same time, to consider themselves under this twofold relation; namely, their state by Nature, and their state by Grace. In reference to the former it was that Paul cried out, "O wretched man that I am;" and yet in the same breath, he breaks forth into thankful Expressions for his escape and deliverance. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." {Rom.7:24,25} I doubt not but Mr. Woodbridge hath heard many ministers in their confessions, adjudge themselves sinful and wretched creatures, and yet at the same time, plead their righteousness and adoption; though their translation from one estate to the other,

was not in that very instant. The Law condemns all men living, for that all have sinned. {Rom.3:19} The Law doth not consider men as elect, or reprobates, or as believers or unbelievers, but as righteous or sinners. Believers have no more advantage by the Law, than unbelievers; the Law will not cease to threaten and condemn them, as long as they live. It is true that believers can plead their discharge, which others may have, though they know it not.

But if Mr. Woodbridge do speak of an absolute condemnation, or of such as are condemned by the first Covenant, and have no benefit at all by the second; we shall then let go the Major, and arrest his Minor proposition that all the world are under condemnation before Faith. For God doth not condemn his elect children, for whom Christ hath died; the Holy Ghost witnesseth, that God's will, to wit, of good pleasure, was, that none of them would perish or be condemned for whom Christ died; and if the judge will acquit them, who else shall condemn them? "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." {Rom.8:33} To whomsoever God doth will life and salvation, {his will being absolute and immutable,} they are not liable to condemnation.

The scriptures brought forth by him to prove his Minor, are forced to go beyond the intention of the Holy Ghost, as John 3:18, "he that believeth not, is condemned already." He that believeth not, is as much as he that never believeth, or he that believeth not at any time, as John 8:24, "if ye believe not {that is, not at all} ye shall die in your sins." The scope {see Mr. Thomas Goodwin's sermon on John 6:37} of our Saviour was to obviate those suspicions and jealousies which are lurking in the hearts of men, as if God in sending his Son, intended not their good, but only laid a design and ambushment for their further condemnation. It is no such matter, {says our Saviour,} for God sent not his Son to condemn the world. {Jn.3:17} It is an evident sign, that God had no such end in publishing the gospel, "for he that believes, is not condemned;" for he knows that he is passed from death to life; and he that believes

not; that is, that finally rejects the Grace which is here expressed, was condemned long before, by the sentence of the Law, and by the just judgment of God, proceeding against them, according to the tenor of the first Covenant. So that God need not go about to entangle men, who were before fast bound in the shackles of sin and misery; the Law condemned them sufficiently, though their contempt of the Gospel will aggravate their condemnation. Our Saviour had no intent at all to show the state of the elect before believing; but the certain and inevitable misery of them that believe not; by reason of the sentence of the Law, which had passed upon them.

His next allegation is as impertinent as this. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." {Jn.3:36} It is evident, that our Saviour speaks there of a final unbeliever, and not of an elect person before believing; the phrase of the abiding of God's wrath, is applicable to none but unto reprobates, who do perish forever; and to say that the place hints, there is a wrath of God which is done away by believing, is but an attempt to suborn the Spirit, to serve our turn.

That which seems to speak most fully to his cause is Ephesians 2:3, where the Apostle tells the Ephesians {whom God had chosen to Eternal life, chap. 1:4,} that they were "by nature the children of wrath; even as others." To which I answer; that the Text doth not say, that God did condemn them, or that they were under Condemnation before Conversion; for the Emphasis of this Text {as I conceive} lies in this clause - by nature; so then the Apostles meaning is; that by nature, or in reference to their state in the first Adam, from whom by natural propagation they descended, they were children of wrath, for they could expect nothing but wrath and fiery indignation from God; yet this hindered not, but that by Grace, they might be the Children of his Love; for so all the Elect are, whilst they are in their blood and pollution. {Ezek.16:4,8.} The Lord calls them his Sons and Children before Conversion, {Isa.43:6 & 53:11 & 8:18, Heb.2:9,} for it is not any

Inherent qualification, but the good pleasure of God, that makes them his Children. {Eph.1:5, Rom.8:29, John 17:6} Believers considered in themselves, and as they come from the loins of Adam are sinful and cursed Creatures, as vile and wretched as the Devil himself, though in Christ they behold themselves made righteous and blessed. It is granted, that Elect Infants have the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them, though they know it not; and I see no reason that can be given, why it should not be imputed to the rest of the Elect before Conversion.

Although the Elect are freed from wrath and condemnation; yet in some sense, they may be said to be under it, in regard that the Law doth terrify and affright their consciences. {Rom.4:15} In which respect, it is called a ministration of wrath, and of death. {II Cor.3:7,9} The wrath of God hath a threefold acceptation in the Scripture. 1. It signifies the most just, and immutable will of God to deal with a person or persons according to the tenor of the Law, and to inflict upon them the punishment which their sins shall deserve; and in this sense, none but Reprobates are under wrath; who for this cause are said to be hated of God. 2. It notes the threatenings and comminations of the Law. {Rom.1:18, Psal.6:1, Hos.11:9, Jonas 3:9 &c.} 3. It notes the execution of those threatenings, or the punishments threatened. {Eph.5:6, Luke 21:23, Mat.3:7} Now in the first and third sense, the Elect never were, nor shall be, under wrath; God never intended to deal with them according to the tenor of the Law; nor doth he inflict upon them the least evil, upon that account, Christ having freed and delivered them from the Curse; but as wrath is taken in the second sense, for the comminations and threatenings of the Law, so they are under wrath, till they are able to plead their discharge and release by the Gospel. The threatenings of the Law, do seize upon and arrest their Consciences, no less than others; and therefore the Law is compared to a rigid School-Master, {Gal.3:24,} which never ceaseth to whip and lash them, until they fly unto Christ. For though he hath freed them from the Curse,

yet the Lord sees it fit they should for a while be held under the Pedagogy and Ministration of the Law, that they may learn to prize the Redemption which they have by Christ. {Gal.3:22} The Lord, when he published the Law in Sinai {as the Apostle observes, Gal.3:17,} did not repent him of his promise, made typically with Abraham and his Seed, but really with Christ, and the Elect in him; but {says he} the Law was added, because of transgression; in order to discover their sinfulness and misery by nature, and to render the Grace of the promise more desirable. {vs.22} As the Saints in the Old Testament were Heirs of the Promise, {Gal.4:1,2,} had a real and actual Interest in all the Blessings of the New Covenant, whilst their Consciences were whipped and scourged by this merciless School-master; so all the rest of the Elect are partakers of the same Grace of Life, though the Law doth terrify and condemn them. The threatenings of the Law do not show what is the state of a person towards God, or how God doth account of him; but what he is by nature, and what he hath deserved, should be inflicted upon him; which a man cannot choose but expect, and fear, till his Conscience be secured by better promises; so that I shall not be afraid to say, that the Consciences of the Elect before Faith, are under wrath, and not their Persons; and though their Consciences do condemn them, yet God doth not. But against this Mr. Woodbridge hath sundry exceptions.

Objection: "The condemnation the elect are under is the condemnation of the Law; which pronounces all men guilty, not only in their own conscience, but before God." {Rom.3:19}

Answer: That the voice or sentence of the Law shows not who are condemned of God, but who are guilty and damnable in themselves, if God should deal with them by the Law, which is the scope of the apostle. "Now we know that what things soever the Law saith, it saith to them who are under the Law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." {Rom.3:19} So indeed are all men considered according to what is due by the Law? "In thy sight shall no man living be justified." {Ps.143:2} But

the elect as considered in the Grace and Forgiveness of God, and the perfect Satisfaction of Jesus Christ, are discharged from this rigorous court, their cause is judged at another bar.

Objection: "The condemnation of an unbeliever's conscience is either true or false; if true, then it is according to the judgment of God, and speaks as the thing is, and so God condemns as well as the conscience, &c."

Answer: The testimony of an unbeliever's conscience is true, so far as it agrees with the written Word; if it witnesseth to a man anything, which is neither in the Word, nor necessarily deduced from it; the testimony is false and sinful. For understanding whereof we must know, that there is a threefold act of conscience about sin; the first, when it witnesseth to us concerning the desert of sin; the second, when it witnesseth to us concerning the act of sin, or the sins which we have done; the third is, when it witnesseth to us concerning our final state and condition before God. Now if conscience doth bear witness to a man, concerning what he hath done, and what is his desert in so doing, it doth but its duty. {Rom.2:15} But if it tell a man, that for the sins which he hath done, he is a damned creature, and must perish everlastingly, such a conscience is both penally and sinfully evil. The conscience of an unbeliever accuseth truly, when it convinceth him of sin; that death eternal is the wages of it; and that by the Law he can expect no other. But if it proceeds to tell a man that his case is desperate, and without hope, it pronounceth a false sentence. For though he be a reprobate, and consequently the sentence is true in itself, yet it is a false testimony in him, for as much as conscience witnesseth that which it cannot certainly know. How much more is it a false testimony, when the conscience of an elect person doth make such a conclusion against himself, that God hath absolutely condemned him to hell torments, it is false in itself, and false in him. If it were a true sentence, it were then impossible he should be saved; for condemnation {as Mr. Woodbridge confesseth a little

after,} is opposed to salvation; and the Law saith not, "now cursed," but "cursed forever." {Matt.25:41} And therefore, I say, if the conscience of any sinner, either elect or reprobate, shall in this life, pass such an absolute and peremptory sentence against himself, that the curse of the Law shall be inflicted upon him, he sins both against the Law, by applying the ministry thereof to a wrong end, and not as God hath intended it; for the Law was not given *ex primaria intentione*, {in its primary intention} to condemn men {see Dr. Edward Reynolds, Three Treatises, pg. 385,} but to further and advance the ministry of the Gospel; that men seeing what they are by nature, and what they have deserved, might flee for refuge unto Jesus Christ. Now when men hearing the curse of the Law, conclude, that surely this must be their portion, and that it is never the nearer for them, that the Son of God hath shed his blood for sinners, they sin against the Law; in regard the end of the Law is to cause them to flee unto Christ; so that by making the sentence of the Law absolute, they quite cross the design and intention of God in giving the Law. They furthermore deny the very tenor and substance of the Gospel, which is, that in Christ there is life eternal for sinners, {I Tim.1:15; I Jn.5:10-11,} and for ought that they can know to the contrary for them, as well as for others. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." {I Jn.5:11}

Though we say, that the sentence of condemnation, which men pass upon themselves in this life, is false and erroneous, yet are we innocent of those ugly consequences which Mr. Woodbridge would thrust upon us, "of blinding men's eyes and hardening their hearts, and searing up their consciences, &c.," which are more likely to follow upon an indiscrete application of the Law, and men's making the voice thereof the definitive sentence of God, upon all transgressors; which is the ready way to make men quite desperate, and to harden their hearts in unbelief. We hold it necessary that the Law should be preached to unbelievers in its strictness, rigor, and inexorable severity; that they may see there is no hope for them at all by the works of the

Law; yet we would have it preached as an Appendant to the Gospel, not to drive men to despair, but to believe, and to flee to that Sanctuary which is opened in the Gospel; whereas if it be published alone, and as an absolute sentence, it is a bar to Faith; for if God doth condemn men, who shall justify them? Christ's merits will not save them, whom God doth condemn; witness reprobate men and angels, unto whom there remained no sacrifice at all for sin.

Objection: His third exception is, "that the condemnation with which the unbeliever is condemned, is expressed, {Jn.3:36,} by the abiding of God's wrath upon him."

Answer: Therefore we say that no elect unbeliever is condemned of God, because the wrath of God doth not abide upon him. The condemnation wherewith the unbeliever, that is, the final unbeliever is condemned is indeed the abiding of God's wrath, that is, he shall die everlastingly; for it is opposed to everlasting life; but what is this to the elect, who are not final unbelievers.

Objection: His fourth and last objection is that the condemnation of unbelievers is opposed to salvation, {Jn.3:17,} and surely, the condemnation that is opposed to salvation, is more that the condemnation of a man's own conscience, &c."

Answer: To which I reply that the condemnation opposed to salvation, is damnation; and then by Mr. Woodbridge's argument, the elect, because they are sometimes unbelievers must all be damned. But, this rather shows {as I have said before} that, by him that believeth not, is meant, he that believeth not at all.

Chapter XII

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's third, fourth, and fifth Arguments are Answered.

His third argument is drawn from the several comparisons by which Justification by Faith is illustrated. "Sometimes it is compared to the Israelites, looking up to the Brazen Serpent for healing. {Jn.3:14; Num.21:7-9} As then, they were not first healed, and then looked up to see what healed them, but they did first look upon the serpent, and then they were healed; even so it is the will of God, that whosoever seeth and believeth the Son, shall be justified. {Jn.6:40} Sometimes Faith is compared to eating and Justification to the nourishment which we receive by our meat, &c."

Answer: To which I answer, that comparisons prove nothing, unless they are framed by the Holy Ghost for the thing in question. Now I utterly deny that it was the intent of the Holy Ghost, in either of these comparisons, to show in what order or method we are justified in the sight of God. The stinging of the fiery serpents did plainly shadow forth the effects of the Law in conscience. The Law by revealing the wrath of God, against all unrighteousness, {Rom.1:18; 4:15,} stings and wounds men's consciences, {Prov.18:14;} for which cause it is called a "fiery Law." {Deut.33:2} Namely, from its effects, because it doth, as it were, kindle a fire in men's bones; they have no rest in their soul, until these wounds are healed. {Ps.102:3 & 38:3} Now as the Israelites when they were stung by those fiery serpents, found no ease, till they looked up unto the Brazen Serpent; so the soul that is smitten and wounded by the ministry of the Law, will never find rest, till it looks unto him, in whose wounds and stripes is the healing of sinners. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." {Is.53:5} "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man

be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." {Jn.3:14,15}

This very comparison doth make against him; as the Israelites were alive, when they looked upon the Brazen Serpent, or else they could not have seen it; so they that look upon Jesus Christ; {"Behold the Lamb of God," &c;} that is, believe in him, are spiritually alive, or else they could not put forth such a vital act. It is said indeed, {Num.21:9,} that when any man that was bitten, beheld the Serpent of Brass, he lived, that is, he was healed, or had ease from his anguish; so they that by Faith look up unto the Antitype, they find ease and rest for their wearied souls; they do then live, that is, they have the comfort and enjoyment of that life, which before they had in Christ. A man is said to live, when he lives comfortably and happily. {Eccl.6:2}

Mr. Woodbridge to make the comparison suit, hath falsified the text of John 6:40. The words are, that it is the will of God "that everyone that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life;" it is not, may be justified, as he corrupts it.

And whereas he says that "faith is compared to eating, and Justification to nourishment, {Jn.6:51,} it is a mistake like the former, for it is Christ himself, who throughout that chapter is compared to Bread and Food; whom by Faith we receive for our refreshment, consolation, and spiritual nourishment.

His fourth argument is drawn from the perpetual opposition between Faith and works; from whence he reasons thus, "what place and order works had to Justification in the Covenant of works, the same place and order Faith hath to our Justification in the Covenant of Grace; but works were to go before our Justification in the Covenant of works; therefore, Faith is to go before our Justification in the Covenant of Grace." I answer, that his Major is extremely gross; for I dare say that a more unfound assertion cannot be picked out of the writings, either of the Papists or Arminians, than this is. That Faith {taking it as he doth, in a proper sense} hath the same place in the Covenant of Grace, as works have in the Covenant of works. That I have not charged

him too high, will appear to any one that shall consider these few particulars.

First, works in the first Covenant, are meritorious of eternal life; he that doth the works required in the Law, may in strictness of justice claim the promise, as a due debt. {Rom.4:4} Was ever any Protestant heard to say, that Faith and faithful actions {which, as hath been shown men of his notion, do include Faith} do merit eternal life?

Secondly, works in the first Covenant, are the matter of our Justification; he that doth them, is thereby constituted just and righteous in the sight of God. Righteousness consists in a conformity to the Law, so that whosoever keeps the Law, must needs be righteous; but now Faith is not the matter of our righteousness, God doth not account men righteous for their Faith. I confess, he hath Bellarmine and Arminius on his side, who say, that Faith itself is imputed unto Righteousness; but the apostle hath taught us other doctrine, {Rom.5:19,} that by the obedience of one {that is, of Christ} many are made righteous; and that God "hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." {II Cor.5:21}

Thirdly, if Faith hath the same place in the second Covenant, as works in the first, then must God account Faith to be perfect righteousness, which is contrary to his truth and justice; for to say that Faith is perfect righteousness by the second Covenant, though not by the first, is but *petitio principii*, {that is, begging the question,} for legal and evangelical righteousness being one and the same, as to the matter of righteousness, though they are inherent in divers subjects. The first Covenant requires a righteousness in us, the second gives and accepts a righteousness which is another's.

Fourthly, if Faith hath the same place in the second Covenant as works had in the first, then were the second Covenant a Covenant of works, seeing Faith is a work, and a work of ours; so that by this means the

two covenants should be confounded, nor would the latter be any whit more of Grace than the former.

Fifthly, this assertion makes Faith to be not of Grace, because not from the Covenant of Grace, seeing the Covenant itself depends upon it. How contrary this doctrine is to the sense of our Protestant divines, hath in part been showed before, who until this last age, have taught, that these two propositions, "a man is justified by works," and "a man is justified by Faith," do carry meanings utterly opposite to one another. The one is proper and formal, and the other is metonymical and relative. In this proposition {a man is justified by works} we are to take all in a plain and literal sense, that God doth account him that hath kept the Law exactly in all points, a righteous person, and consequently worthy of eternal life; but now that other proposition {a man is justified by Faith} we must understand it relatively thus; that a sinner is justified in the sight of God, from all sin and punishment by Faith; that is, by the obedience and righteousness of Jesus Christ, which we receive and apply unto ourselves by true Faith.

Let us now hear what Mr. Woodbridge hath to say for the defense of his Major, which treads Antipodes {places diametrically opposite each other on the globe} to the current of all our Protestant writers. "If {saith he} the Minor be granted, the Major must be out of question." I must confess, if confidence did prove, here were proof enough. That which he adds, hath as little weight; as, "why should not, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, {which is the tenor of the New Covenant, Rom. 10:6,9,} plead as strongly for the antecedency of Faith to Justification in this Covenant, as, do this and live, doth evince, that works were necessary antecedents of Justification in the Old Covenant?"

Answer, here he takes that for granted, which will certainly be denied, that, believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, is the tenor of the New Covenant; for, it is nowhere called so; and where the New Covenant is recited, {as Jeremiah, chapter 31 &

Hebrews 8,} it runs quite in another strain, for it doth not promise salvation upon condition of Faith, but Faith and Salvation, and all other blessings, present and future.

That Text, Rom.10:6,9, is not the tenor of the New Covenant, for that requires Confession as well as Faith, and then the Justification of the New Covenant should be called Justification by Confession, as well as by Faith. The Apostle there describes the persons that shall be saved, they are such as do believe and profess the truth. His scope {as our divines have noted⁸³} is to resolve that grand and important Question; namely, how a man may know that he shall be saved? You need not {says he} to ascend into Heaven, or descend into Hell, &c., to fetch Christ himself to tell you by immediate Revelation, whether you shall be justified and saved; for we have nearer and more certain evidences; he that believes with the heart, &c. In this Scripture he gives us two marks or characters of a true Christian; one Internal, known only to the Christian himself - believing with the heart; the other External, or visible to men - Confession with the mouth.

He urges, "that Faith and Works have the like order to Justification, in their respective covenants, or else Justification by Faith, and Justification by works, were not opposed, as they constantly are in the Apostles Writings, &c."

We grant, that there is a true and formal opposition between Faith and Works; the affirmative, which the Jews pleaded for {that a man is justified by works;} and the negative which the Apostle contended for, {that a man is not justified by works,} but by Faith, are as opposite as East and West, and as impossible to be reconciled, as light and darkness. But then Faith must be taken objectively, and not properly; for that which is formally opposed to works, is not the act, but the object of Faith, to wit, the righteousness of Christ, which we apprehend and enjoy by Faith, for if by Faith he had meant the act of believing, there were no

⁸³ See Shepherd's "Sound Believer," pg. 230.

opposition at all between Faith and Works, and the establishing of Justification by Faith, will in no wise destroy Justification by works; and consequently {to use Mr. Woodbridge's expressions} there would be nothing but "falsehoods and equivocations in all the Apostles disputation, against Justification by works." How easily might the Jews, and the Apostle, I will add, the Papists and Protestants be reconciled? They say we must be justified by works, and these say we must be justified by Faith, which is a work of ours, and such as includes all other works of new obedience; an easy distinction will solve the matter. We are not justified by works, as they are conditions of the first Covenant, but we are justified by works, as they are conditions of the second Covenant. We are not justified by works as they are our legal righteousness, but we are justified by works, as they are our evangelical righteousness. Was it befitting the gravity of so great an Apostle, to raise so sharp a contest about a trifle, as the denomination of works from the first and second Covenant, when as the works are the very same, in respect both of the matter and subject? Would not all men have censured his writings to be but strifes of words?

6. His fifth objection is raised from I Cor.6:11, "and such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Where {says he} there is an evident opposition between the time past, and present, in respect of their Justification. And thence he argues, "now you are justified, and therefore, not before; or before, you were unjustified."

To which I answer, that the words do not countenance this inference. He says indeed, that in times past they were unsanctified, they had been fornicators, idolaters, &c., that is, as vile and wicked as the worst of men, for which sins they deserved to be shut out of the Kingdom of God, no less that they that are damned. He doth not say, that they were unjustified before conversion; they were reclaimed or cleansed from those sins, by the preaching of the gospel, but they were justified from those sins, in, or by the name, that

is, by the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ, which was imputed to them by God, whilst they lived in unbelief. But if any man will strain this consequence from the words, "you are justified," therefore you were not justified whilst you lived in these sins; I shall then own the answer which he rejects with so much scorn and contempt, that they were not justified before conversion, either in *foro conscientiae*, {in the court of conscience} or in *foro ecclesiastico*, {in the ecclesiastical court, or the Church or Assembly,} not doubting but that I shall sufficiently clear it from his exceptions.

The first of which is, why might they not be said to be sanctified before conversion, as well as justified?

I answer, that there is not the same reason for a man's Sanctification before Faith and Conversion, as there is for his Justification. For to say, that an unconverted person is sanctified, is, contradiction in addition; but it is no contradiction to say, that an ungodly or unconverted person is justified, which is the expression of the Holy Ghost. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his Faith is counted for righteousness." {Rom.4:5}

Sanctification consists in our conversion, or being turned unto God; but our Justification in God's accounting unto us the Righteousness and Satisfaction of his Son; the one is a work or act of God done without us, {II Cor.5:19,} but the other is the operation of God within us. God cannot sanctify us without holiness, because he cannot do contradictions; but God may justify us if he please without Faith and inherent Holiness, because that *ex natura rei* {from the nature of things} is no contradiction. Our Sanctification flows from Faith, as the principle and motive of it. {I Jn.3:3; 4:19; Gal.5:6} But now our Justification hath not that dependence upon Faith, seeing that Justification is God's act alone, and not ours; though we are said to be sanctified by Faith, yet not in that sense, that we are said to be justified by Faith. Faith is active in the one, but passive in the other; it is only the hand or instrument that receives our Justification in Christ, and

as such, it is the principle or efficient which operates and produceth our Sanctification.

Though Justification be sometimes taken, for the declared sentence of absolution in the court of conscience, yet it follows not, that Sanctification should be so understood; because the sentence of Justification is terminated in our conscience; but Sanctification diffused throughout the whole man. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." {I Thess.5:23} Sanctification is not our knowing that we are sanctified, but the conformity of our faculties, and their operations to the rule of holiness; so that his assertion, that {nothing can be alleged for Justification before believing, which will not hold as strongly for Sanctification before believing,} hath nothing but a frayed thread in support thereof.

His next exception is, "that the Justification they now had, was that which gave them right and title to the kingdom of God, which right and title they had not before they believed, &c., for if they had this right before they believed, then whether they believed or no, all was one as to the certainty of their salvation; and they might have gone to Heaven, though they had lived and died without Faith."

To which I answer, that these elect Corinthians had no more right to salvation after their believing, than they had before; for their right to salvation was grounded only upon the purpose of God, and the purchase of Jesus Christ. {Rom.6:23} Salvation is a gift freely bestowed upon us, and not a debt, or wages that becomes due to us upon the performance of conditions. So, it will not follow from hence, that then they might have gone to Heaven without Faith, seeing Christ hath purchased Faith for his people, no less than glory. {II Pet.1:1} And God hath certainly appointed, that all that live to years of discretion, whom in his secret Justification he hath adjudge to life, shall have this evidence of Faith. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and

as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." {Acts 13:48} "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." {Acts 2:47}

"But {says Mr. Woodbridge} this evidence is of such necessity, as that if they have it not, they shall lose that life to which they are adjudged or not; and if not, then whether they believe or do not believe, they shall be saved; if it be, then there is no absolute Justification before Faith, and Justification must be conditional."

1. By this argument, not only Faith, but all other works of Sanctification and perseverance in them, must be the conditions of our Justification; and consequently, we may be said to be justified and saved by them. The Scripture speaks the same things of works as it doth of Faith. {Mk.16:16; Prov.28:18; I Tim.4:16; Matt.24:13} Now let him consult with our Protestant divines, whether this be a good argument; namely, that no man is saved or glorified without works, therefore, men are saved by works? 2. This reason makes as much against absolute Election before Faith, as against absolute Justification; for he may argue as well that Faith is of such necessity, that they that have it not shall loose the life, to which they are elected, or not; and if not, then whether the elect believe or not they shall be saved; if it be, then there is no absolute Election before Faith, and Election must be conditional, contrary to many Scriptures. {II Tim.2:19; Rom.9:11; Mk.13:22} 3. But to the argument, we say, that Election and Justification are absolute, because they depend upon no antecedent condition in the person elected and justified, not because they are absolute without the consequents that depend upon them, so that notwithstanding all that hitherto he hath brought, the opinion he opposeth will stand unshaken. We shall now proceed to the next part of his discourse, and so weigh the strength of his replies to those arguments of ours, he is pleased to mention.

Chapter XIII

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's Answers to those Scriptures which hold an immediate actual reconciliation of sinners to God, upon the death of Christ, without the intervention of Faith, are examined.

The texts which he hath cited, as objected against him, are Matt.3:17, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and Rom 5:10, "when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Which places were not once mentioned in the conference that I had with him. The former I alleged in the discourse which I had with Mr. Warren, {as hath been shown before,} to which I had added sundry others, had I not been interrupted by the unseasonable {not to say uncivil} interposing of this antagonist, who then cast in the exceptions, which since he hath printed with some enlargements.

His first exception against the force of that Scripture, is, that the well-pleasedness of God need not to be extended beyond the Person of Christ, who gave himself unto death an offering and sacrifice unto God, of a sweet smelling savor. {Eph.5:2} Whereunto I answer, that he opposeth his single opinion against the judgment of all the interpreters that I have seen, without one grain of reason to counter-balance them, as if he were as David, {II Sam.18:3,} "worth ten thousand" such as Calvin, Beza, Perkins, &c., who do extend it unto all those, for whom Christ exhibited himself a Mediator.

It was the opinion of Musculus,⁸⁴ that this testimony of the Father doth manifest the will of God towards mankind. "God {says Calvin,} by this testimony which he gave to Christ, declares he is a Father unto us all." And a little after, "Paul doth best interpret this text,

⁸⁴ Wolfgang Musculus, 1497-1563, a Reformed theologian of the Reformation. He was the primary professor of theology at Bern Switzerland, from 1549, where he wrote several biblical commentaries and his work entitled "Loci Communes Sacrae Theologiae," or "Common Places of the Christian Religion," a major systematic theology.

{Eph.1:6,} where he says, God hath made us accepted in Jesus Christ." And again, in this clause {"this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"} he gives us to understand, that "his love is so great to Christ, that from him, it overflows upon us all." {"Harmony of the Gospels, Matthew; on Mt.3:17.} And Beza more expressly notes that the Father did hereby signify, that Christ is he alone, whom when the Father beholds, he lays aside all his wrath and indignation, which we deserved; and that he is the only Mediator and Reconciler; which {says he} will be better understood by comparing this Text with Exod.28:38, where we read, that Israel was made accepted to God by the High Priests appearing for them in the presence of God; which High Priest was undeniably a type of Christ. "And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD."

The words "I am well pleased," {saith Beza,} though in the use of sacred, and other authors, it hath the signification of the present tense; yet here it may as fitly be rendered by the time perfectly past; that the Father might declare that he is already reconciled to men in his own Son; he plainly alludes to Isa.42:1, &c. Pareus⁸⁵ concludes that the meaning of this place is, that this is my Son, for whose sake and merit, I do lay aside, all my displeasure against mine elect, and do receive them into favour. This voice doth comprise the whole mystery of our reconciliation with God, by, and for the sake of Christ. To these we might add the suffrage

⁸⁵ David Pareus, 1548-1622, a German Reformed Protestant theologian and reformer. In 1570, he came under the influence of Zacharias Ursinus. Wrote many Commentaries on the Old & New Testament, and between 1604-1717, also issued various tracts against the Papacy. Pareus advocated calling rulers to account for their actions. These opinions were viewed with suspicion by the absolute monarchy of James I of England. In 1622, authorities in Oxford were ordered to search libraries and bookshops and to burn every copy of his work.

of one of our own countrymen. "This voice {saith Ward⁸⁶} was uttered in respect of us, because of old God was angry with us for our sins, but now he is reconciled to us by Christ." And honest Ferus⁸⁷, {who was more a Protestant in the doctrine of Justification, than many of ours,} "these words were not only spoken unto Christ, but unto us." Let him that hath leisure look over more.

Furthermore, it is against the scope of the words {Mt.3:17} to limit them to the Person of Christ, they being a solemn declaration of Christ's investiture in the glorious office of a Mediator; in which respect he is said to be a Son given, and born to us, Isa.9:6; and therefore this declaration of God to men, was at his birth proclaimed by the holy Angels. {Luke 2} All that grace or favor which at any time was manifested to Christ, as a Mediator, was for their sakes whom he represented, and to whom the benefits of his Mediatorship were intended. "Jesus answered and said, this voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." {Jn.12:30} That text, {Eph.5:2,} which Mr. Woodbridge alledgeth for confining of this voice to the Person of Christ, proves nothing less, where the Apostle shows the effect of Christ's sacrifice towards us; thus, as when Noah offered up his burnt-offerings to God, "the Lord smelled a sweet savor, &c.," Gen.8:21; so when Christ offered up himself a sacrifice of atonement, the Lord smelled a savor of rest, and was fully satisfied for the sins of his people. Therefore there is no reason that can be given, why those words should be terminated to the Person of

⁸⁶ Seth Ward, Bishop of Salisbury, 1617-1689, a rigid supporter for the Church of England, in his diocese he showed great severity to nonconformists, and rigidly enforced the act prohibiting conventicles.

⁸⁷ Johann Wild – Ferus, 1497-1554, a German Franciscan scriptural commentator and preacher; prolific writer, who wrote many Commentaries on the Scriptures; and whose preaching in Mainz, Germany was influential in promoting the Papist faith; inasmuch that he was reputed by his opponents of being the most learned preacher in Germany in the sixteenth century.

Christ, {Jn.17:24,26,} seeing that God was never displeased with him, nor had our Saviour any doubt, or suspicion of it; and therefore it was altogether needless that God should declare his well-pleasedness to Him in his own person. The well-pleasedness of God is to be extended unto them, for whom Christ offered up his sacrifice; but Christ did not offer up his sacrifice for himself, but only for sinners.

Well, *haec non successit, alia aggrediamur via*, {when one way fails, another quite contrary unto it may be fixed on,} his next exception therefore is, that "if we should extend it unto men, the words prove no more than that it is through Christ, that God is well pleased with men, whensoever it be that he is well pleased." So that in his sense I am well pleased, is as much as, I will be well pleased with them, when they have performed the terms and conditions required on their part. A gloss which {I dare say} was never dreamed of, by any expositor before himself. Here, let the reader observe, how bold he makes with the Holy Ghost; for when God tells us, he is well pleased to say no, he is not now, but he will hereafter, is not to interpret, but to contradict the Scripture. His gloss contradicts itself, for if our reconciliation with God doth depend upon terms and conditions performed by us, then it is not through Christ alone, that God is well pleased with men, whensoever it is; and Christ is at most but a partial cause of our reconciliation.

But to render his paraphrase more probable, he hath cited divers other places, where {as he pretends} verbs and participles of the present tense have the signification of the future; though {says he} "the verb in this place be not the present tense, but the first aorist;" though it be the aorist, what is that to the purpose, seeing (as every school-boy knows) the aorist's have the signification of the present perfect tense {as Beza grants} then is it much more true in the present tense.

But to his allegations I answer, that in most of his instances, there is no necessity to feign a change of tenses, as John 4:25, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ;" that is, the promise of the

Messiah draws nigh to be fulfilled. So John 5:25, "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The dead did then hear the voice of the Son of man, both in his own and in his Disciples ministry. So, II Cor.3:16, "nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away;" the verbs are most properly rendered in the present tense; so when Israel shall, or doth turn unto the Lord, the veil is taken away; for as Cameron notes, "their conversion to God, doth not precede the taking away of the veil, but both are at the same time." Romans 8:24. "We are saved by hope;" the enunciation is true and emphatical in the present tense; for in many other places the saints are said to be saved and to have eternal life, whilst they are in the body. {John 3:36; 5:24; 6:54; Col.2:10; Eph.2:5,8; Tit.3:5; I Jn.5:11,12} They have here the beginnings, or first fruits of that salvation; the complement and perfection whereof, they as yet do wait for; they have now the joy and comfort of their salvation through Faith and Hope, because hope looks upon the promises of God, not as doubtful, but as sure and certain. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." {Heb.11:1} They are now saved by hope, or they shall never be saved by hope, for hope that is seen, is not hope; in the world to come they are saved by sight, and not by Faith or hope. So that text, I Cor.15:57, "but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;" is most properly rendered, "thanks be unto God that giveth, or hath given us the victory through Jesus Christ;" for the saints have already obtained victory over death and the grave, in Christ their Head. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." {Rom.8:37} "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." {Jn.16:33} So, "cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward;" {Heb.10:35;} namely, in the present effects which it did produce, as inward peace, joy, &c., according to that of

the Psalmist, "moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward." {Ps.19:11}

But, if I should grant what he desires, that in all these places there were an heterosis of tenses, {for I acknowledge this trope is frequent in Scripture;} yet this great flourish will amount to nothing, unless he had shown by the circumstances of the text, or the nature of the thing, that it must be so expounded here; for if men had liberty to feign enallages of numbers, cases and tenses, at their pleasure, it were easy to elude the meaning of the plainest texts.

Those words, {Heb.11:6,} "without Faith it is impossible to please God," do not conclude what he would have them, to wit, that God is not well-pleased with his elect in Christ, before they do believe; for the Apostle speaks there of men's works and actions, and not of their persons. No man can please God without Faith, no not believers themselves; their religious services are not pleasing to God, unless they are done in Faith, *for bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu* {an action is good when it is good in every respect; it is wrong when it is wrong in every respect.} Now Faith is a principal ingredient in the saints obedience; for if it be not done in Faith, it is not done in love. {Gal.5:6} And consequently it is not fruit unto God. {Rom.7:4} God's well-pleasedness with his Elect, is the immediate effect of the death of Christ, for that which raised a partition wall between God and them, was the breach of the Law; now when the Law was satisfied for their sins, this partition was broken down, his favor had as free a current, as if they had not sinned; and therefore the blotting out of our sin, and our reconciliation with God, is ascribed, solely, and immediately to the death of Christ, as in many other Scriptures, so particularly, Eph.1:6,7; 2:13,14; Col.1:20,21; 2:13,14, II Cor.5:19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;" he did not only act towards it, as Mr. Woodbridge glossed those words in his sermon, but {saith the text} he did not impute their sins unto them, for whom Christ died. The actual blotting out

of sin {says Mr. Perkins,} "doth inseparably depend upon satisfaction for sins, and satisfaction with God doth necessarily imply the very real and general abolishment of the guilt and punishment of sin." That which makes our persons acceptable to God, is the righteousness of Jesus Christ; but now our actions are not pleasing, unless they are conformable to the rule, and all necessary circumstances do concur; the chief whereof, is Faith in the propitiation and atonement of Jesus Christ, whereby their defects and obliquities are done away.

Whereas he adds, that it was a poor answer which I gave to Mr. Good, {that God was well pleased with his elect, whilst unregenerate, though not with their unregeneracy;} and as far as it concerns myself, I shall subscribe to his censure, I am poor, but he is rich; I am empty, but he is full. {I Cor.4:8} But, he may be pleased to take notice, that a far richer man than himself, in all kind of learning both human and divine, hath given the very same answer unto this question. Mr. Pemble distinguisheth between God's love to our persons, and God's love to our qualities and actions. "A distinction which {says he} parents are well skilled in, who put a difference between the vices, and persons of their children; those they have, these they love, even when for their vices they do chastise their persons. The case {says he} is the same between God and the elect; his love to their persons is from everlasting the same; nor doth their sinfulness lessen it, nor their sanctity increase it, because God in loving their persons, never considered them otherwise, than as most perfectly holy and unblameable in Jesus Christ, &c." {William Pemble, "Vindiciae Gratiae," 1627 Edition, pg.19.} It is a strange inference which he draws from my words, that because I said, God is well pleased with the persons of his elect, whilst unregenerate, that afterwards he is well pleased with their unregeneracy also. He might as well impose this absurdity upon the Prophet, that because he saith, Ezek.16:8, "thy time {namely, the time of unregeneracy,} was the time of love." Surely not of unregeneracy, but of their persons then unregenerate,

that therefore the Prophet supposeth, that after their conversion God did love their unregeneracy, or that corruption of nature which remained in them. Such quibbles are unbecoming serious Christians!

I shall add but a word to clear up the difference between the actions of regenerate and unregenerate persons. First, we say that the best actions of unregenerate men are impure and sinful, which though they are pardoned unto all the Elect for the sake of Christ, yet they are not acceptable to God, but in themselves most abominable and loathsome in his sight. {Prov.5:8, Tit.1:15, Is.1:13, &c.} Secondly; though {as the Orthodox acknowledge} the best works of the best men, have not in them that inherent purity and holiness, which can stand before God without the mediation of their High Priest; yet they may be said to be acceptable and pleasing unto God, only as they are washed and cleansed in the blood of Christ. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." {I Pet.2:5} Our spiritual sacrifices are made acceptable to God in Jesus Christ, or by his taking away the sin and defilement that adheres unto them. "And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD." {Ex.28:38} Our High Priest doth not procure the acceptance of those works, which in their whole abstract nature, are sinful, such as are all our works before Conversion, and the fruits of the flesh after Conversion, he obtains forgiveness, but not acceptance for them; but now those works which come from the Spirit of God, and are sinful only through the mixture of our corruptions {as sweet water which passeth through a sink} these he makes acceptable to the Father, by taking away the imperfections and defilements that adhere unto them.

The next Scripture which Mr. Woodbridge hath brought in, by way of objection against himself, is Rom.5:10, "for if, when we were enemies, we were

reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." To which he answers, "that Christ's death was the price of our reconciliation, and so it is through the death of Christ that we are reconciled, be it when it will be that we are reconciled." Against this answer of his, I shall offer these exceptions. 1. It offers a manifest violence to the text, to say, that we were reconciled, is as much as we shall be reconciled when we have performed the terms and conditions required of us. 2. If our reconciliation to God did depend upon terms and conditions performed by us, then is it not through the death of Christ that we are reconciled unto God; we should be more the cause, of our reconciliation, than Christ is; for he that performs a condition, to which a benefit is promised, doth more to the procuring of it, than he that makes or obtains that conditional grant; notwithstanding which, he is never a whit the near of the benefit, unless his own act do concur. 3. The Apostle declares that this reconciliation was made when we were enemies; therefore, before our believing or the fulfilling of any condition on our part; for believers are not enemies. 4. If his meaning were no more than this, that it is through the death of Christ that we are reconciled, be it when it will that we are reconciled; then this clause {when we were enemies} would be superfluous and redundant; whereas the main emphasis of the text doth lie therein, as is evident from the gradation which the Apostle makes in verses 6, 8 & 10. 5. The Apostle in, II Cor.5:19, affirms, that our Saviour did not only pay the price of our reconciliation, but that God did so far accept of or acquiesce therein, that upon the payment of it, he did not impute our sins unto us, that is, he justified us; for the Apostle in Romans, chapter 4, defines Justification to be the non-Imputation of sin. 6. And lastly, that which he grants, yields the matter in question; namely, the immediate actual reconciliation of sinners upon the death of Christ; for if Christ by shedding his blood, paid the total and full price for our deliverance from the curse of the Law, then were we actually set free from the obligation of it; for when the debt is paid, the debtor is free in Law; and it is

unjust to implead a person for a debt, which has already been paid in full.

Secondly, to illustrate and confirm his answer, he makes use of Grotius⁸⁸, and his distinction of three moments, or periods of the will of God. God at enmity; God appeasable, and God appeased. "Before the consideration of the death of Christ, God {saith he} is at enmity with the sinner, though not averse from all ways and means of reconciliation. After the consideration of the death of Christ; and now is the Lord not only appeasable, but doth also promise that he will be reconciled with sinners; upon such terms as he himself shall propose. After intercession on Christ's part, and Faith on the sinners part; and now is God actually reconciled, and in friendship with the sinner."

This Grotian and Vorstian Divinity is monstrously gross, which renders God as changeable as a fickle Creature, and palpably denies his God-like nature; as, His Simplicity, Eternity, Omniscency, Immutability, &c. Arminius himself was more modest than to affirm a change in the will of God; nay, Plato was a more Orthodox divine in this point, who said, "that the first mover can be moved of none, but by himself." The will of God is not inclined or moved by anything without him, unto any of his acts, whether Immanent or Transient; for that which is the cause of his will, is the cause of Himself; seeing that his will, is his Essence. The death of Christ doth not cause any alteration in the will of God; his Merits are not the cause, why God doth love us, or will to us the blessings of his Covenant, they did not change God; and the Reasons are, {1} Because God is unchangeable, he neither ceaseth to will what at any time he intended, nor doth he begin to will what he did

⁸⁸ Hugo Grotius, 1583-1645, a philosopher, theologian, apologist, historiographer, statesman, diplomat, &c., but more essentially Grotius sided against God's Predestinating Grace in Christ, and took up the Arminian cause of free will. His contributions to Arminian theology provided the seeds for later Arminian-based movements, such as Methodism, &c, and he is acknowledged as a significant figure in the Arminianism-Calvinism debate.

not always purpose. {2} Because no reason can be given of the will of God. Nothing that hath its being in time, can be the cause of that which is eternal, for then the effect should be before the cause. Now that I may not *actum agree*, {to do what has already been done,} I shall desire the reader to consult what Mr. Owen hath said in answer to this notion of Grotius; whereof if Mr. Woodbridge had vouchsafed to take any notice, he might have seen cause enough to decline from the steps of his admired Grotius. {John Owen, Death of Death, 1650 Edition, pgs.36, &c.}

Thirdly, he infers, that because the Apostle saith, Rom.5:11, "by whom we have now received the atonement;" or reconciliation, therefore, not before we believed. To which I answer, that he might as well reason, that because the Apostle saith, I Cor.15:20, "but now is Christ risen from the dead;" therefore, he was not risen before he wrote that epistle; and from, Eph.2:2, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;" or unbelief, therefore, he did not work in them before. If it be referred to our receiving or apprehension by Faith, it doth not prove, that the reconciliation or atonement was not made before. There is a wide difference between the making or obtaining of reconciliation and our receiving of it; though we cannot receive, or apply it to ourselves any otherwise than by Faith, yet it follows not, that God did not account it unto us before. The typical sacrifices made a present atonement, much more the real. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" {Heb.9:14}

Fourthly, he gives us his opinion concerning the immediate effect of the death of Christ, "which {saith Mr. Baxter} is one of the greatest and noblest questions in our controverted divinity; he that can rightly answer this is a divine indeed." And no doubt but Mr. Woodbridge deserves the bell in his account. Let us therefore see what a glorious achievement he ascribes unto it. "It is {saith he} through the death of Christ,

that the promise of reconciliation is made by, and according to which we are actually reconciled unto God after we do believe;" that is, at the day of judgment when we have performed that, and all other conditions required of us; which in sum is as if he had said, that the death of Christ procured no certain or immediate effect at all; for notwithstanding his death, it is possible that none may be saved; for things obtained under condition, are to their accomplishment altogether uncertain; for the condition may be fulfilled, or it may not be fulfilled. The utmost which hereby is ascribed to the death of Christ, is that he hath obtained a salvability for sinners, or a way whereby they may become their own saviors; which in the old Popish English is, that Christ hath merited, that we might merit eternal life; or as the Remonstrants have refined the phrase, his death hath made God *placabilis*, {placable; that is able to be easily pacified;} but not *placates* {appeased; that is, satisfied in Christ.} "A shift {says Pemble} devised merely to uphold the liberty of man's will and universal redemption." Whereunto the abettors of this notion do quicken them apace.

But against it I oppose these considerations. 1. The Scripture nowhere ascribes this effect to the death of Christ, that he died to obtain a conditional grant, and that we by performing the condition might be reconciled to God, but to obtain peace and reconciliation itself. Daniel doth not say that Messiah shall be cut off to obtain a promise, but "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, &c." {9:24} Nor the Apostle, that Christ by the blood of the cross, hath obtained a conditional promise of reconciliation, but that he hath made peace, {Col.1:20,} broken down the partition wall, {Eph.2:14,} and delivered us from the curse, {Gal.3:13;} and our Saviour in that of, Matt.26:28, {which Mr. Woodbridge cites} doth not say, that he shed his blood to procure a conditional promise, whereby all men may obtain remission; but for the remission of the sins of many, that is, of all the Elect. "For this is my blood of the new

testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." 2. If Christ by his death obtained only a conditional promise, then was his death no more available to the Elect, than unto Reprobates, no more to Peter, than it was to Judas; whereas the Scripture shows us, that the effects of Christ's death are peculiar only to the Elect. "I lay down my life for the sheep." {Jn.10:15} "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." {Jn.17:20} 3. If Christ by his death obtained but a conditional promise, then do men more for their Salvation, than Christ hath done; for he that performs the condition, doth more to his Salvation, than he that obtained the conditional promise; notwithstanding which, he might have perished. 4. It makes Christ to have died in vain, at least, without any determinate end, in reference unto them, for whom he died; seeing that notwithstanding his death, it was possible, that none at all might be saved. And thus {as Mr. Owen hath noted} he is made a Surety of an uncertain Covenant, a Purchaser of an Inheritance perhaps never to be enjoyed, a Priest sanctifying none by his Sacrifice; a thing we would not ascribe to a wise man in a far more easy undertaking. If Mr. Woodbridge shall say that Christ is certain, that the Elect will perform the condition required, we shall demand whether this certainty doth arise from their wills, or his will. If he say from their wills, and his fore-sight of their will, using of their natural abilities to fulfill the condition required, he shakes hands with Papists and Arminians, who make our Election and Redemption to be but an uncertainty, a conceit that hath been confuted over and over; if from his own will, because he hath purchased Faith for them, then he obtained more by his death, than a conditional promise.

Fifthly, the ground whereon he builds these assertions is a very sandy foundation indeed, to wit, that the death of Christ was not *solutio cjusdem*, {in essence, a payment of the same,} but *tantidem*, {is as good,} not the payment of that which was in the obligation, but of something equivalent; and therefore it

doth not deliver us *ipso facto*, {by the fact itself,} but according to the compact and agreement between the Father and him. I answer, whether the death of Christ be a full payment equivalent to the sum; as it is a perfect satisfaction or payment of a debt, so the discharge thereby procured, must needs be present and immediate? For that a debt should be paid and satisfied, and yet justly chargeable, implies a contradiction.

But Mr. Woodbridge might have thought we would expect a better proof than his bare word, that the death of Christ was not a full payment, seeing the Holy Ghost shows otherwise, first, that Christ was held in the same obligation which we were under. Christ was made under the Law, not another, but the very same that we were held in. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." {Gal.4:4,5} Therefore Christ paid the same debt that we did owe. Secondly, that the curse or punishment which we deserved, was inflicted upon him. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." {Gal.3:13} The whole wages or curse that is due to sin is death, and this Christ underwent for us. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." {Heb.2:14} "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." {Is.53:4,5} What is it to die, or to bear chastisement for another, but to undergo that death which the other should have undergone? If it be objected, that the death which we deserved is eternal, such as the damned endure; our divines have answered long ago, that Christ's death was such in *pondere*, {weight,} though not in *specie*, in *potentia*, {in particular, in potency,} or in *actu* {actually.} The dignity of his Person raised the price of

his temporary sufferings to an equipollency with the other. Mr. Owen says well, "that there is a sameness in Christ's sufferings, with that in the obligation in respect of essence, and equivalency in respect of the adjuncts or attendencies." Thirdly, the laying of our sins upon Christ, {Isa.53:6,} subjected him to the same punishment which our sins deserved. Fourthly, if God would have dispensed with the same in the first obligation, Christ need not have died; for if the justice of God would have been satisfied with less than that penalty threatened in the Law, he might as well have dispensed with the whole; so then his inference, that the death of Christ doth not actually deliver us, {being destitute of this support,} will fall to the ground of its own accord.

Mr. Woodbridge grants, that "if the debtor himself do bring unto the creditor that which he owes him, it presently discharges him, but the payment of a surety doth not." And why not? Amongst men there is no difference, so the debt be paid, it matters not whether by the principal, or his surety, the obligation is void in respect of both. The case is the very same between Christ and us. Secondly, this exception makes the payment of Christ less efficacious for the discharge of our debt, than if it had been made by us, whereas it is infinitely more acceptable to God, than the most perfect righteousness performed by us.

"But {says he} the payment of a surety is refusable." Not after that he is admitted by the creditor, and taken into bond with, or for the principal debtor. It is true, God might have refused to be satisfied for our debt by a surety; but seeing he ordained his Son to be our Surety, and entered into Covenant with him from everlasting to accept his payment on our behalf; the debt which he hath fully satisfied cannot be charged again, either upon the party, or surety, without manifest injustice.

"But the Father and the Son have agreed between themselves, that none should have actual reconciliation by the death of Christ, till they do believe." Show us this agreement, and we will yield the cause. As

for the Scriptures which he hath mentioned, they speak of no such thing. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." {Jn.6:40} This text, and others like it, do only show who have the fruition and enjoyment of the benefits of Christ, to wit, they that believe. The other text, Gal.5:2,4, is palpably abused to serve his turn. The Apostle doth not say, without Faith Christ shall profit us nothing, but if we join anything with Christ as necessary to attain salvation, we are not believers, or true Christians, our profession of Christ shall profit us nothing; and the reason hereof is, because these two principles cannot be mixed.

A man's righteousness before God is either all of works or all by Christ; and therefore, whosoever attributes any part thereof to works, he wholly renounces Christ. At the sixth verse he attributes that to Faith which he denies unto works. "In Christ Jesus {saith the Apostle} neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but Faith which worketh by love." But as the Godly learned have well observed, the intent of the Apostle here, was not to show what it is that doth justify, but what are the exercises of divine worship, in which Christians should be conversant. He doth not say that Faith working by love is available to us before God, or in the sight of God, but in Christ. In the Church or Kingdom of Christ, which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; though neither Faith, nor love, are available to justify us, yet they are available; or that is, acceptable to God as acts or duties of spiritual obedience, they are the only acceptable service which we can perform to God in Christ. The last place he hath mentioned is as little to the purpose as the rest, I Jn.5:12, "he that hath not the Son, hath not life." True! He doth not say, that all who have not Faith {except final unbelievers} have not the Son, or any benefit by him.

"But {says Mr. Woodbridge} if our adversaries could prove, that it was either the will of God in giving his Son, or the will of Christ in giving himself to the

death, that his death should be available to the immediate and actual reconciliation of sinners, without any condition performed on their part, it were something to the purpose; but till this be done {which indeed can never be done} they were as good say nothing."

Had not prejudice cast a mist before his eyes, the Scriptures which have been brought already, would be proof sufficient. What clearer Testimony can be desired of the will of God and of Christ in this point, than those Sacred Oracles which show us. First; that Christ by the will of God, gave himself a Ransom and Sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor unto God, in behalf of all the Elect. Jn.6:27; Heb.5:10 & 10:9,10. Secondly; that this Ransom was alone, and by itself, a full adequate and perfect satisfaction to Divine Justice, for all their sins. Heb.1:3; 10:10,12,14; I Jn.1:7. Thirdly; that God accepted it, and declared himself well pleased and satisfied therewith, Matt.3:17; Isa.42:1; insomuch, that God hath thereupon covenanted and sworn, that he will never remember their sins, nor be wroth with them anymore, Isa.43:25; 54:9,10. Fourthly; that by this Ransom of his, they are freed and delivered from the curse of the Law. Gal.4:4; 3:13.

Our adversaries say that Christ paid the price for their redemption, but with no intent that they should be immediately and absolutely freed; which is often boldly affirmed, and slenderly proved. But why not immediately and absolutely? "There is {says Mr. Woodbridge} a compact and agreement between the Father and the Son, when he undertook to be our Surety, that his death should not be available for the actual reconciliation of sinners, till they have performed the terms and conditions required on their part." *Hoc restat probandum*, {that remains to be proved,} and I am persuaded will, till the world's end. Let them show us this Covenant and agreement, and we are satisfied; till this be done, we shall think our proofs sufficient; and that the force of those allegations is no whit invalidated by this crude assertion. I confess, I have heard much talk of the suspensive Covenant, but hitherto I have not had the hap to meet with that author, that hath

attempted to make it forth; though I might justly be excused from the labour of proving the negative, seeing that it lies upon our adversaries to clear it up, that there was such a compact and agreement made between the Father and the Son, that his death should not be available to the immediate reconciliation of sinners, but only upon conditions performed by them. Yet because I intend not any other reply, and that Mr. Woodbridge may see I do not dissent, because he hath said, and not proved it; which in controverted points were ground enough; I shall offer him the reasons which as yet do sway my judgment to believe the contrary.

Chapter XIV

Of the Covenant between the Father and the Son concerning the immediate effects of Christ's death.

The reasons which persuade me to believe, that there was not any Covenant passed between God and Christ to hinder the immediate and actual reconciliation of God's elect by his death, and to suspend this effect thereof upon terms and conditions to be performed by them; but contrariwise, that it was the will both of God and of Christ, that his death should be available to their immediate and actual Reconciliation and Justification, without any condition performed on their part, are as followeth.

First, there is no such Covenant doth appear, therefore, there is none. *Non est Scriptum*, {there is no Scripture,} therefore there is no such thing; hath hitherto been counted a good argument amongst Christians. It is not possible to speak ought of God, beside the things which are Divinely manifested in the Old and New Testament. If there be any such Covenant, let our adversaries show it, and until they do, we shall rest securely in the negative; they must pardon us, if we yield not up our Faith to unwritten verities.

Secondly, the Covenant made between God and Christ; was, that upon giving up of himself to death, he should purchase a Seed like the Stars of Heaven; that is, all the Elect of God, Isa.53:10; and our Saviour Christ after that he had tasted death to bring many sons unto glory, boasts and glories in this achievement. "Behold, I and the children, whom God hath given me." {Heb.2:13} Therefore it was the will of God, that his death should be available for their immediate reconciliation; for they could not be the children of Christ, and the children of wrath at the same time.

Thirdly, if it were the will of God, that the death of Christ should be the payment of our debt, and a full satisfaction for all our iniquities, then was it his will, that our discharge procured thereby should be immediate; but it was the will of God, that the death of Christ should be the payment of our debts, and a full satisfaction for our iniquities, therefore, I suppose that the assumption will not be questioned; for though the word Satisfaction be not used in Scripture, yet the thing itself is plainly signified in those phrases of Redemption, Atonement, Reconciliation; and in like manner, all those places which declare that Christ died for us, and for our sins, and offences, do imply the same; namely, that the death of Christ was the payment of our debts, and the punishment of our sins; that thereby he satisfied the Law for all those wrongs and injuries we have done unto it. Now the sequel is evident; if God willed that the death of Christ should be a full and satisfactory payment of our demerits, then he willed that the discharge procured thereby, should be immediate and present; for it is contrary to Justice and Equity, that a debt when it is paid, should be charged either upon the Surety or Principal; and therefore though God did will, that the other effects of Christ's death, as it is the meritorious effects of Faith, Holiness, Glory, &c, should be not present but future; yet he willed, that this effect of it; namely, our discharge from sin, and the curse, should be present and immediate; because it implies a contradiction, that the same debt should be paid, and not paid; that it should be discharged, and yet justly

chargeable. As when a man that is a trespasser, or any one for him, pays a sum of money, which is sufficient both for the discharge of his trespass, as also for the purchase of a piece of land. From the trespass his discharge must be present, if the satisfaction be full, though the enjoyment of the land may be *in diem*, {from day to day,} as the buyer and purchaser can agree; the case before us is the very same. The death of Christ was both a price and a ransom, it served both to pay our debts, and to procure our happiness; he did thereby purchase both our deliverance from sin and death, and all those Spiritual Blessings, present and future, which we stand in need of. The discharge of our debts, and deliverance from punishment must needs be present and immediate upon the payment of the price, though those Spiritual Blessings be not received till a long time after, as God and Christ shall see it fit to bestow them on us.

Fourthly, if nothing hindered the reconciliation of the Elect with God, but the breach of the Law, then the Law being satisfied, it was the will of God that they should be immediately reconciled; but nothing hindered their reconciliation with God, but the breach of the Law. Therefore; it was sin alone that made a distance, or separation between God and them, {Isa.59:2;} for which cause it is compared to a cloud or mist, {Isa.44:22,} and to a partition wall. {Eph.2:14} It lay as a block in the way, that God could not in accords with Divine Justice bestow upon them those good things intended towards them in his Eternal Election. The cause of Christ's death was to satisfy the Law; for he did not die to procure a new will or affection in the heart of God towards his Elect, nor yet to add any new thing in God, which doth perfect and complete the act of Election. But that God might save us in a way agreeable to his own Justice, that he might confer upon us all those Blessings he intended, without wrong and violation to his holy Law; for God having made a Law, that the soul which sinneth, should die, the Justice and Truth of God required that satisfaction should be made for the sins of the Elect; which, they being unable to perform, the Son

of God became their Surety, to bear the Curse, and fulfill the Law in their stead. God might will unto us sundry benefits, which he cannot actually bestow upon us without wrong to his Justice. As a king may will and purpose the deliverance of his favorite, who is imprisoned for debt, yet he cannot actually free him, till he hath paid and satisfied his Creditor. So though God had an irrevocable, peremptory will to save his Elect; yet he could not actually save them, till satisfaction was made unto his Justice; which being made, there is no let or impediment to stop the current of his blessings. As when the Cloud is dissolved, the Sun shines forth; when the partition wall is broken down, they that were separated are again united. So the cloud of our sins being blotted out, the beams of God's love have as free a passage towards us, as if we had not sinned. Now that Christ by his death removed this let and hindrance, the Scripture is as express as can be desired, as that he made an end of sin, Dan.9:24; blotted it out, &c., Col.2:14; took it quite away, {as the Scape-goat, Lev.16:22,} Jn.1:29; and slew the enmity between God and us. Eph.2:16.

Fifthly, if it were the will of God that the sin of Adam should immediately over-spread his posterity, then it was his will that the Satisfaction and Righteousness of Christ, should immediately redound to the benefit of God's Elect; for there is the same reason for the immediate transmission of both, to their respective subjects; for {as the Apostle shows, Rom.5:14} both of them were heads and roots of mankind. Now the sin of Adam did immediately over-spread his posterity; for all men sinned in him, before ever they committed any actual sin, Rom.5:12,14; and in like manner the Righteousness of Christ descended immediately upon all the Elect for their Justification, Rom.5:17,18.

Sixthly, if the sacrifices of the Law were immediately available for the typical cleansing of sins under that administration, then the sacrifice which Christ hath offered was immediately available to make a real atonement and actual reconciliation for all those sins for

which he suffered. The reason of the consequence is, because the real sacrifice is not less efficacious than the typical. Heb.9:14. But those legal sacrifices did immediately make atonement, without any conditions performed on the part of the sinner. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD." {Lev.16:30}

Seventhly, if it be the will of God that the death of Christ should be available, for the immediate reconciliation of some of the Elect, without any condition performed by them, then it was his will, that it should be so for all of them; the reason is, because the Scripture makes no difference between persons in the communication of this Grace. The free gift {saith the Apostle} came upon all men, that is *in omnes praedestinos*, {to all those predestinated,} to Justification of life; {Rom.5:18;} namely, by the gracious imputation of God. But it is the will of God that the death of Christ should be available for the immediate reconciliation of some of the elect, without conditions performed by them; as, to elect infants, or else they are not reconciled, and consequently they cannot be saved.

Now if any shall say, that God hath a peculiar way of reconciling and justifying infants, or of communicating unto them the benefits of Christ's death; let them clear it up from Scripture; let them show us the text that saith, God gives salvation unto infants in one manner, and to men in another; to the one freely, and to the others upon conditions. If they say that infants have the seed or habit of Faith, the Scripture will contradict them, which affirms that they have no knowledge at all, either of good or evil. {Deut.1:39} And that they cannot so much as discern between the right and left hand. And if so, how can they who conceive not of natural things, understand those things that are heavenly and spiritual? And therefore {says Augustine} "if we should go about to prove, that infants know the things of God, who as yet know not the things of men, our own senses would confute us; and can there be Faith without knowledge?" "Faith cometh by hearing,

and hearing by the word of God" preached. {Rom.10:17} Now infants either hear not, or if they do, they understand not what they hear. We have sufficient experience, that no children give any testimony of Faith, until they have been taught and instructed. Elect children {which are afterwards manifested to be such} are as obstinate and unteachable as any others. As for the instance of the Baptist, that he believed in his mother's belly, because it is said, {Lk.1:41,} that he was filled with the Holy Ghost, &c., it doth not prove it; for {as one observes,} {Downe⁸⁹, "A treatise of the true nature and definition of Justifying Faith together with a defense of the same, against the answer of Nicholas Baxter;" 1635, pg.199,} it is not said, *credidit in utero*, {that he believed in the womb,} but only *exultavit*, {rejoiced,} which exultation or springing, *divinitus facta est in infante, non humanitus ab infante* {was, in essence, a Divine motion in the infant, and not a human action by the infant.} And therefore it is not to be drawn into an example, or urged as a rule to us, what to think of other infants. But if any shall say, that infants do perform the conditions of reconciliation and salvation by their parents; then it will follow, that all the children of believing parents are reconciled and justified, because they perform the conditions, as much for all as they do for one. But I suppose no man will say, that all the children of believing parents are justified; for we may as well assert works of supererogation, as that one is justified by another's Faith. {Ez.18:20} That any infants are saved, it is merely from the Grace of election, and the free Imputation of Christ's righteousness; of which, all that are elected, are made partakers in the same manner.

Eighthly, if it were the will of God, that Christ should have the whole glory of our Reconciliation; it was

⁸⁹ John Downe, 1570?-1631, Church of England clergyman, was born at Holdsworth, Devon, the son of John Downe and his wife, Joan, daughter of John Jewel; his uncle, who exerted a strong influence on Downe, was John Jewel, bishop of Salisbury.

his will that it should not in the least depend upon our works or conditions; because that condition, or conditions, will share with him in the glory of this effect; and our Justification would be partly of Grace, and partly of works; partly from Christ, and partly from ourselves. Nay, it would be more from ourselves than from Jesus Christ; seeing, that notwithstanding all that he hath done for us, we had been eternally miserable, unless we had also contributed our own endeavors. How derogatory this is to Christ, and contrary to the Scriptures, is sufficiently manifest.

Ninthly, if it were the will of God that his people should have strong consolations, {Heb.6:18,} and that their joy should be full, {I Jn.1:4,} then it was his will that their peace and reconciliation should not depend upon terms and conditions performed by themselves. For {as was noted before out of Calvin} it is impossible that any should enjoy a firm and settled peace, whose confidence towards God is grounded upon conditional promises; and, says the Apostle, our salvation is by Grace, to the end that the promise might be made sure unto all the seed; implying that if it depended never so little upon our works, we could not be sure thereof, and consequently, we must walk in darkness, and see no light.

Tenthly, if it were the will of God, that the death of Christ should be available for the reconciliation of his elect, whilst they live in this world, then it was his will that it should procure for them immediate and actual reconciliation, without the intervention of those conditions supposed to be required of them; and the reason of this consequence is, because they cannot perform all the conditions required of them till their last breath, this being one, that they must persevere to the end; and the nature of conditional grants is such, that the benefit cannot be had and enjoyed, till all the conditions are performed. So that if the reconciliation of the elect did depend upon the conditions pretended, they should not only not have Reconciliation before Faith, but not before death; which is contrary to innumerable Scriptures, which do declare that the saints

are perfectly justified, and so immutably reconciled unto God, that nothing shall be able to separate them from his love; though their Sanctification be imperfect, {in themselves,} yet their Justification is as full and perfect as ever it shall be; it doth not grow and increase as the other doth, but is as perfect at first; and therefore baptism which seals unto us the forgiveness and washing away of all our sins, not original only, but actual also, is administered but once in all our lifetime; to show that our Justification is done all at once, at the very first instant, wherein the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. {Ezek.16:8,9; Acts 13:39; I Jn.1:7; Col.2:13,14}

Eleventhly, if it were the will of God that the death of Christ should certainly and infallibly procure the reconciliation of his elect, then surely it was not the will of God that it should depend upon terms and conditions on their part; because that which depends upon future conditions, is, as to the event, altogether uncertain, it is possible it may never be, by the non-performance of the condition. But this hath been alleged before.

Twelfthly, if God willed this blessing to his Elect by the death of Christ, but conditionally; then he willed their Reconciliation and Justification, no more than their non-Reconciliation and Condemnation; and stood as it were indifferent to either event; but doubtless his heart was more set upon it then so. {Jn.6:38,39; 17:21-24.} The consequence is clear, for if he willed their Justification only in case they should believe, and repent; then he willed their Damnation in case they do not believe, and repent; and then it will follow that he willed their Justification, no more than their Damnation; nay, most probably; he willed it less, because we are more prone to Infidelity, than we are to Faith; and to hardness of heart, than we are to repentance.

Thirteenthly, if God willed unto men the benefits of Christ's death upon any condition to be performed by them, it will follow that God foresaw in them an ability to perform some good, which Christ hath not merited. Conditional reconciliation necessarily supposes Free-will. For either God willed it unto men upon a possible, or

impossible condition; not upon an impossible condition, for that is inconsistent with the wisdom of God; if upon a possible condition, the possibility thereof ariseth either from God's will, or from man's will; it is possible, either because God will bestow it, or because man can perform it. Our adversaries cannot mean it in the former sense, for God will bestow upon us nothing, but what Christ hath purchased; and Christ hath purchased nothing, save what God hath promised in his Covenant. Now Mr. Woodbridge denies that the promise of Faith is any part of the Covenant, or any effect of it, and others that are for this conditional reconciliation look upon it as a ridiculous conceit, that God should promise men Salvation upon a condition, and that he should work this condition in them, and for them; so that in the upshot, we shall be beholding chiefly to free will, an opinion so absurd that in all ages it hath been exploded by humble and sober minded Christians, it being palpably contrary to the Scriptures which show that every man by nature is without strength, dead in trespasses and sins, that we cannot so much as think a good thought, that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. If any shall say that God did will that by Christ we should have Faith, and after that reconciliation; though this be granted them, it will follow notwithstanding, that our reconciliation is an immediate effect of the death of Christ {as Mr. Owen hath invincibly proved in his answer to Baxter,} and then all the controversy will be about God's order and method in conferring on us the effects of Christ's death; and whether God doth enable a man to perform good works, before his person is reconciled to God. Some reasons for the negative have been given before.

Fourteenthly, if God did will that our sins should be accounted unto Christ without any condition on our part, then it was his will that they should be discounted unto us without any condition, and the reason thereof is, because the charging and accounting of them unto him, necessarily includes our discharge; the imputing of our sins to Christ was formally the non-imputing of them unto us. God's accounting of them unto Christ {as hath

been shown} was a real discounting of them from us, for they could not be accounted or charged upon both, without a manifest contradiction in the thing itself, and in the justice of God. But God willed that our sins should be accounted to, and charged upon Christ, without any condition performed by us, for he actually suffered for them before we were.

To these Arguments from Scripture, I might add many plain Texts, which do declare that our Reconciliation is the actual and immediate effect of Christ's death, as Col.1:14; Eph.1:7. We have redemption {not, we shall have} the forgiveness {or non-imputation} of sins according to the riches of his grace; {not according to any condition performed by us;} he having obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb.9:12; II Cor.5:18,19. A place which we have often mentioned, the Apostle shows that Christ by his death made such a reconciliation for us, as that God thereupon did not impute our sins unto us, which was long before any condition could be performed by us. Elsewhere, that Christ by himself purged and expiated our sins, Heb.1:3, and afterwards set down, as having finished that work, chap.10:12. Now sin that is fully purged, and expiated, is not imputable to the sinner. The same Apostle adds, that Christ by his sacrifice hath forever perfected all them for whom it was offered, Heb.10:14; and in another place, that he hath made them complete, as to the forgiveness of their sins, Col.2:10-14. In Romans 8:33,34, he argues from the death of Christ to the non-imputation of our sins "who can lay anything to the charge of God's Elect, it is God that justifieth, it is Christ that died;" whereas notwithstanding sin would have been chargeable upon them, and they condemnable, if the death of Christ had not procured their discharge, without the intervention of any condition performed by them.

Chapter XV

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's Replies to the second objection {as he calls it} concerning our being justified in Christ as a common person, are examined.

The argument was proposed by me at the time of our conference, in this manner. They that were in Christ as a common person, {Covenant Representative,} before they believed, were justified before they believed; but many were in Christ, as a common person, before they believed, therefore, Mr. Woodbridge denied both propositions. The major I proved in this wise; if Christ was justified before many that are in him do believe; then they that are in him, were justified before they believed. But Christ was justified before many that are in Christ did believe, therefore his answer hereunto {as I remember} was, "I deny all;" and the assumption was confirmed from Isa.50:8,9, in this manner, "Christ was justified at his resurrection, but that happened before many of them, who are in Christ as a common person, do believe." Therefore, that Christ was justified at his resurrection, is clear from this text, "he is near that justifieth me, &c.," {Is.50:8,} which words {I said} were uttered by the Prophet in the Person of our Saviour, in the time of his greatest humiliation, who comforted himself with this, that the Lord would shortly justify him; which was to be done at his resurrection, {see Thomas Goodwin, Christ Set Forth, 1642 Edition, Section 3, Chapter 5} when the Lord publicly declared to all the world, that he was acquitted and discharged from all those sins which were laid upon him, and which he as a Surety undertook to satisfy. The sequel of the major was also proved by this enthymeme, that the acts of a common person do belong unto them whom he represents; whatsoever is done by, or to a common person, as such, is to be attributed to them in whose stead he stands; and therefore if Christ were justified, all that were in him were justified also; for seeing that he was not justified from his own, but from the sins of others; all they whom he represents were justified in his

Justification. Whereunto he replied, "that Christ was not justified according to the tenor of the New Covenant," which did lead us to that discourse of the New Covenant, which is afterwards mentioned, of which in its place.

We shall now take a view of his replies to this argument, which we find in his printed copy. And, herein he distinguisheth of a threefold Justification. Purposed; purchased, and exemplified, all which are before Faith. So then by his own confession, Justification in a Scripture sense goes before Faith; which is that horrid opinion he hath all this while so eagerly opposed. It may be he will say as Arminius doth, that neither of these were actual Justification, which were a poor put off; for as Dr. Twisse observes, "if all justification is explained simply so called, in accordance with actual justification, then all analogous, used by themselves, would stand for the thing signified."

When we speak of Justification simply, there is no man but understands it of actual Justification. And first, that which he calls Justification purposed in the decree of God, is real and actual Justification, for if Justification be God's will not to punish, or to deal with his elect according to their sins, {as both the Psalmist and Apostle do define it,} then when God's will was in actual being, their Justification was actual. It is absurd to say, that God did decree or purpose to will anything whatsoever, his will being his Essence, which admits no cause, either within or without God. Secondly, we have shown before, that Justification being taken for the effect of God's will; namely, our discharge from the obligation of the Law, it was actually, because solely, and absolutely obtained by the death of Christ; there being no other cause out of God, which concurs to the producing of this effect.

The third branch of his distinction, "Justification Exemplified," is a term redundant, which may well be spared. 1. There is not the least hint thereof in Holy Writ; the Scripture nowhere calls our Saviour the example or pattern of our Justification. For though he is proposed to us as an example in acts of moral obedience, yet in his works of mediation he was not so;

in these he was not an exemplary, but a meritorious procuring cause! An example is proposed to be imitated, and therefore we are frequently exhorted to imitate our Saviour in works of Sanctification, {Mat.11:29; Jn.13:15; Phil.2:5; I Pet.2:21; I Jn.2:6,} but we are nowhere bid to imitate him in our Justification, or in justifying ourselves. It was needless he should be a pattern of our Justification; for this pattern must be of use either unto us, or unto God; not to us, because we do not justify ourselves, not unto God, because he needs no pattern or example to guide or direct him. 2. He that pays our debts to the utmost farthing, and thereupon receives a discharge, is more than a pattern of our release; for our real and actual discharge is in his, as our real debt was upon him. And therefore his grandfather Parker said well, "that Christ's resurrection was the actual Justification both of him and us." 3. If Christ were only a pattern and example of our Justification, then was he justified from his own sins, and consequently was a sinner, which is the most horrid blasphemy that can be uttered. The reason of the consequence is evident; for if Christ were but a pattern and example of our Justification, then was he justified, as we are; now we are justified from our own sins, which we ourselves have committed, and therefore his Justification must be from his own sins, or else the example and counterpart do not agree. 4. This expression intimates, that as Christ was justified by performing the conditions required of him, so we are justified by performing the conditions required of us; which in effect makes men their own saviors, as before. 5. He recedes very far indeed, both from the meaning and expressions of all our Orthodox writers, who do constantly call our Saviour a common person, but never that I find, the exemplary cause of our Justification. I shall only refer the reader to what his grandfather Parker hath written of this matter, who hath copiously and learnedly proved both from Scripture, and the fathers, that Christ, no less than the first Adam, was made a common person {that is, a Covenant Representative} by the ordination of God, and his own

voluntary undertaking; who took our sins upon him, as if they had been his own, and for the same made full satisfaction to Divine Justice, and consequently received as full a discharge in our behalf. 6. This expression of his favors rankly both of Pelagianism and Socinianism. The Pelagians, as they made the first Adam a mere pattern and example, in communicating sin to his posterity; so they made the second Adam but the pattern and example of our reconciliation. Those words, II Co 5:18, "who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ," they expounded by his doctrine, and by his example; that is, by our obedience to his doctrine, and by imitating his example. The Socinians do speak the same language, so Christ is therefore called a Saviour, because by his life and doctrine, he hath showed us the way of salvation, and by his miracles and sufferings hath confirmed the same. I am sorry to hear the language of Ashdod, from the mouth of a Protestant minister. {Neh.13:24}

The excuse which he gives, for calling our Saviour the exemplary cause of our Justification, rather than a Covenant Representative is both fallacious and impertinent. "I use {saith he} the term of an exemplary cause, rather than of a common person, because a common person may be the effect of those whom he represents, as the Parliament of the Commonwealth."

This is fallacious dealing, under pretense of giving a more significant term, to leave out that wherein the force of the argument lay. He seems to intimate, that the phrases are of equal latitude, that an exemplary cause doth express as much as a common person, which is clearly false; for the act of the exemplar is not the act of the imitator; as the act of a common person is the act of them whom he represents, which in Law is accounted as if it had been done by them. Parents and superiors are examples to their children and inferiors, they are not common persons, as Adam was to all his posterity, in whose loins {saith the Apostle} we all sinned; and in this respect he is made a figure of Christ, {Rom.5:14,} whose righteousness is accounted unto them for whom he died; as Adam's sin was accounted unto us, when as yet we were not.

It is impertinent, for though Christ be not the effect of them whom he represents, yet that hinders not but that his discharge was theirs, no less than if it had been chosen by them. I can see no reason why the act of God, constituting and appointing his Son to be the Head, Surety, and Common Person to all his Elect, should not be as effectual for the communication of his benefits to them, as their own choice and election. We did not choose Adam to be our common person, and yet his sin was imputed to us; so though we did not choose the Lord Jesus to stand in our stead, that is no reason why his Righteousness and Satisfaction should not be accounted ours.

The instances he hath brought from our personal resurrection, and inherent sanctification, to render this argument absurd, have not the least force to conclude against the efficacy of Christ's Satisfaction, for our immediate discharge from sin and wrath. It doth not follow, that because we did not personally rise with Christ, and were not inherently sanctified in his Sanctification, therefore, we had not in his Resurrection an actual and complete discharge from the guilt of sin; there is not the like reason for these. For to our actual discharge, there needed no more than the payment of our debt, or satisfaction to the Law of God, but our personal resurrection necessarily supposeth both our life and death. Again, our inherent sanctification cannot be without our personal existence, and the use of those means which God hath appointed for that end; but our Justification is wrought without us, and for us. Though Christ hath fully merited our Sanctification and Resurrection to glory, {in which respect we are said to be crucified with him, and to be risen with Christ,} as well as our Justification, yet it is not necessary that these benefits should be communicated to us at the same time, and in the same manner. It is no such absurdity to say, Christ hath purchased our resurrection, though we are not risen, as to say, Christ hath purchased our discharge, and yet we are not discharged; for {as hath been shown} to say a debt is discharged, and yet that it is justly chargeable, implies a

contradiction. Let the reader judge, whether the assertion that follows, be not much more confident than solid. No man living can show any reason of difference, {as if he were master of as much reason as all men living,} why we may not as justly infer, that our resurrection is passed already, because we are risen in Christ; as that our Justification is passed before we believe, because we are justified in Christ. Enough hath been said to evict the disproportion of these consequences.

His next distinction, is that Justification is either causal and virtual, or actual and formal; "we were {saith he} causally and virtually justified in Christ's Justification, but not actually and formally." Our Protestant divines do generally place the principle of Justification, in the non-Imputation of sin. Now if our sins were formally imputed unto Christ, even to a full Satisfaction, they could not formally be imputed unto us also, unless a debt discharged by a Surety can be justly reckoned unto him that did first contract it. It is true, a debt may be imputed both to principal and surety, before it be discharged, but after to neither. It is granted by all Orthodox writers, that our Saviour by giving himself to death, made full Satisfaction to the utmost farthing, for all the sins or debts of God's elect. Now I say, the discharge of a debt, is formally the discharge of the debtor, unless we speak of an outward formality, such as is by an acquittance, which serves but either against the unfaithfulness of the creditor, who otherwise would deny the payment, or else against the ignorance of the debtor, who being not at the payment, might still look upon himself as a debtor, and liable to all the consequences of his debts. In this sense, our formal Justification is by the gracious sentence of the Gospel, terminated upon our consciences; but otherwise, intrinsically and formally, the payment of our debt is our real discharge. I shall grant him, that the death of Christ doth justify us only virtually; but yet I affirm, that the Satisfaction in his death {being accomplished, and made known unto us,} doth justify us formally; for the actual payment of a debt, is that which formally makes him

that was the debtor, no debtor. And therefore Christ dying for us, or for our sins; his reconciling us to God, and our being justified, are synonymous in scripture phrase. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." {Rom.5:8-10}

Objection: But against this, some have alleged that of the Apostle, {II Cor.5:21,} where he saith, that "Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made {he doth not say, that thereby we are made} the righteousness of God in him." Whence they would infer that the laying of our sins on Christ, is only an antecedent, which tends to the procuring of our Justification, and not the same formally.

Answer: Whereunto we answer. 1. That this phrase {that we might be, or be made,} doth not always signify the final, but sometimes the formal cause; as when it is said, that light is let in, that darkness might be expelled; where the emission of light is formally the expulsion of darkness. 2. Though the imputation of our sins to Christ, and of his Righteousness to us, do differ; yet the imputation of sin to him, and non-imputation of it unto us, is but one and the same act of God; which was, when God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, before the word of Reconciliation was given; and therefore before they believed. {II Cor.5:19} 3. Though the imputation of our sin to Christ, and so the non-imputation thereof to us, have an antecedency in respect of imputation of Righteousness to us, yet it is of nature only, and not of time. For though it be objected, that we were not then, and therefore Righteousness could not be imputed unto us, yet it follows not; for they might as well object that our sins were not then, therefore, they could not be imputed unto Christ; whereas in this business of Justification, God calleth things that are not, as though they were.

{Rom.4:17} But if Mr. Woodbridge had shown what it is that formally justifies us, besides the Satisfaction made in Christ's death, somewhat more might have been spoken to it.

The close of this paragraph is such a dirty puddle, that I intended to have stepped over it in silence, seeing it is so hard to touch pitch, or pollution, and not be defiled with it; but yet for their sakes that do not know me, I shall stay the reader a little while, whilst I wash off that dirt which he hath thrown upon me and others. "They are credulous souls, I will assure you, that will be drawn by such decoys as these, into schism and faction, to the hardening and discomforting of more hearts in one hour, than the opinion itself {should it obtain} will do good to, while the world stands." I dare not allow myself retort, or to pay him in his own coin, having persuaded my heart to follow better examples, even his, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again." {I Pet.2:23} And theirs, who being reproached, returned blessing. {I Cor.4:12} In these few words there are a heap of slanders packed together, both against myself and others, {which is more grievous to be born,} against the truths and ways of God, which we adhere to. 1. They that do embrace this doctrine which I have taught are aspersed with credulity and levity. I do believe there is not one of my charge, but is able to say as the Samaritans, John 4:42, "now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, &c." I dare say that they are better settled than to be shaken with the sophistry of this assailant. I am sure, both they and many more will bear me witness, how frequently I do admonish them, of taking up matters of Faith upon trust and credit; it being idolatry in a high degree, to give the most spiritual worship of God; namely, our Faith, to a weak and sinful man. He that believes a truth upon a human account, is no better Christian than he that doth believe a lie. Let the prudent judge, whether they are not more justly obnoxious to this censure of abusing the credulity of simple fools, who will not endure that their hearers should bring their doctrines to the touchstone. The tyranny and usurpation

of the Popish Priests is far more excusable than the affected domination of some of ours; for they believe, that their church is infallible and cannot err; ours confess, that they are fallible, and may err, and yet expect subscription to their dictates, no less than the Canon itself. It is held a *piaculum* {a high crime} to question, or debate, whatever they say. Surely, it is but an unhandsome character he hath given my arguments, which he calls decoys. The Apostle, I take it, hath Englished his French, Eph.4:14, "the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." I dare say he knows me better than in cold blood to accuse me of driving on such a devilish trade, as wittingly to deceive men's precious souls; and therefore I shall call in no other accuser than his own conscience.

As for his charge of schism and faction, I am not careful to answer it, being the usual foam of passionate men, who when they want arguments to convince, fall to downright railing. "Schism {says a learned man} in the common management of the word is a mere theological scarecrow, wherewith they who uphold a party in religion, seek to fright away others from enquiring into, and closing with that which they do oppose." Both this and the other are most frequently in their mouths, who are deepest in the guilt that is imported by them. Ahab by his sins brought down plagues and judgments upon Israel; yet he calls Elijah, the troubler of Israel. {I Kings 18:17} Athaliah was the chiefest traitor, and yet she was the first that cried out treason. {II Kings 11:14} Tertullus was the orator of the tumult, yet he inveighs against Paul as a ringleader of sedition. {Acts 24:5,6} The Church of Rome, which hath fallen from the purity of the Catholic Faith, brands them for schismatics who refuse to continue in the same Apostasy. Amongst ourselves the late innovators aspersed all those with faction and schism, who would not prostitute their consciences to the wills of men; and to this day ignorant and profane persons think all those to be factious and schismatics, who live more strictly and religiously than themselves. I must need say that they are less to be

blamed, seeing professors and ministers do give them such an evil example.

I confess, though in common use, schism and faction are but ridiculous terms, yet the things themselves are real evils; the one being an offence against civil, and the other against ecclesiastical peace. If this author had shown wherein I offended against either of them, I doubt not but I should have cleared myself at a just tribunal. For, I have ever been so far from factious combinations, or attempting anything against the civil peace, that {as I verily believe} it hath not been the least cause of my troubles, that I have always, prayed for, and pressed for subjection to the powers in being; had others of my calling done the like, the disaffections of the people against the present government, had not been so great as yet they are in these parts. As for schism, I know no ground that he hath to charge me with it; for schism cannot be, but where communion is, or ought to be held. Now to my best remembrance, I never refused to hold Christian communion with any person or persons, with whom by the rules of Christ I conceived I ought. It is true, we receive not all within that parochial circuit wherein we live, unto communion in church privileges; because either they refuse to make profession of their Faith, and to declare their subjection to the ordinance of Jesus Christ, and so they separate from us, and not we from them; or else they are such as in their practices do contradict the profession which they seem to make; like such who "profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate;" {Tit.1:16;} or these who transgress, and abide not in the "doctrine of Christ." {II Jn.1:9}

And as for members of other churches, we are ready to give them the right hand of fellowship, unless the person or church to which he belongs, lies under the guilt of any public scandal. {See John Cotton, "The Way of the Churches of Christ," 1645 Edition, pgs.78, &c.} If he doth accuse me of schism, because I have refrained going to some lectures that are preached in this city, I

doubt not but the wife will be satisfied with a just apology. I do not conceive that Christians are bound to frequent every lecture that is preached near them; the obligation to this duty must needs be determined by Christian prudence; and we ought to follow that which we conceive hath the greatest tendency to personal edification and the exaltation of Christ. Now I confess that I have rather chosen to deprive myself of that benefit which sometime I might enjoy, than to wound my conscience by keeping of silence, when I hear the truths and servants of God declaimed against. Dr. Jackson, {a man large enough in the point of communion} grants that "there is just cause to separate from the communion of a visible church {our practice doth not amount so high} when we are urged or constrained to profess or believe some points of doctrine, or to adventure upon some practices, which are contrary to the rule of Faith, or love of God; and in case we are utterly deprived of freedom of conscience, in professing what we inwardly believe," for which he cites, I Cor.7:23, "ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." For {says he} "although we were persuaded that we might communicate with such a church, without evident danger of damnation; yet in as much as we cannot communicate with it upon any better terms, than servants and bondslaves do with their masters, we are bound in conscience, and religious discretion, when lawful occasions or opportunities are offered, to use our liberty, and seek to our freedom, rather than to live in bondage." {Thomas Jackson, "Treatise of the Church," 1627 Edition, chapter 14, pg.111.} Let them allow us that liberty {which we offer to them} to discuss and examine the doctrines which they do deliver, and if they shall be found erroneous, to profess against them, I shall not often decline such opportunities.

But, says Mr. Woodbridge "the contending about this matter will harden and discomfort more souls in an hour, than the opinion itself will do any good, while the world stands." It seems he is of the mind that the matter in question is of so small concernment that it

ought not to breed a controversy. I marvel then he should offer himself a champion on either part, especially in a place where he had so little to do, and where his humility might suppose there were others as able as himself, to defend the notion which he stickles for. No man will imagine that he engaged in this controversy upon conscientious principles, if he judgeth the point in question to be of little moment. For my part, I cannot look upon that as such a trifle, which doth so nearly concern the glory of God's Grace, the virtue and efficacy of Christ's blood, upon which alone poor souls can with confidence and security build their hopes of eternal life. I have showed before, that the doctrine itself is guiltless, both of hardening and discomforting the souls of men, and if these effects do ensue the pressing of it in a Christian way, they are accidental, and consequently ought not to be charged upon the tenant. I know none that are discomforted by these debates but such as the Apostle speaks of, "who are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." {II Tim.3:7} For having pinned their Faith on the sleeves of others, they are jealous of their credit, least they should be thought to have built on a sandy foundation.

Chapter XVI

Of Mr. Woodbridge's Answer to the third objection, which he hath framed concerning our being in Covenant with God before believing.

This last he scoffingly calls the great argument, which as he hath proposed it, was none of mine. We fell upon our discourse of the Covenant, upon his saying that "Christ was not justified according to the tenor of the New Covenant;" whereunto I replied; if the New Covenant were made with Christ, then Christ was justified according to the tenor of the New Covenant; but the New Covenant was made with Christ, therefore, he denied the assumption. But by the way let me give the

reader the reason of the sequel, which is as followeth; the New Covenant contains all the promises which God hath made to the Head and the members, both to Christ personal, and to Christ mystical; the same Covenant is conditional to him, and absolute to us; a Covenant of works to him, but a Covenant of Grace to us. Now if it be one and the same Covenant, by which Christ and we are justified, {though in a far different manner,} Christ by works, and we by Grace; he by his own righteousness, and we by his; then his Justification was by virtue of the New Covenant that we are justified by. We read but of one Covenant that was made with Christ, by, and according unto which he was justified, when he had paid the debt which he had undertaken.

To confirm the assumption that the New Covenant was made with Christ, I alleged the judgment of the late assembly, who in their larger Catechism {Westminster Catechism, Question 31,} have laid down this proposition: "Q. 31. With whom was the covenant of grace made? A. The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed." First he denied the allegation; though I believe at another time he would have taken my word for a greater matter. I desired Mr. C. an Assembly man, {who sat next unto him,} to declare, whether it were so; but he refused to speak, though I urged him twice. Had he remembered the words of our Saviour, John 8:37, I dare say he would not have refused to perform so just an office. At length a gentleman that stood by {one of the parish elders} ingenuously acknowledged, that I had truly alleged it. Then Mr. Woodbridge denied their authority, saying, "it was a human testimony." I accepted his answer, and desired the people to remember what Mr. Woodbridge had told them, knowing that many present would receive it sooner from him than they would from me, that the authority of the Assembly is but human, and not divine, and infallible; and consequently, that their votes and determinations are of no greater force than the proofs and reasons which do confirm them. And therefore, I immediately offered him Divine Authority in the argument following.

If they with whom God did make the New Covenant, when it was first revealed and exhibited, were in that federal act or relation, the types and figures of Jesus Christ, then the New Covenant was made only with Christ. For that which is attributed to a person, as a type or figure, belongs properly and peculiarly to the antitype. But all they with whom the New Covenant was made, when it was first exhibited, were in that federal relation the types of Christ, therefore, the minor was proved thus, that the New Covenant was made with Abraham, but Abraham in his federal relation, or in receiving that Covenant, was a type of Christ. Whereunto {if it had been needful} I had added divers other instances; as of Noah, Phinehas, David, &c., who in the respective covenants, which God made with them, were also types and figures of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Covenant made with Noah, {Gen.9:9,} was, {as our divines have observed,} the Covenant of Grace; and that Scripture itself doth make it manifest. "In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee." {Isa.54:8-10} Now Noah in receiving the Covenant was type of Christ; for it followed immediately upon the offering up of his sacrifice, {Gen.8:20,21,} which clearly signified, that all the effects of God's Covenant are procured for us, by that Sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, which Christ hath offered. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour." {Eph.5:2}

So Phinehas and his Covenant, "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not

the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace; and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." {Num.25:11-13} This Covenant with Phinehas, concerning the everlasting priesthood was the very same which was confirmed by oath unto Christ. "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." {Ps.110:4} It was made with Phinehas as a typical mediator, because he stood in the gap, to turn away God's wrath.

In like manner the Covenant made with David, was the Covenant of Grace. "Yet {saith David,} he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire." {II Sam.23:5} And therefore it is called the sure mercies of David. "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." {Is.55:3} Now that David in receiving that Covenant was an eminent type of Christ, is evident from Acts 13:34, "and as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." "For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever; thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, {mystical David, the Messiah, David's son and antitype, Ez.34:23, &c.,} thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." {Ps.89:2-4}

But I must return to Mr. Woodbridge who denied the major, that is, that the Covenant made with Abraham, was the New Covenant; which I proved in this wise. If the whole New Covenant be comprised in this one promise, I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed, then the New Covenant was made with Abraham; but the whole New Covenant is comprised in this promise, I will be thy God, &c. He answered, "I deny all;" to which I replied to him, that the sequel is evident; forasmuch

as this promise is the sum of the Covenant made with Abraham in Genesis 17. And the assumption is acknowledged by all divines that ever I met with; nay, the Apostle himself calls it the Gospel. "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." {Gal.3:8}

If my memory fail not, he affirmed, that the Covenant made with Abraham, was only concerning temporal blessings, as the land of Canaan, &c., whereof circumcision was a seal. I well remember, that upon his often affirming, that the New Covenant made with us, is this conditional promise, "if thou believest, thou shalt be saved;" to which I offered him this argument to evict the contrary. If we are in Covenant, or do partake of some benefits of the Covenant before we believe, then that conditional promise is not the New Covenant; but we do partake of the same benefits of the Covenant before we do believe; therefore, the reason of the sequel is, because the condition must be performed, before the benefit, which is promised upon condition, can be received. The minor was proved by a medium, which Mr. Rutherford makes use of for the same purpose. The Spirit which works Faith, is given us before we do believe; but the Spirit which works Faith, is a blessing of the New Covenant, and given us by virtue of the Covenant. Therefore, we do partake of some blessings or benefits of the New Covenant before we believe. He denied, that the Spirit which works Faith, is given us by virtue of the New Covenant, which I proved from the tenor of the New Covenant mentioned, Heb.8:10-12, "for this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no

more." He denied, that this was a promise of the Spirit which works Faith, but rather of the Spirit of adoption, which follows Faith. That it is a promise of the Spirit which works Faith, was proved from John 6:44,45, where our Saviour, having shown that none do believe but by a Divine and Supernatural power, tells us that "no man can come to me, except the Father draw him," to which he adds, "it is written in the Prophets, they shall be all taught of God;" that is, God will give his Spirit unto all that are ordained to life, which shall enable them to believe. The places in the Prophets, where this is written, or promised, are Isa.54:13, "and all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children;" and Jer.31:34, "and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more;" which is cited by the Apostle in Hebrews 8. Then he denied that this was the New Covenant made with us; whereunto I replied, that the New Covenant which is made with Spiritual Israel, is the Covenant made with us, and this Covenant is made with spiritual Israel, and therefore with Christ, for us. His answer was I deny all; though the major be as clear as the sun, that all the elect, whether Jews or Gentiles, are spiritual Israel, or the seed of Abraham. See the ninth, tenth, and the eleventh chapters to the Romans, and Gal.3:26-29; and the assumption is in the text, "this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel in those days," &c.; and therefore I rejoined, *contra negantem principia, non est disputandum* {against one who denies the principles, there can be no debate;} and so our conference brake off. I have here given the reader a true narrative of discourse concerning this matter, wherein I take the Lord to witness that I have not wittingly concealed, or added a syllable, to vary either from his sense, or my own.

I shall now return to his printed discourse, and take things in the same order as they lie before us. The

argument; as he hath formed it, runs thus, "if we are in Covenant before we believe, then we are justified before we believe; but we are in Covenant before we believe," therefore, wherein he blames the proposition; "for, {says he,} though it were supposed that we are in Covenant before Faith, yet it will not follow, that we are justified;" and his reason is, "because the blessings of the Covenant have an order and dependence one upon another, and are enjoyed successively one after another." But by his favour, the sequel is not invalidated by this reason; for though a man be not sanctified, and glorified before Faith, yet if he be in Covenant with God in Christ; that is, one of the elect, to whom the Grace of the New Covenant appertains, he is certainly justified; for God from all eternity, did will not to punish his elect ones; which {as hath been shown} is real Justification, it being forgiveness in the heart of God; or taking it for an effect of his will, Justification is the first benefit that doth accrue to us by the death of Christ. God hath promised from thenceforth to remember the sins of his people no more. {Isa.43:25; 54:9 & Ezek. 36:25} The LORD first promiseth to cleanse us from all our filthiness, {which must be meant of our Justification; for by Sanctification our inherent filthiness is not perfectly cleansed in this life,} and then to give us a new heart. And in chapter 16 he first says unto the soul, "Live," Ezek.16:6, {which is the sentence of Justification,} and then he adorns it with the precious gifts of his Holy Spirit. It is sufficiently known, that the generality of our Protestant divines, in comparing the blessings of the Covenant, have given the precedency to Justification; some have ascribed to it a priority of time, but all of nature, before the rest. "Justification {says Tilenus⁹⁰} is most absurdly made an effect or consequent of Sanctification, which in nature doth go before it; for a

⁹⁰ Daniel Tilenus, 1563–1633, a German-French Protestant theologian. Initially Calvinistic in his theology, he later became a prominent and influential Arminian teacher at the Academy of Sedan. He was an open critic of the Synod of Dort of 1618–9.

man cannot be sanctified, until he is first justified; for the tree must be good, before it can bring forth good fruit." Bishop Downname accounts it a gross error, to say, that Sanctification goes before Justification; "for {says he} Sanctification is the end and fruit, &c." {George Downname, "Covenant of Grace," 1647 Edition, pg.289.} So that if they have right to any benefit of the Covenant before Faith, it must be to Justification; for Faith is a part of Sanctification, and the same thing cannot be before itself.

He furthermore denies the assumption "that we are in Covenant with God, or that we have any right and title to any blessing of the Covenant before we believe." But before he will give his reasons for the negative, he is willing to hear mine for affirmative. This seeming civility, ushers in a notorious slander, that {I was so obstreperous in our conference, that I would not give him a fair hearing} which hath been sufficiently disproved in another place; nay, his own mouth did acquit me in the close of that discourse, before {I believe} a thousand witnesses. I wonder, though his conscience was asleep when this fell from his pen, that his memory should fail him so? Methinks he should have been more tender of his own reputation, than to contradict himself, though he had a desire to blast mine; but as if it were not enough to mis-report my actions, he takes upon him the office of God, to judge my heart. "I believe {says he} that he is resolved to give it unto nobody else, whiles the judgment of the cause must be left to the people." Yes, to himself, or anyone else, when I have an occasion for the like essay. I am sure he hath not found me heretofore of so morose a spirit, as not to weigh and yield unto better reason; for he is no fit champion to defend the Faith, who is so much a stranger to the rules of charity, which thinketh no evil, but hopes the best. {I Cor.13:5-7} I confess that I am yet to seek for the reason of this next clause, whilst the judgment of the cause must be left to the people. One would think, that he who leaves the judgment of his cause unto the people, should be most willing, they should have a fair hearing of whatsoever can be said,

either pro or con, or else he cannot expect their votes should be for him. The people are apt to think he hath the better cause, whose mouth is stopped. But perhaps it sticks in his stomach, that in our conference I desired the people to weigh and judge of some interpretations of Scripture, which were given by him. It was far from my thoughts to defer the decision of the question unto most voices, either of ministers or people. The judgment desired, was, that of private discretion, and not of public determination; though the latter ought not to be usurped by ministers, whose reasons, and not their votes, must satisfy men's consciences; yet the former ought not to be denied to the meanest Christians, who are required to judge for themselves, {Job.5:27,} to prove, {I Thes.5:21,} and try, {I Jn.4:1, Acts 17.11,} the doctrines which are brought unto them. Now why this expression should be faulted, I see no cause, unless men would have the people to content themselves with an implicit Faith, such as the Romanists do allow their disciples, who use them as babes, which must swallow whatsoever their nurses do put into their mouths. The Church of Christ {saith Optatus⁹¹} is *rationabilis*, {capable of reasoning,} as she hath the use both of natural and supernatural reason. Did Christians more generally see with their own eyes, make use of that light and reason which God hath given them, they would never acquiesce in many of those dictates, which are imposed upon them; will any man that hath a spark of reason believe that "I am" doth signify "I will be"?

Well, now he hath heard my reason, that we are in Covenant, or have a right and title to the blessings of the Covenant, before we believe, because some benefits of the Covenant, to wit, the Spirit which works Faith, is given us before we believe. What hath he to say against it? He undertakes to explain that which is plain enough, that the word "give" as it is taken for constituting or appointing, and for the actual collating of a benefit, so as that it is received, and possessed by him to whom it

⁹¹ Optatus was Bishop of Milevis, in Numidia, in the fourth century, remembered for his writings against Donatism.

is given. He tells us of sundry ways, how the Spirit is said to be given, essentially, personally and operatively; all which is nothing at all to the matter in hand; but serves merely to raise a dust to blind the unwary reader. The terms need neither distinction nor explication, being easy enough to be understood by the weakest capacity. When we say; that the Spirit which works Faith is given us before we believe; none can well imagine that we meant it of God's purpose or decree to give the Spirit, but of the actual sending, or bestowing of him; nor yet of an Essential or Personal giving of the Spirit, so as to be Hypostatically united to us as the God-head of the Son is to the Human nature; though some godly men, {John Cotton, "Modest and Clear Answer to Mr. Ball's Discourse on Set Forms of Prayer," 1642 Edition, pg.36, &c.} have affirmed, that the Person of the Spirit dwells in the Saints from those Texts: John 14:16,17,26, 15:26, II Tim.1:14, Rom.8:11, I Cor.6:19, 3:16; yet none {that are sober} ever affirmed, that the Person of the Spirit dwelleth in us in such a manner as to make us one person with himself, or to communicate his personal Properties to us. I see not how a man could imagine any other sense than this; that God according to his gracious Covenant doth in his appointed time, give, or send his Spirit, in the preaching of the Gospel, to work Faith in all those that are ordained to life; so that the Spirit is the cause, and Faith the effect. It matters not how he is given, whether personally or operatively; for if the Spirit which works Faith be given us by virtue of the New Covenant, then some benefit of the Covenant is bestowed upon us before we believe; quod erat dēmonstrandum {that which was to be proved or demonstrated.}

Though the Spirit be not given us {as he saith} one atom of time before we believe, yet that weakens not the force of the argument; it is enough for my purpose, that it hath a precedency in order of nature, though not of time; and that Faith is not before the Spirit, for then Faith is not the condition of the Covenant, seeing the condition goes before the thing conditioned, and consequently, that conditional promise.

If thou believest, &c., is not the tenor of the New Covenant; for either he must say that the Spirit doth not work Faith; and that it is a work of nature, to wit, of our own free-will, contrary to innumerable Scriptures; or that the Spirit which works Faith, is not given us by virtue of the New Covenant; which was disproved by comparing John 6:45 with Jeremiah 31:34, and is contrary to those Scriptures, which affirmed that all spiritual blessings are given us in and through Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." {Eph.1:3} "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" {Rom.8:32} Or, that there is some other condition of the Covenant besides and before Faith, as some make ingenuity and towardliness of nature, the condition of conversion; or that there are two New Covenants; one absolute, and the other conditional; one, wherein Faith is promised without condition; the other, wherein all things else are promised upon condition of Faith; of which more in its place.

Whereas he charges me with often abusing that received maxim, *posita causa ponitur effectus* {assuming the cause, we have the effect;} and letting pass his uncivil language, I say that in our discourse, I did not so much as mention it, nor at any time else, but with such cautions and limitations, as such who give an understanding it of *causa proxima* {the proximate cause} and *completa*, {completed or accomplished,} and then I conceive *causa positain actu*, {placed the actual cause,} so that the effect must necessarily follow. So, I cannot see that it is any abuse to apply it to the death of Christ, in effecting our Justification or Deliverance from the curse; his death and satisfaction being the adequate and immediate cause thereof, for when the debt is paid, the obligation is no longer in force. Though I understood this maxim never so well, it would little advantage Mr. Woodbridge's cause, that Faith is the condition of having the Spirit in our first

conversion, unless it would prove, that the cause is produced by its immediate effect.

That which follows is altogether impertinent, "as a man {saith he} doth first build himself an house, and then dwells in it; so Christ by his Spirit, doth build, organize, and prepare the soul to be an house unto himself, and then by the same Spirit dwells in it immediately." What is this to prove, that no man hath interest in the Covenant before he believes; or that the Spirit, which works Faith, is not given us before Faith? We grant that Christ by his Spirit doth build or prepare the soul to be his house, and then dwells in it, {II Cor.6:16; Jn.14:23,} as in, vouchsafes more sensible effects of his presence; but is not that organizing and preparing act of the Spirit, one benefit of the Covenant of Grace? And is not the Spirit in that act, the cause of Faith? If so, then we have an interest in the Covenant before Faith, for he that hath *jus in re*, {property, title; the right which a man has in a thing by which it belongs to him,} doubtless hath *jus ad rem* {a right to a thing,} when we have the benefits of the Covenant, it cannot be denied, but we have a right and title to them. I find that Mr. Burgess mentions this answer, "but {saith he} it is not safe to go this way, for that grand promise, Ezek.36:26, doth evidently argue the habits or internal principles of Grace, are before the actions of Grace." {Anthony Burgess, "True Doctrine of Justification Asserted and Vindicated from the errors of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, &c.," 1651.}

His next passage gives us little evidence of a heart prepared and organized by the Spirit of Christ, it being false and slanderous. "This {saith he} is that which I would have spoken publicly, in answer to the argument, if Mr. Eyre had not been beyond measure obstreperous." I dare say such as know Mr. Woodbridge's tongue and forehead, will not easily believe, that he would be hindered from speaking his whole mind; but my innocency in this matter, hath been cleared by persons more worthy to be believed than Mr. Woodbridge, especially when he speaks in his own cause. I shall add, that I verily believe, he then spake

near as many words, I am sure, as much to the purpose, as this which he hath printed; I well remember some passages which are here omitted, as that saying, *anima fabricat fibi domicilium*, {the soul forms the body, and then dwells in it;} as the soul works first efficiently, that afterwards it may act formally, so doth the Spirit in our conversion, &c. If he spake no more, it was his own fault; for all that were present, do know, that the only answer I could get unto divers syllogisms was, "I deny all;" but this he intended rather to vilify me, than to excuse himself.

Chapter XVII

Concerning the Covenant, wherein Faith is promised, and by virtue whereof it is given to us.

Mr. Woodbridge in the next place propounds this question, "whether Faith itself be not given to us by virtue of the Covenant made with us?" Which he answers negatively, "faith is not given us by virtue of the Covenant made with us, but by virtue of the Covenant made with Christ." His answer implies, that there are two distinct covenants of Grace, one made with Christ, and the other with us; which will need a clearer evidence than yet he hath given us. We deny not, that Faith, yea, and all other blessings are promised in the Covenant which was made with Christ, the promise of giving him a seed, and that this seed shall be blessed, doth include no less; for all the promises both of this life, and that which is to come, are but so many explications of the grand promise. "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." {Gen.12:3} All the nations or families of the earth {that is, all the elect, whom God hath chosen out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation} shall be blessed in him. Mr. Woodbridge should have proved that these promises were not made with us in Christ; he should have showed us any other Covenant made with

the elect, than that which was made with Christ. We say, with the Apostle, that "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us;" {II Cor.1:20;} and with the late Assembly, that the Covenant of Grace was made with Christ, and with us in him. With him actively, as the Person that performed all the conditions, upon which the promises thereof are grounded; with us passively, as the persons to whom the benefit of those promises doth belong. If one man promise another, that in case he shall bear so many stripes, endure so long imprisonment, or perform any other condition, be it what it will, he will then take care of and provide for his children, doth not this promise which was made with the Father, most properly belong to his children? The case is the same between Christ and us; he performed the conditions, and we receive the benefits of the New Covenant; the same Covenant is made with both, and consequently Faith is given us, not only by virtue of the Covenant made with Christ, but by virtue of the Covenant made with all the elect; which might be further proved by many reasons.

If there be but one Covenant of Grace, which is made with Christ for us, then Faith is given us by virtue of the Covenant made with Christ; but there is but one Covenant of Grace, therefore, the sequel is undeniable, I doubt not but our adversaries will grant, that Faith is given us by virtue of the Covenant of Grace; and the assumption is as evident, that there is but one Covenant of Grace; though there are many promises, yet is there but one Covenant. Forasmuch as all the promises have the same ground and foundation - the merit and purchase of Jesus Christ; and therefore they are said to be yea and amen {sure & certain} in him. {II Cor.1:20} The Scripture makes mention but of two covenants; the Covenant of works, and the Covenant of Grace; the former was made with the first Adam, and his seed; the other with the second Adam, and his seed, and is commonly called the New Covenant. I confess this latter hath been variously administered in the times of the Old and New Testament; in which respect it hath been looked upon by some as two distinct covenants, and

distinguished by the names of the Old and New Covenants. But this controversy is easily reconciled if it be considered that the Old Covenant is sometimes put for the promise veiled, and sometimes for the veil itself. When it is put for the veil itself, as doubtless it often is, when it is said to have waxen old and to vanish, to be changed, abolished, disannulled, &c., which things cannot be affirmed of the promise, which is an Everlasting Covenant, and always remains one and the same; yet, it may be said to be a distinct Covenant from the Covenant of Grace, exhibited in the times of the New Testament. But, when it is taken for the promise veiled, there is no doubt but it is the same in substance with that in the New Testament; for though this Grace was then but darkly revealed, and as it were covered out of sight by the Mosaical Administration, yet it brought upon them the same righteousness and salvation, which is now enjoyed by the children of Faith in Christ. {Acts 15:11; Jn.8:56; Gal.3:8 & Heb.11:14} But be the Old and New Testament administration, one, or two covenants, it matters not much to our question; for it lies on Mr. Woodbridge to prove, that there are two New Covenants, or two distinct covenants of Grace, in the times of the New Testament; one made with Christ, and another with the elect; one, in which God doth promise us Faith; the other, in which he doth promise all other blessing that follow Faith; which, I suppose, he will find to be somewhat difficult.

If Christ merited nothing for himself, but only for the elect, then all the promises made to him do belong to them, or the Covenant which was made with him as Mediator, is made with them; but Christ merited nothing for himself, and therefore the Minor is the unanimous tenant of our Protestant divines, who have sufficiently cleared it from the Scriptures. And for my own part, I see not what can be rationally excepted against the consequence of the Major; for if he merited nothing for himself, then all the promises made to him, do belong to his elect; and in this regard he is called, "the Mediator of a better Covenant," {Heb.8:6,} and the "Mediator of the New Covenant." {Heb.12:24} Now a Mediator doth not

act for himself, but in their behalf, whose Mediator he is. I suppose Mr. Woodbridge will not deny that Faith is bestowed upon us by virtue of that Covenant whereof Christ is the Mediator. Now Christ is the Mediator of the Covenant made with us, and not of a Covenant made singly and particularly with himself, for a man cannot properly be called a mediator for himself. The Apostle is express, that we obtain Faith by the same means, whereby we obtain all good things else, to wit, by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." {II Pet.1:1} "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." {Eph.1:3} "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." {Rom.3:32} So that consequently it is one and the same Covenant, by virtue whereof Faith, and all other spiritual blessings are bestowed upon us.

If Faith be given to us by virtue of that Covenant, wherein Justification, Sanctification, Perseverance and Glory, are bestowed upon us, then Faith is given us by virtue of that Covenant which is made with Christ. But Faith is given us by virtue of the same Covenant, wherein Justification, Sanctification, &c., are promised and bestowed upon us; and so therefore neither sequel nor assumption, do need any proof. In the same Covenant wherein God promiseth to cleanse us from our filthiness, to cause us to walk in his ways, &c., he likewise promiseth to circumcise our hearts, to write his laws in our inward parts, and that we shall be taught of God; that is made to believe. "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." {Jn.6:45} {See also, Ezek.36:25, &c.; Jer.31:34}

If Faith be given to us by virtue of that Covenant which was made with Abraham, and his seed, then is it given by virtue of the Covenant made with us, {in Christ,} for the same Covenant which God made with

Abraham is made with all the faithful to the end of the world; and therefore they are called the children of Abraham. {Gal.3:7,29} Now God in promising to be his God, and to be a Sun, and a shield, &c., promised also to give Faith, whereby the refreshing beams of this Sun are conveyed into the soul, and this shield, Eph.6:16, is managed for our best advantage. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." {Mal.4:2} "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." {Heb.12:2}

Which was the medium I made use of at our conference; which was, if Faith be given us by virtue of the Covenant made with the house of Israel, then is it given us by virtue of the Covenant made with us; for the house of Israel is the whole company of God's elect, who are therefore called Spiritual Israel; {Rom.9:6-8;} but Faith, or the Spirit which works Faith, is promised in the Covenant made with the house of Israel. {Jer.31:33; Ezek.11:19}

Whereunto Mr. Woodbridge answers, by way of retorting, "if Mr. Eyre {saith he} will urge the words of this text rigorously, they would prove more than he would have." I hope there is no hurt in that, though the place doth prove more, that doth no whit invalidate its force, as to the purpose for which we alleged it; but what is that which it proves more? "It is manifest {says he} that this Covenant contains a promise of sending Christ into the world, to die for our sins, as the Apostle proves, {Heb.10:14-16,} so that we may as well infer from hence, that we are in Covenant with God before the death of the Mediator, as that we are in Covenant before we believe; and then his death shall serve not to obtain all, or any of the blessings of the Covenant, but only {as the Socinians} to declare and confirm, &c."

If he please to admit of a reply, we say, that he mistakes the inference that was drawn from hence. The proposition to be concluded was not, that we are in Covenant before we believe; but that Faith, or the Spirit which works Faith, is given us by virtue of the Covenant made with Christ on our behalf, which is sufficiently secured by these texts; for if by the house of Israel be

meant all the elect, {as undoubtedly they are,} and the Spirit which works Faith is promised in the Covenant which is made with the house of Israel, then the Spirit and Faith are given by virtue of the Covenant which is made with us {in Christ,} we being in the number of God's elect. Furthermore, it is not so manifest {as he pretends} that these texts do contain a promise of sending Christ to die for us. The promises here mentioned, do express only what benefits do accrue to us by the death of Christ. I grant, that this Covenant supposeth the death of Christ, as the only meritorious procuring means, by which these benefits do flow down unto us; and therefore it is said, "in those days, or after those days," meaning the days of the Son of Man, when the Messiah, whom God had promised, should be exhibited; which in Scripture are called, the last days, the last times, and the world to come, &c. Though the Apostle mentions the Covenant, Heb.10:15,16, it is not to prove, that God would send his Son to die, but that being come, {as these believing Hebrews acknowledge,} he hath offered up a perfect sacrifice, Heb.10:10-14, and consequently they needed no other sacrifice to take away sin; for otherwise God had not made such ample promises, in reference to the times of the Messiah, as you find he hath in Jeremiah 31, &c., that he will remember the sins and iniquities of his people no more, &c., for {says the Apostle} "where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. " {Heb.10:18}

Though we should grant him that this text, {Jer.31,} contains a promise of sending Christ; what were this to the purpose, to weaken our inference that Faith is given by virtue of the Covenant? May not God in the same Covenant promise both Christ and Faith? "But {says Mr. Woodbridge} it will follow then, that this Covenant was made with us, or that we were in Covenant with God, not only before we believe, but before the death of Christ." I am so far from looking upon it as an absurdity, that I shall readily own, and acknowledge it as an undeniable truth, that the New Covenant was made with all the elect in Christ, before the foundations of the world were laid; {see Dr.

Reynolds on Psalm 110:4, &c.,} it being, the fixed and immutable will of God, concerning all those good things which in time are bestowed upon them; and therefore it is called an everlasting Covenant, II Sam 23:5, not only a *parte post*, but a *parte ante* {eternity past and eternity future} as it shall have no end, nor be changed; {Gen 17:7; II Chron.13:5; Psalm 89:28,34; Isa.54:9; 55:3} so it had no beginning, God having from all eternity, immutably purposed in himself, to bestow upon them all those blessings which they do receive in time; yet we say there are more, especially three moments, or periods of time, wherein God may be said to publish this Covenant with us; as {1} immediately upon the fall of Adam, when he first published his gracious promise of saving all his elect by the woman's seed, {Gen.3:15,} the first Covenant being broken and dissolved, the Lord immediately published that other Covenant which cannot be broken; and hereunto {as hath been showed} do those Scriptures relate, "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" {Tit.1:2;} "who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ." {II Tim.1:10,11} {2} At the death of Christ; because thereby all the benefits willed to us by the everlasting Covenant, were merited and procured for us, the full price which was paid for them, was then exhibited; for which cause, the New Covenant is called a Testament, which was confirmed by the death of the Testator Jesus Christ. "For this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator." {Heb.9:15-16} And the blood which the Testator hath shed is called "the blood of the everlasting Covenant;" {Heb.13:20;} and the blood of the New Testament. "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed

for many for the remission of sins." {Mt.26:28} So that his charge of Socinianism, doth not touch us; for though we do not say, that Christ procured the Covenant, or that God should will to us those mercies which are therein promised; yet we say, the effects of the Covenant, or the mercies themselves, were all of them obtained by the blood of Christ, as our deliverance from the curse, inherent holiness, &c. {3} The Covenant is said to be made with men, when God doth confer upon men the benefits which are therein promised, or at least makes them to know and understand their interest and propriety therein. Thus is that to be understood, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." {Is.55:3} "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." {Jer.32:40} "I will make an everlasting Covenant;" that is, I will fulfill my everlasting Covenant, or bestow upon you all those mercies which I have promised, and which my Son hath purchased, by shedding of his blood. And thus we grant that God makes his Covenant with his people, when he gives them Faith, when he enables them to lay hold of it, and to plead it at the throne of Grace, &c. Now though in this sense God may be said to take men into Covenant, when they do believe, yet will it not follow, that the Spirit and Faith are not given by virtue of that Covenant; so that this retortion is pitifully unsuccessful, for it gives not the least wound to the cause which we maintain.

The second branch of his answer, is, "that upon a most serious perusal of these texts, I find them so contradictory to Mr. Eyre's purpose, that I cannot but wonder what he means to shelter his opinion under the protection of them." I must needs say that after a most serious perusing of his papers, I cannot be persuaded to be of his mind, to think that these places are contradictory to the purpose for which I brought them; but rather that they do give in full evidence to the proposition which I was to prove; namely, that the Spirit which works Faith is given us by virtue of the Covenant

of Grace. But how doth Mr. Woodbridge prove the contradiction? "We shall find {saith he} in these words three things of distinct consideration; the conclusion of which is the only support of this feeble argument." I cannot but wonder {and so I dare say doth the impartial reader,} that Mr. Woodbridge should say the text is contradictory to my purpose, and yet confess, that it affords support unto my argument; for though no more than that which he calls the conclusion of these texts doth afford it shelter, yet is that sufficient to clear it from the guild of a contradiction? But what are the three things which he finds in these texts to ground his charge on? He says that "there is the matter and blessings of the Covenant on God's part," I will be their God, and they shall be my people; in which words, as many blessings temporal and eternal are promised, so peculiarly pardon of sin, &c. Secondly, that "therein is expressed the bond and condition of it on our part, and that is Faith, which is signified in those words, of putting God's laws in our minds, and writing them in our hearts. In these two things is the tenor and formality of the new Covenant; they that believe the Lord will be their God, and they shall be his people." Furthermore, "but {says he} there is also a promise that God will work this condition, by which men shall have an interest in this Covenant, and a right and title to the blessings of it; I will put my laws into their minds, that is, I will give them Faith, which Faith is not promised as an effect of the Covenant ready made, but as the means by which we are brought into Covenant, and thereby invested in a right to all the blessings of it, &c." Should I grant all that he saith, yet would it not one whit weaker our assertions, that this Covenant is made with us, who are meant by the house of Israel, and that the Spirit which works Faith is promised in this Covenant, which Mr. Woodbridge cannot deny, though he would thrust it behind the door, saying, that it is promised in the Covenant, but not as a part of the Covenant; I might easily show, that there are not so many lines as mistakes in this short discourse; for I profess that I cannot but wonder at his boldness, that he durst for his

advantage wrest and falsify the words and tenor of the Covenant, excluding the promise of Faith from the matter and blessings of it, which is expressed more than once in these few words, as in this clause, ver.33, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people;" and in that also verse 34, "and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

We deny that the whole matter, and all the benefits of the Covenant on God's part are confined to these words, I will be their God, and they shall be my people; for though *omne bonum vocat bonum* {everything good summons the good,} and when this promise is put alone, it may comprehend as much as Mr. Woodbridge speaks, yet when other promises are joined with it, it denotes one particular blessing; either it relates to the formal part of man's happiness, which consists in the fruition and enjoyment of God, or the knowledge of our interest and propriety in him. {See Sermons of Dr. John Stoughton⁹², True Happiness in Ten Sermons on Psalm 4:6, 1640.} Thus, I will be their God, is as much as, they shall know that I am their God, and that they are my people. "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." {Hos.2:32} Or else, I will be their God, &c., imports as much as, I will protect them, and they shall worship me. But say, this promise be as large as Mr. Woodbridge would make it, though all blessings temporal and eternal be more generally included in it, yet that hinders not, but the other promises annexed thereunto, do also exhibit the matter

⁹² John Stoughton, 1593?–1639, was an English clergyman, a student at Emmanuel College, Cambridge from 1607, graduating B.A. in 1611, M.A. 1614, B.D. 1621, and D.D. 1626. Minister at St Mary, Aldermanbury in London.

and blessings of the New Covenant. {See John Calvin on Jeremiah 32:38,39.} The same things oftentimes in the Scripture are expressed, first more generally, and then more particularly.

It is apparently false, that in these words, "I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts," is expressed the bond and condition of the Covenant on our part; for the words are an absolute promise, and not a precept; the Lord declares what he himself will do for them. If Mr. Woodbridge sees a condition in these words, he hath found more than all the divines that ever I met with. Dr. Twisse, {his predecessor⁹³} in his answer to Arminius' Preface, reciting the tenor of the Covenant, as it is in this place of Jeremiah, Isa.32, and Ezek.36, challenges him to show *vel levissimam mentionem conditionis* {even the slightest mention of a condition.} Dr. Preston⁹⁴, speaking of the Covenant which God hath made with his elect, says, that it is Absolute, and not conditional; for which he alleges this place of Jeremiah, Ezek.36, &c. A learned man of the late assembly in a sermon before the Parliament then sitting⁹⁵, declared that all the promises of the New Covenant are absolute, not only *citra meritum*, {without merit,} but *citra conditionem*, {without conditions,} that is, without any pre-required conditions of us; amongst many other places he cites

⁹³ Woodbridge is considered to have been the successor of Dr. William Twisse at Newbury, but several other Presbyterian Ministers were intruded in the interval between the death of Twisse and the appointment of Woodbridge.

⁹⁴ John Preston, Sermon 2, pg.38, &c, "Breastplate of Faith & Love," 1634 Edition. John Preston, 1587–1628, was a Puritan Minister, and Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge; whose writings display a heart firmly set on the propagation of the Calvinistic theology; his posthumous works, edited by Richard Sibbes, John Davenport, Thomas Ball, and partly by Thomas Goodwin, D.D., are a storehouse of arguments in its favour.

⁹⁵ William Strong, died 1654, was an English clergyman and member of the Westminster Assembly. In 1650 he was chosen pastor to a congregation of Independents, which comprised many members of Parliament, and to which he preached in Westminster Abbey.

this text. Besides this, I might add abundance more. But I believe Mr. Baxter is *instar omnium* {like all the others} with Mr. Woodbridge. Now he acknowledges that this text, with the like, doth express an absolute Covenant. Mr. Woodbridge might as well say that the bond and condition of the Covenant on our part is expressed in these words, they shall be my people, or in the other clause, I will be their God, interpreting it by that of Hosea 2:23, "and they shall say, Thou art my God;" which one, {I remember} would have to be the condition of the Covenant on our part; so that according to these men's interpretation, the New Covenant shall consist only of conditions, or of precepts imposed upon us, without so much as a promise of mercy to us; and consequently, the Covenant of Grace shall exhibit no Grace at all; or at most, much less than the Covenant of works doth. If the Lord had meant that these words, I will write my laws in their hearts, &c., should be the bond of the Covenant on our part, he would have expressed it in such a manner, if my laws be written in your hearts, I will be your God; the words are plainly a promise of Sanctification, which is one principal benefit of the New Covenant.

Whereas he adds, "that God doth here promise to work Faith, which Faith is not promised as an effect of the Covenant, but as the means, by which we are brought into Covenant;" it being so crudely asserted, that a bare denial might serve the turn better. But, I shall appeal to the indifferent reader, whether it doth not sound very harshly, that the same words should be formally both a precept and a promise, and that God should require a condition of us, and yet promise to work it in us? How shall we distinguish between precepts and promises? Mr. Woodbridge may be pleased to consider, what some grand assertors of conditions have said thereof. I would ask, whether this promise of Faith be not a part of the New Covenant? All the promises of God do belong either to the Covenant of works, or to the Covenant of Grace; it is no part of the Covenant of works, therefore, it is a part of the Covenant of Grace. Now if the promise be a part of the New Covenant, the

thing promised is an effect of the Covenant; or a benefit given, by virtue of it. Furthermore, I would ask, whether the promise of Faith, be not an effect of Christ's death? If it be, then is it an effect of the Covenant already made; for all the effects of his death, are effects of the Covenant, which was confirmed by his death; who, for this cause is called the Covenant, "I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people," {Isa.42:6,} "thus saith the LORD, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people," {Isa.49:8;} implying, that all the benefits of the Covenant, are the fruits and purchases of his death; and that Christ hath not purchased anything for us, but what is promised in the Covenant; the effects of the Covenant, and the effects of Christ's death are of equal latitude. The Scripture nowhere affirms, that Faith is promised as a means to bring us into Covenant, or to invest us with a right and title thereunto. That which gives men interest in the Covenant is the good pleasure of God, willing those blessings to them; and the purchase which Christ hath made in their behalf, who hath performed whatsoever was necessary by Divine constitution, in order to our having of them. We grant that Faith is the means whereby we come to know our interest in the Covenant, and in all the benefits thereof; but their saying, that hereby we have, or do obtain our interest and title to the Covenant, hath not any ground that I find in the Written Word. If any shall infer it from hence, because it is said, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved;' they may as well make Baptism, Sanctification, Perseverance, &c., {to which the promise of Salvation is sometimes annexed,} means to bring us into Covenant, or to invest us with a right and title to the benefits of it, and consequently no man shall have any interest in the Covenant as long as he lives, and till these conditions be performed. To conclude, if the promise of Faith be a part of the Covenant, {as hath been showed,} then is it not a means to bring us into Covenant, or to invest us with a

title to the benefits of it, because it is impossible that the same thing should be the means, or cause of itself.

Chapter XVIII

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's Exposition of the New Covenant, {mentioned Jer.31:33 and in other places,} is further examined.

The tenor of the New Covenant, in the Prophet {whose words are punctually cited by the Apostle in Hebrews 8,} runs thus, "this is the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people; and, &c." But now Mr. Woodbridge renders it thus, "this is the Covenant which I will make with the house of Israel when I shall write my laws in their hearts, I will be their God, &c." or, "this is the Covenant, which I will make, saith the Lord, that giveth his laws into their minds, and writeth them in their hearts, &c." I know not what can be called wresting of the Scripture, if this be not? If men may take the liberty to chop and change, to add or diminish from the Word, at their pleasure, nothing can certainly be concluded thence; nay, the Scripture might be made a shelter for the foulest errors. It favors not of a spirit that trembles at the Word, and believes that threatening, Rev.22:18, to make so bold with the Oracles of God. The word "when" is neither in, nor agreeable to the Hebrew or Greek text, though he would make his reader believe that it is in both. The verbs in the first clause are not in the present, but future tense, as in the rest which follow. Besides, his paraphrase charges the Holy Ghost with a gross tautology, if not a flat contradiction. The time of making this Covenant is signified in these words, {after those days,} which undoubtedly ought to be referred unto the days of the Messiah, in opposition to the times before, when the Grace of this Covenant was not so clearly revealed; so that it was needless he should add, "when I

put my laws, &c" And if God makes not his Covenant with spiritual Israel, till he writes his laws in their hearts, then the former clause "after those days" must either stand for nothing, or else imply a falsehood. In a word, the unsoundness of this gloss doth appear from hence, that these words are not only here, but in many other places, mentioned as a distinct promise of the New Covenant, and not as a bare connotation of the time, or a periphrasis of the Person that makes the Covenant, as Mr. Woodbridge carries it. "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live;" {Deut.30:6; see also, Ezek.36:26,27; Jer.32:38,39,} where that promise, which Mr. Woodbridge calls "the matter or substance of the Covenant on God's part", is put first, and the other which he calls the condition, is made as it were the consequence of the former.

The Scriptures he hath brought to countenance his new found interpretation of the Covenant, will by no means shelter it; as Jer.24:7, "and I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." Where {says he} "the condition on the peoples part of the Lord's being their God, is, their returning with their whole heart." The affirmation is not so clear, as not to need a proof; that promise, I will give them a heart to know me, is {as hath been showed} one principal blessing of the New Covenant, the immediate effect whereof is, men's returning unto God with their whole heart. Now to call their returning unto God the condition of God's being their God, is as unhappy a mistake, as his that set the cart before the horse. Could they have returned to God, unless God had returned to them? Are not Faith and Repentance, the fruits of our reconciliation, by the blood of Christ? God having given us his Son, hath with him given us all things else. {Rom.8:32} Mr. Calvin calls this blessing of God's being our God the cause and fountain of all other blessings; and particularly, of the renewing of our hearts, and our returning unto God. Now the

consequences and effects of a blessing are not the conditions of it.

His next allegation from Heb.10:14, &c., hath the fate to fall as short of the mark, as the former did. For the Apostle's scope there is not to show in what order and method the benefits of the Covenant are bestowed upon us; but that there needs no other sacrifice for sin, besides the sacrifice which Christ hath offered; which he proves, because God in that Covenant, which he promised to make with his people in the times of the New Testament, declares, that he will not only give them a new heart, but their sins and iniquities shall not be remembered any more. Now where there is no more remembrance of sin, there needs no more sacrifice for sin; so that the words expressed, are sufficient to complete the sense without understanding of "then he saith" or "then it followeth" which again Mr. Woodbridge hath added in the close of the sixteenth verse. We may take them as they lie, from verse the fifteenth. "Whereof {that is, of Christ's perfect sacrifice, mentioned in verse 14,} the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; for after that he had said before, this is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, {to wit of the Old Testament, which are now expired,} saith the Lord, {that is, the Holy Ghost who is the Lord Jehovah, and with the Father and Son, the author of the New Covenant,} I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." So that I say, there is no need that either of those clauses, "then he saith, &c.," should be foisted in between the 16th & 17th verses. It seems to me, that the copulative "and" is set as a bar, to keep it forth, showing that the words in the 17th verse ought to follow immediately upon the sixteenth. I grant, that the promise of remission, is one of the most special and noble blessings contained in that general promise, I will be their God; yet it doth not follow, that regeneration or inherent holiness is required or promised, as the means or qualification, to obtain this blessing. A note by Pareus {David Pareus, 1548-1622,} upon this place is very sound, that the Apostle here doth

ground the promise of remission of sins upon that perfect oblation which Christ hath offered, and not upon works of Sanctification, which {according to Mr. Woodbridge's doctrine} is the immediate principle, for whence it follows.

His next assertion, "that in the New Covenant, the giving of the first Grace, is always promised, not as a part of the Covenant, but as a means and qualification on man's part, for his entrance into Covenant," is justly obnoxious unto more than one exception.

The work of Conversion, or the renewing of our hearts, is unfitly called the first Grace; for to speak properly, the first Grace, is that which is Grace indeed, {George Downname, "Treatise of Justification," 1634; Book 3, Chap.2, &c., or pg.366, &c.} that is, the everlasting love, favour, and good pleasure of God towards his people; for this is the rise and fountain of all those mercies, which we receive in time, yea, of Christ himself. "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you." {Deut.7:6-8} "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." {Jer.31:3} Or, if by Grace, we understand the fruits and effects of this Grace, then certainly the precedency or priority must be given unto Jesus Christ, for whose sake all other blessings are bestowed upon us. {Eph.1:3} Or else, if by Grace we understand the fruits and effects of Christ's death, or the benefits which are freely given us for his sake, even in this sense, inherent Sanctification is unduly put in the first place, which is a consequent, both of Justification and Adoption. {Gal.4:5,6} Though it be promised in that place of Jeremiah, before remission of sins, yet in other

places it is put after it, as Ezek.36:25,26 & Jer.32:38,39. The reason why this promise is sometimes put first, may probably be, because the Grace of Sanctification is most apt to affect our senses; for we do apprehend and perceive it, before we come to know our Justification in Christ.

It is utterly false, "that the giving of a new heart, is not promised as a part of the Covenant; but as a means on man's part, for his entrance into Covenant;" for the Scripture nowhere affirms it; and it is weakly concluded hence, because it is sometimes mentioned, first in the recital of the Covenant, which is all he hath to pretend for this notion, seeing that in other places, the promise of Sanctification follows that of Justification; from whence he may as well conclude, that Justification is promised, not as a part of the Covenant, but as a means to entitle us unto Sanctification; so that not only the promise of Faith, but of remission also, shall be excluded from being a part of the Covenant. The promise of a new heart, includes not only the first act of Faith and Repentance, but the continuance and increase of these gifts; so that either he must say, that all the promises of Sanctification, which are included therein, are no part of the Covenant; or that the same promise is both a means to bring us into Covenant, and a part of the Covenant; or in other words, that it is a part, and no part. I must confess, that I never yet met with that man, who had the unction to deny, that the promise of Faith and Repentance, is a part of the New Covenant. It seems to me an undeniable truth, that the promises of Sanctification, as well as of Justification are parts of the Covenant, considering; {1} that they have the same ground and foundation; namely, the merit and purchase of Jesus Christ; Christ hath merited Faith and Repentance, no less than remission of sins. Now whatsoever Christ hath purchased, the Covenant promiseth for all the effects of his death, are equally parts of the Covenant. {2} Both these promises have the same end and design; namely, the glory of God. Faith and Repentance are not promised only subserviently for our benefit, but ultimately for the

praise of his glory. {Tit.2:14; I Thes.4:3} {3} They are promised in the same manner, as distinct, and not as subordinate benefits; he doth not say, I will write my Laws in their hearts, that I may pardon their sins and iniquities; but, "I will write my Laws, &c., and their sins and iniquities, I will remember no more."

It sounds harshly, "that God promiseth Faith, as a means on our part, to bring us into Covenant;" for if God doth promise to bestow Faith, it cannot properly be called a means on our part; it were a means on our part, if we performed it ourselves, and by our own strength, as the condition required of Adam, should have been. For the removing of this rub, I shall make it to appear; that in the New Covenant, there is no condition required on our part, to give us a right and title to the blessings of it. But before we proceed, we will give the reader a brief account of those other Scriptures, which Mr. Woodbridge hath alleged to prove that Faith is promised, not as a part of the Covenant, but as a means on our part, to obtain the remission of sins; all which I find have the same misfortune as the rest, not to be able to bring forth the conclusion, which his fancy hath begotten on them.

That assertion of grace, as found in Ezek.36:25-28, makes quite against him; for there the Lord first promises to justify us, in those phrases of pouring out clean water upon us, and of cleansing us from all our filthiness, and then to renew or sanctify us, so that there is no instance to infer from hence, that Sanctification, or any part thereof, is promised as a means to entitle us to Justification. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

The other texts are much to the same purpose, as, Ezek.11:19,20, where the Lord after he had promised unto his people many particular blessings {as

that he would give them a new heart, take away their stony heart, make them walk in his statutes and ordinances, that they should no more defile themselves with idols, that David; that is, Christ, should be their King and Shepherd, that his tabernacle should be with them, that he would dwell in them, and walk in them, II Cor.6:16;} tells them, that he will be their God, and they shall be his people; from whence Mr. Woodbridge would gather, that God promises Faith, not as a part of the Covenant, but as a means to bring us into Covenant, that God may be our God. How rational this deduction is, let the reader judge; for if that promise, "I will be their God," must be taken exclusively; so that the promises preceding, are no part of the Covenant, then the promises of Justification, Sanctification, Perseverance, &c., must be excluded from being parts of the Covenant. If he says, that it only excludes Faith, I would ask, *quo jure*, {by what right} what reason is there that it should exclude Faith more than the other promises preceding? If it includes the rest, why not this? But to draw to a conclusion, we say, that this promise, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people," may be taken, either more generally, as comprehending all good things whatsoever, as if the Lord after the enumeration of many particular benefits, had summed up all in this, "I will be their God." They may expect as much good from me, as the living God can bestow upon his people, even this that hath been mentioned, and all things else; and in this sense the promise of Faith, or the Spirit which work Faith, is included in it; or it may be taken more restrictively, as noting some particular benefit and privilege distinct from the rest, as that they shall worship him, and he will protect and provide for them; or else, that they shall not only have an interest in God, but that they shall know it, and live in the comfort of it.

In the next place Mr. Woodbridge offers me his service, to new mold my argument, and to cast it into a better form, as thus, "they concerning whom God hath promised, that he will give them Faith, they are in Covenant before they believe; but concerning the elect,

God hath promised that he will give them Faith, &c." But, *pace tanti viri*, {if so great a man will forgive me, often said sarcastically,} I shall not accept his courtesy, if he hath any mind to it, as I have framed it, the Law is open, he may try his skill; only he may be pleased to remember, that these texts, {Jeremiah 31 & Hebrews 8,} were not brought to prove that we are in Covenant before we believe, but that the Spirit which works Faith, is given us by virtue of the Covenant made with us. As for that argument, which from these texts he hath advanced against us, together with the auxiliaries, which he hath placed in the rear, I shall presently attend their motion, having first given in my evidence to the cause depending, that the New Covenant is not conditional, and that in it, God doth not require any restipulation {condition} from us, to entitle us to the blessings of it. The contrary assertion, I conceive, is the crux of his whole discourse; for if there be no condition, or restipulation required in the New Covenant, there will be no need, to make Faith the means of our entrance into Covenant, nor any absurdity in saying, that our Justification in the sight of God precedes Faith.

Chapter XIX

Wherein is shown, that in the New Covenant there are no conditions required of us, to invest us with a right and title to the blessings of it.

Before I do give the reasons of this assertion, I must crave the reader's patience, whilst I tell him, what I mean by the New Covenant, and what I understand by a condition. By the Covenant, I mean that engagement which God hath laid upon himself, to bestow on them for whom Christ hath died, all good which is commensurate to their nature, and by virtue whereof all blessings Corporal, Spiritual, and Eternal, do flow down unto them. I call it an Engagement, because God by promising makes himself a debtor, though not to us, yet unto himself; being bound in justice to perform his Word

and Promise. There are two principal engagements, which God hath laid upon himself, in order to our eternal happiness, to one of which all his promises may be reduced. The first is that Covenant, which he made with the first Adam in the time of his innocency wherein God promised us life, upon condition of our perfect obedience; and this is called a Covenant of works, because the effects thereof do depend upon our works; the promise is not in force, nor have we any right to the blessings, until all those works are performed which are here required. Now this Covenant {saith the Apostle} became weak through the flesh, that is, it was altogether unable to give us life, by reason of our default, and not performing the condition required of us, we have no benefit at all by this engagement, and therefore the Lord made another Covenant with the second Adam, that upon the making his Soul an offering for sin, he would give unto his seed, namely, all the elect, eternal life, all good things whatsoever which they stand in need of. Now this we call the New Covenant, because all the effects thereof do flow down unto us, merely from the favour of God, and the merit of Christ. All the mercies we receive, they are the fruits and effects of this engagement. {Zech.9:11} It is the only plea we can use to God, both for the things of this life, and that which is to come; and by virtue hereof, we may claim and confidently expect from him all things whatsoever which we stand in need of, and are good for us. Now I say, that Promise or Covenant by virtue whereof, we obtain both Grace and Glory, good things, present and future, is not conditional to us; I say, to us; for to Christ it was conditional, though to us it be free; to him it was a Covenant of Works, though to us it be a Covenant of pure Grace; there is not so much as one blessing doth descend to us, but he hath dearly bought it, even with the price of his own blood; for which cause he is called the Mediator, Witness, and Surety of the Covenant.

When we say that the New Covenant is not conditional, we understand a condition in its proper and genuine sense, as the Jurists use it, in reference to

men's contracts and bargains. "A condition {saith Dr. Cowel} is a rate, manner, or Law annexed to men's acts {or grants} staying and suspending the same, and making them uncertain whether they shall take effect or no." To the same purpose, the Expositor of Law terms, "a condition is a restraint or bridle, annexed and joined to a promise, by the performance of which it is ratified and takes effect, and by the non-performance of it, it becomes void; the person to whom it is made, shall receive no commodity, or advantage by it." Hence is that maxim amongst lawyers, *conditio adimpleri debe priusquam sequatur effectus* {the condition must be performed, before the grant or promise becomes valid.} In this sense we say that the Covenant which God made with Adam was conditional, God annexed to the promise of life the condition of obedience, Do this, and thou shalt live; and the stability, and success of that promise, did depend upon his performing of the condition; he failing in his part, the promise became void. Now we deny that the blessings of the New Covenant do depend upon this, or any other condition to be performed by us. Lawyers do distinguish of a twofold condition, antecedent, and consequent. The antecedent condition being performed, doth get, or gain the thing, or estate made upon condition; the consequent condition doth keep and continue it. As for instance, if I sell a man a farm, on condition he shall pay me five hundred pounds present, and forth shillings, nay, be it but six pence per annum for the future; the payment of the five hundred is the antecedent condition, which gives him possession of the farm; the forty shillings or six pence per annum is the subsequent condition, and that continues his possession; and if he fail in this latter, the estate is forfeited, and in Law I may re-enter upon the farm, as if no such bargain had been made between us. Now we say further, that the blessings of the New Covenant require not only no antecedent, but no subsequent condition to be performed by us; there is nothing on our parts, that procures our right and interest, nor yet that continues and maintains our interest in them; the Lord Jesus is both the author and the finisher of our

salvation; it is by, and through him that we are made sons, and do continue sons; are made righteous, and do continue righteous; that we obtain, and do enjoy all the effects of the New Covenant.

I am not ignorant that the word "conditions" is sometimes taken improperly, for that which is merely an antecedent, though it contributes not the least efficiency, either natural, or moral towards the production of that which follows it. A condition properly taken is a moral efficient cause, which produceth its effect by virtue of some compact, agreement, or constitution between persons; thus, a condition properly so called, is effective of that which is promised upon condition. Now, I say, not only conditions in a proper sense, but all certain and constant antecedents {though they are not expressed or included in their federal constitution, so as that the promise doth depend upon them} may in a vulgar sense, be called conditions of those things that follow them; and in this sense our divines do commonly call one benefit of the Covenant a condition of the other; as that which is given first, of that which is given after. Thus Dr. Twisse {"Vindiciae Gratiae," 1632,} makes inherent holiness to be a cause dispositive or the *sine qua non*, {an indispensable condition, element, or factor; something essential,} not of Justification, but of Salvation or Glorification, because the one always precedes the other. Many others do express themselves in the same manner. It is evident, that some benefits of the New Covenant in their execution and accomplishment do follow others; though we have a right unto them all at once, {forasmuch as that flows immediately from the purchase which Christ hath made,} yet we have not possession of them all at once, but in that order and manner as God is pleased to bestow them. Christ hath procured both Grace and Glory for his elect, yet he gives Grace, as in, gracious qualifications, as knowledge, faith, love, &c., before he brings them to the possession of glory; in which sense, I conceive, it is that the Scripture annexes Salvation unto Faith, and other works of inherent holiness; {Matthew chapter 5; Heb.12:14, &c.,} because these are certain

and infallible antecedents in all that shall be saved; {see, George Downname, "Treatise of Justification," 1634; pg. 471, &c.,} none {who live to years of understanding} are saved, but they that do believe the Gospel, and show forth the fruits of it in a suitable conversation. If in this sense only, Faith and Repentance be called conditions of the Covenant, to wit, because they are wrought in all those that do enjoy the full effect of the Covenant, I will not contend.

Yet I think it fit rather to forbear this expression, because it is so improper, to call a part of the Covenant, the condition of it. Chamier, {Daniel Chamier, 1564–1621,} though he often useth the expression, yet he acknowledges that "faith is not the cause of salvation, but rather an instrument of apprehending grace." Faith is not a proper antecedent condition, but an improper or consequent condition, it is not a cause of salvation, but only the instrument whereby we receive and apply it. Mr. Rutherford {Samuel Rutherford, 1600?-1661,} himself, though he calls them Libertines and Antinomians, who say the Covenant of Grace is not conditional, yet almost in the same breath he hath let fall these words, "to buy without money, and to have a sight of sin, is the condition of our having the water of life, but the truth is, it is an improper condition, for both wages and work is free Grace." {Trial of Faith, Pg.61, 1645 edition.} I confess, that improper locations ought to be born with, when they serve to illustrate truth; but this I conceive doth exceedingly darken it. Further, I think to abandon this expression because of the advantage, which the adversaries of the gospel do make of this expression. Were most of the ancient Fathers now alive, to see, what use the Papists and others do make of their unwary sayings, to patronize their errors; I am persuaded they would fill the world with their retractions and apologies. Have we not cause then to be careful in this matter, when we see so many profligate errors, as free-will, and universal redemption, sheltering themselves under this expression! But that which moves me most, is compassion to our vulgar hearers; who when they hear men say, that Faith, Repentance, &c.,

are conditions of the Covenant, understand it no otherwise than in the most common acceptation, and as the term condition is used in reference to men's contracts, and as obedience was the condition of the first Covenant; whereby {as Luther hath observed,} {Commentary on Galatians, chapter, 4,} they live still in bondage, not daring to take hold of the promise, because they doubt whether they have the condition; all their endeavors after faith and holiness, are but mercenary and selfish, they would not do the work, but to get the wages.

But this is not the matter that is now in question, for our difference is not about words but things. The reader I suppose is sufficiently informed, in what sense we deny, that the New Covenant is conditional, to wit, in that manner as the first Covenant was, which was properly conditional; and this persuasion I cannot but adhere to, {notwithstanding all that I have seen or heard to the contrary,} that in the New Covenant, wherein God hath promised life and salvation unto sinners, for whom Christ hath shed his blood; and by virtue whereof they do obtain all good things present and future, there is no condition required of them to obtain or procure the blessings, that are therein promised; for though God doth bestow upon us one blessing before another, yet he gives not any one for the sake of another, but all of them {even to our final sitting down in Glory} are given us freely for the sake of Christ. Glory itself is not only not for, but not according to our works, as the principle or rule by which God proportions his reward, but according to his own mercy and Grace. My reasons are.

Because in all those places, wherein the nature or tenor of the New Covenant is declared, there is not {as Dr. Twisse hath observed} any mention at all of the least condition, as Jer.31:33; Ezek.36:25 &c.; Hos.2:18-20, &c., in all which places, with the like, God promises to do all in them, and for them; upon the last of those texts Zanchius {Hieronimus Zanchius, 1516-1590} observes, "he doth not say, if thou wilt repent, I will receive thee into favour, and betroth thee; but

absolutely so, I will betroth thee, &c., it is therefore a most absolute Covenant, wherein God without any condition, doth promise that he will receive his people into favour, and save them." The same author in another place, speaking of the Covenant which God made with Abraham, Gen 17:7, says, "it is to be noted that this promise is altogether free, absolute, and without any condition," which he proves by two arguments, one of which is that because in the words of the Covenant we find no condition. And long before him, that noble champion of Grace against the Pelagians, Prosper of Aquitaine⁹⁶ who lived about the year 445, says that "the Covenant is still in force, and is daily fulfilled, which the Lord promised unto Abraham, without any condition, and established without a restipulation." Now if any shall say, that these, and such like texts, do not comprise the whole, but only a part of the New Covenant, because God doth not say, it is the whole Covenant, I answer that it is a mere shift, like that of the Papists against Justification by Faith alone, because the word "alone" is not found in those Scriptures, which the Protestants do bring to prove it. Our divines answer, it is there virtually, and by necessary consequence, though not formally or literally; and so say I, when the Lord saith expressly, "this is my Covenant;" it is all one as if he had said, "this is my whole Covenant." Let our adversaries show us one place, where any conditional promise is called the New Covenant, either in whole or in part; for that which they would make the condition of the Covenant on our part, is expressly promised to us, no less than any other blessing; and their saying, that it is promised in the Covenant, but not as a part of the Covenant, hath been sufficiently disproved before.

Because all those covenants which God made to prefigure this Covenant were free and absolute, without any condition, therefore the Covenant itself, which was figured by them, is much more so; it is not to be questioned, but the substance hath as much Grace as

⁹⁶ Prosper of Aquitaine, 390-455, a writer and disciple of Augustine of Hippo.

the shadow. Now I say, in those typical covenants, which God made with Noah, Abraham, Phinehas, David, &c., there are no stipulations. The Covenant with Noah, doth not run like that with Adam, do this and live, but I will not destroy the earth, &c., Genesis 9:11. I confess Rivet⁹⁷ saith, "that the condition on Noah's part was, that he walked uprightly," but God doth not say so, for the Lord doth not say, I will make this Covenant with thee, if thou wilt walk uprightly. Note also, that this Covenant was made not only with Noah, but with every living creature, verse 12, now sensitive creatures could not perform any such condition; and if the benefit of that Covenant, had depended upon Noah's upright walking, then upon Noah's fall, verse 21, the world should have been drowned again; as death entered into the world upon the non-performance of Adam's condition. The Covenant with Phinehas, Num.25:11-13, is not like that which God made with Eli, which was but a conditional and uncertain Covenant, I Sam.2:30; and so the Covenant which God made with David, concerning the kingdom, is not like the Covenant which he made with Saul, which was quickly void, because it depended upon his obedience, I Sam.13:13,14, which David's did not; and therefore the Covenant, which God made with David, is called, "the sure mercies of David," Isa.54:3, God promised mercies unto Saul, as well as unto David, but they were not sure mercies; because they were conditional, they were promised upon conditions to be performed by him; but the Covenant with David, was sure and steadfast, Psal.89:28, because it depended not upon conditions on his part; and therefore though he started aside as well as Saul; yet the Covenant made with him, was not thereupon dissolved and broken.

Because if there were any condition required in the New Covenant to entitle us to the blessings of it, it would not be a Covenant of pure Grace; so that the

⁹⁷ André Rivet, 1572-1651, French Huguenot theologian, who as a rigid 'Calvinist' and an uncompromising enemy of the Roman Catholic Church.

asserting of conditions in the New Covenant, doth by necessary consequence overthrow the nature of it; for as Augustine hath observed, "Grace is not Grace, unless it be every way free;" and the Apostle before him, Rom.11:6, "if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Our salvation is ascribed to Grace, not only inclusively, but exclusively. {Eph.2:8,9; Tit.3:5} All the blessings of the New Covenant are called gifts, {Rom.5:17,18, 6:23,} and gifts that are given freely. {I Cor.2:12; Rom 3:24} To give a thing freely and conditionally, are contradictory; he that parts with anything upon conditions, doth as it were sell it. The works and conditions which men perform in the Prophets phrase, are their money, {Isa.55:1,2,} a condition performed, makes the thing covenanted for a due debt, which the promiser is bound to give; so that if the blessings of the Covenant did depend upon conditions, they would not be of Grace, but debt; and men by performing those conditions, would be, at least in part, their own saviors. Now what can be imagined more derogatory to the Grace of God!

Objection: True, may some say, it would derogate from the Grace of God, if we attribute such a meritorious-ness unto these conditions, as the Papists do unto works; but we do not do so.

Answer: To which I answer, that the Papists assert no other works and conditions to be necessary to Justification and Salvation, than what our adversaries do; and neither Papists nor Arminians do ascribe any more meritorious-ness to works, than our opponents. They grant there is such an infinite distance and disproportion between the blessing promised, and the conditions required of us, that in strictness of justice they do not deserve it, only *ex pacto*, {by covenant or agreement,} seeing God is pleased to promise so largely upon condition of so small a pittance of service, we may be said to merit by performing the condition; and in this sense Mr. Baxter will tell you, that the performers of a condition may be said to merit the reward. The Papists

never pleaded for merit upon any other account; and Mr. Calvin observed long ago, how much they please themselves with this simple shift, supposing that hereby they shall evade whatsoever arguments are brought against them. Though Mr. Baxter seems to mince the matter, calling his conditions but a *sine qua non*, {something that is absolutely needed,} and a pepper corn, &c., yet he attributes as much, if not more to works, than the Papists, Arminians, and Socinians, have done; for the Papists will not say, that works do merit in a strict and proper sense. Smalzius {a Socinian} calls their *fides formata*, {faith formed by charity,} a mere *sine qua non*, {something that is absolutely needed,} and a known friend to the Remonstrants doctrine amongst ourselves dubs it with a no better name than "a slight, inconsiderable, despicable pepper corn, most pitifully un-proportional to the great rent which God might require, and to the infinite treasure of glory he makes over to us;" and again, "that mite of obedience, faith and love." But now Mr. Baxter goes a step beyond them, in that he ascribes a meritorious-ness to works, which the Arminians and Socinians have not dared to do. I would ask, whether the condition required of Adam was meritorious of eternal life? I presume no man will say it was, in a strict and proper sense, there being no proportion between the work and the wages; but yet that condition did lessen the freeness of divine Grace. The Grace of God was not manifested so much in saving man in that way, as in giving life unto him freely. And therefore to put our Justification and salvation upon the same terms, must necessarily eclipse the Grace of God in the New Covenant.

Objection: But some may say, there is a great difference, the conditions required of Adam were legal conditions; but the conditions which we stand for, and assert in the New Covenant, are evangelical conditions.

Answer: I answer, that the sound of words doth nothing at all to alter the nature of things; all conditions performed for life, are legal conditions. The precepts both of Law and Gospel have the same matter, though not the same end; but when gospel duties are made

conditions of Justification and Salvation, there is no difference.

Objection: Yes, may some say, Evangelical Conditions are more facile and easy than legal conditions were.

Answer: Are they so! Let them consider again, whether it be more easy for a man that is dead in trespasses and sins, to believe in Christ, to love God, to hate sin, to mortify his lusts, &c., than it was for Adam in his innocency {when he had a natural inclination to obey God} to abstain from the fruit of one tree, when he had a thousand besides as good as that; there can be no condition imagined more facile and feasible than Adam's was. But even if it were so, yet would the reward be debt and not Grace. As he that hath his penny by contract, hath as much right to it, though he labored but an hour, as if he had endured the heat of the whole day. We say, *gradus non variat speciem*, {it is not more Grace, but all Grace,} that doth denominate the Covenant, a Covenant of Grace. To these reasons there might be added many more; which because they have been mentioned before, upon another occasion, I shall not stand upon them now.

Note further, that because all the pretended conditions of the Covenant are promised in the Covenant, how absurd is it to make anything a cause of itself, or a means and conditions whereby it is procured.

Because the asserting of conditions in the Covenant, attributes unto men a power and ability to do good, not only before they are justified, but before they believe. For if all the promises of the Covenant are conditional, then the promise of Faith is conditional, and consequently a man must be supposed able to perform some good and acceptable work to God, before he believes, whereas, "without Faith it is impossible to please God." {Heb.11:6} Conditions in a proper sense, do necessarily infer the liberty of man's will unto that which is good; for as the Remonstrants do define it, "a condition is a free act, which we absolutely may perform, or not perform, by free-will, not acted by the pre-determinating Grace of God." A conditional

Covenant and free-will are inseparable, for the former supposes the latter. Whether Mr. Woodbridge will own the consequence, I am not able to say; however, that there is no such power or ability in the natural man to do that which is good, might be irrefragably demonstrated from sundry Scriptures, as Gen.6:5; Eph.2:1,2; I Cor.2:14; II Cor.3:5; Rom.7:18; Phil.2:13 &c.

Because if the Covenant were conditional, no man in this life could attain to any assurance of his own interest in the blessing of it, but must live always in a wavering and uncertain estate, as to the hope of eternal life; that hope of salvation which is built upon conditional promises is {as Calvin observes} always wavering and tottering; for conditional promises belong to none, but unto them who have performed the condition. If remission of sins were promised unto us, not absolutely, but conditionally, as upon condition that we do believe, repent, and persevere, "then {says Rutherford} it must follow, that no man's sins are remitted in this life, no man is justified here," which is contrary to many plain Scriptures, as Rom.4:10; 5:1; 8:30; Eph.1:7; I Cor.6:11."

The Scripture shows that there is the same proportion, between Adam's conveying sin to his seed, and Christ's conveying Righteousness to his Seed. {Rom.5:16-19} The imputation of Adam's sin did not depend upon the personal sinful acts of his posterity, so neither doth the imputation of Christ's Righteousness depend upon the good works and actions of God's Elect; but as by Adam's sin, all his posterity became actually sinners, even they that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; namely, actually in their own persons; even so by Christ's Righteousness all the Elect to the end of the world, are constituted righteous, before they have performed any works, or conditions in their own persons.

Because if the Covenant were conditional, then infants and idiots, though elected, could have no interest in any of the blessing therein promised, in regard they cannot perform the conditions upon which they do

depend; and consequently, dying without Faith, they must needs be damned.

And lastly, if they to whom the Covenant belongs, had a right and title to all the blessings of the Covenant, before their believing and turning unto God, then are there no conditions required on our part to entitle us to the blessings of it. But they to whom the Covenant belongs, the elect, had a right and interest in all the blessings of the Covenant, before their believing, &c., so therefore, the assumption shall be proved in our answer to that argument to which Mr. Woodbridge hath retorted upon us from Jeremiah 31, wherewith we shall enter the lists in the next place.

Chapter XX

Wherein Mr. Woodbridge's chief argument against the absoluteness of the New Covenant, is answered; and this position {that God is the God of his people, before they do believe and repent} rescued from his contradictions.

From the Scriptures before mentioned, wherein the tenor of the Covenant is recited, Mr. Woodbridge hath advanced this argument against us, "if God be not the God of any, nor they his people before they believe, then none are in Covenant with God before they believe; and therefore, as for the proposition, {says he,} he is destitute of sense that shall deny it." I say so too, if that cause of God's being the God of any, be taken comprehensively, and in its full latitude, for their having interest in God, and in all the blessings which God hath intended to his people; but if it be taken for the actual enjoyment and possession of any one, or more of those blessings, {as sometimes it is,} he is as much destitute of sense that shall affirm it; for then the sense of it is this, if none do know, or have the comfort of this privilege, that God is their God before they believe, then

none are in Covenant with God before they believe; this consequence is false, for there is a wide difference between having an interest in God, and the blessings of his Grace, and our knowledge thereof, or our enjoyment of those blessings. Interest and possession are not equipollent and reciprocal; God may promise some one benefit, in order to our possession, and enjoyment of others, though not to give us a right and interest in them. We say, that by Faith we have the knowledge and comfort of that Reconciliation which Christ hath made between God and us, though we cannot say, that we obtain a right and interest therein by Faith. Through Faith we come to know, that God is our God, though our believing doth not make him to be our God. But the assumption that God is not the God of any before they believe, is obvious unto just exception, which he hath endeavored to prove after this manner; "for if God promise to give Faith, that we may be his people, and he our God, then till that Faith be given, he is not our God, nor we his people; but God promiseth to give Faith, that he may be our God, and we his people, Jer.31:33; Heb.8:10; Ezek.11:19,20; 36:25; 37:23-27." We have shown before, that the Scriptures mentioned do utterly refuse to protect the Minor; and that all the particular promises contained in them, are parts or effects of the Covenant. The having of a new heart doth not make God to be our God; but because he is our God, he gives us that blessing, and all things else.

That God is the God of his people before they do believe, and are converted, is evident unto me from these grounds.

First, if God be their God, whom he doth peculiarly love, and whom he hath chosen and separated to himself from the rest of mankind, then is the Lord a God unto some before they believe; the consequence is clear, because God hath loved and chosen some in that manner from everlasting. "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." {Jer.31:3} "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we

should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." {Eph.1:4,5} Now this was not an ordinary common love, such as he bears unto all creatures, but a peculiar and distinguishing love, whereby he willed to them the greatest good in Christ. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us." {Eph.2:4} {See John 17:23,24} But God is their God whom he doth peculiarly love, and hath chosen and separated to himself, therefore, for what is it to have the Lord for our God, but to be appropriated to God, to have such an interest in God, as others have not, to be the objects of his special love? It was Israel's prerogative above all the nations of the world, that they had the Lord to be their God; now the Lord became their God, by setting his love upon them, and choosing them to be a peculiar people to himself. "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." {Deut.14:2} And by separating them from other people, "and ye shall be holy unto me; for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." {Lev.20:26} The Lord, {Ezek.16:8,} declares concerning spiritual Israel, that they became his, whilst they were in their blood, that before ever they were washed and adorned {had any amiable qualities in them} he swore unto them, and entered into Covenant with them; which swearing, as it refers to spiritual Israel, must be understood of that oath which he made to Christ, concerning the blessing of his seed. The Prophet infers this their relation unto God from his everlasting love, Jer.31:3, and the Apostle likewise, Rom.8:31-33, grounds the saints interest in God, or their having God to be with them, upon his eternal and unchangeable good will towards them, even before he spared his Son to die for them. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." {II Tim.2:19} This foundation standeth sure, the Lord knoweth them that

are his; implying that the Election and Foreknowledge of God doth make men his.

Secondly, if the Lord be a God, not only to his people, but to their seed also, then is he a God to some before they believe; but he is a God not only to his people who are called and do believe, but to their seed who are not called, and do not yet believe; therefore, the Lord promised Abraham, that he would be not only his God, but the God of his seed; the seed of Abraham did not then believe, yet the Lord styles himself their God. And the Apostle tells those converts, Acts 2:39, that the promise was to them, and to their children. Now what was that promise, but that the Lord would be their God; and if our opposers say, that God was not the God of their children, until they were called, they would be guilty of the same tautology which they charge upon the Anti-Paedobaptists; who from this Scripture, deny baptism to the infants of believing parents, because they are not proper subjects thereof till they are called; that is, enabled to believe and repent. Upon this ground it is, that the children of believing parents are admitted to baptism, before they believe; because God hath declared, that he is their God.

Thirdly, they whom the Lord hath purchased to be a peculiar people to himself, have the Lord to be their God; but God hath purchased some to be a peculiar people to himself before they believe; therefore, the major is evident, for when a man makes a purchase, he obtains a legal right and propriety in the thing purchased; *quod venditur, transit in potestatem ementis*, {when a thing is sold, it passes into the possession of that to which it is sold;} and therefore the Apostle concludes from hence, that we are not our own, but God's, because we are bought with a price. {I Cor.6:19,20} The minor is undeniable, that God did purchase us before we do believe, even when he gave himself a ransom for us. {I Tim.2:6} He bought us {saith the Apostle} with his precious blood, I Pet.1:18,19, and thereby we were made a peculiar people. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar

people, zealous of good works." {Tit.2:14} Though he had not immediately upon the payment of the price the possession of us, yet thereby he obtained a right to us; we became his in right, though not in enjoyment. It was here as with a man that buys a living, and pays down the price, he hath immediately a right to it, though he hath not the present possession of it; he may call it his own, though it be not in his hands.

Fourthly, if we receive all good things from God; yea, Faith itself upon this account, because we are his people, then God is our God before we believe; but we do indeed receive all good things from God, even Faith itself, merely upon this account, because we are his people, as Gal.4:6, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts;" they were sons before they received the Spirit of his Son. So, Isa.48:17, "thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go;" by my word and works; by which means men are brought to Faith and Repentance. No reason can be given why one man profits by the Word and another doth not, but because the Lord is a God to one, and not to the other; he hath chosen one, and not the other. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed;" {Acts 13:48;} ordained unto eternal life; that is, chosen and separated from the rest of mankind, to be a peculiar people unto God; in essence, believed.

Fifthly, if none can or do believe and repent, but they to whom the Lord doth manifest this Grace, that he is their God, then the Lord is our God before we believe and repent; but none do or can believe and repent, but they to whom God doth reveal and manifest this Grace; therefore, we choose him, because he hath chosen us; and love him, because he hath loved us first. {Jn.15:16; I Jn.4:10,19} In Hos.2:23, saith the Lord, "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." I have

observed that expositors generally do take notice of the order of the words. As Mr. Burroughs⁹⁸, says that, "God must begin with us, for we cannot begin and say, thou art my God; but God must begin with us first, and say, you are my People." {Burroughs, Exposition of Hosea, 1643 edition, pg.674.} And Dr. Rivet, {André Rivet,} "the order of the words ought diligently to be observed, it is God that begins and calls them his people, who being made his people through Grace, do by Faith give their consent, and own him for their God." And Zanchius, {Hieronymus Zanchius,} says, to the same purpose, that "the order of the words show that God doth first prevent us with his Grace, and makes us his people, then follows the assent of our Faith, whereby we acknowledge and embrace him for our God." So that our Faith doth not make him to be our God, but suppose he is so.

Sixthly, they to whom God is a Father, and a Shepherd, have the Lord for their God; but God was our Father and Shepherd before we believed. Therefore; all the Elect are the Sheep, and Children of Jesus Christ. They are his Sheep, "I lay down my life for my Sheep," {Jn.10:15,} he laid down his life, not only for them that were then called, but for them that were to be called afterwards, so ver.16, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold;" the elect Gentiles were his sheep, before they were brought into his Fold - the visible communion of Saints. They are also called his Seed and Children. {Isa.53:10 & Heb.2:13} "Behold I, and the children which God hath given me;" he speaks of all those sons, whom he was to bring unto Glory, ver.10. So, Jer.3:19; "thou shalt call me, my Father;" their calling him Father, did not make, but suppose him to be their Father, and in this respect he is called an "Everlasting Father." {Isa.9:6}

⁹⁸ Jeremiah Burroughs, 1600-1646, an English Congregationalist and a well-known Puritan preacher; a member of the Westminster Assembly and one of the few who opposed the Presbyterian majority.

Mr. Woodbridge tells us, "that he hath only one observation to add, which the most learned among the Jewish and Christian writers do often take notice of, and that is this, that God is never said to be our God in reference to his giving of the first Grace, but only in reference to the blessing, which he promises to them that have Faith. He is not our God that he may give us Faith, but is everywhere said to give us Faith, that he may be our God." I acknowledge that Mr. Woodbridge is a learned man, yet I know it is much above his reach to determine, who are the most learned amongst the Jewish and Christian writers; who as yet hath not looked into the tenth part of either. As for the Jewish Doctors, I suppose no man will think them competent judges of gospel verities; and I must confess, that too many of our Christian writers are leavened over-much with a Jewish legal spirit. However, if he had pointed to the authors that make this observation, I should have weighed the grounds whereon they lay it; the names of men, though never so learned, weigh lighter than a feather in matters of Faith. If he took up his observation upon trust from Grotius {as I suspect he did} I shall presume once more, to advise him to take heed of tampering with the notions of that learned apostate.

I have showed already that sundry godly and learned men are of another mind, who exclude all manner of conditions from the New Covenant, and consequently do make Faith a blessing of the Covenant; to which there might be added many more, as Luther, "the promises of the Law are conditional, promising life, not freely, but to such as fulfill the Law, and therefore they leave men's consciences in doubt, for no man fulfilleth the Law; but the promises of the New Testament have no such condition joined unto them, nor require anything of us, nor depend upon any condition of our worthiness, but bring and give unto us freely, forgiveness of sins, grace, righteousness, and life everlasting for Christ's sake, &c." Melancthon speaks as fully to the purpose, "men commonly {says he} do imagine that the gospel is a conditional promise; but this conceit is to be rooted out of them. The gospel

offers remission of sins and eternal life, without the condition of our works." And again, "our obedience is neither the cause nor the condition, for which we are accepted before God." So P. Martyr⁹⁹, "we deny {says he} that the Covenant of God, concerning the remission of sins, hath any condition annexed unto it." And Olevianus¹⁰⁰, "the whole frame or substance of the New Covenant is without any condition." Estius¹⁰¹, puts this question, "how the New Testament can be called a Covenant, seeing it contains only a most free promise, whereas covenants do consist of conditions on both parts? We may not answer, {says he} that good works are the condition thereof, seeing that works themselves are contained in the promise of the New Testament; but {he continues} the word doth not only signify a Covenant in a strict sense, which consists of mutual conditions, but a single promise, which is free from all conditions; and such a Covenant is that which we call the New Testament, that promise of God which is altogether free and absolute." With him agrees Dr. Ames, {William Ames, 1576-1633} who adds, "that the New Covenant is more properly called a Testament than a Covenant; because a will or testament bequeaths legacies, without any office or condition of the legatees." And Beza, {Theodore Beza, 1519-1605,} "the word 'promise' used in, Gal.3:14, doth not signify {says he} any promise, but that which is altogether free, in which respect it is opposed to the Law; for the promises of the

⁹⁹ Peter Martyr Vermigli, 1499-1562, an Italian theologian of the Reformation period; who was influenced by reading Protestant theologians such as Martin Bucer and Ulrich Zwingli, and converted from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism. He was a very influential figure in the early development of Reformed theology and in the English Reformation.

¹⁰⁰ Kaspar Olevianus, 1536-1587, was a significant German Reformed theologian during the Protestant Reformation and along with Zacharius Ursinus was said to be co-author of the Heidelberg Catechism; in 1578, he published a commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, with a preface by Theodore Beza.

¹⁰¹ Guilielmus Estius, 1542-1613, Biblical Commentator of the Augustinian mold.

Law have conditions annexed to them; and therefore this word 'promise,' whereby the New Covenant is signified, is better rendered promise than Covenant." But to avoid prolixity, I shall desire the reader at his leisure to peruse Junius¹⁰² his second narration on the four first Psalms, who being so great a linguist and lawyer, his judgment in this point ought the more to be regarded. It may be Mr. Baxter and Mr. Woodbridge will place them but in the form of ignorant and unstudied divines; though they do, it hath been sufficiently confirmed, with the authority of a greater doctor. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son." {I Jn.5:9}

The Scriptures which Mr. Woodbridge hath brought, do no whit help him, as, Heb.11:16, where it is said, God was not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were believers; "therefore, {says he,} God is not the God of any before they do believe." He might reason as well that a Father acknowledges and stands by his Son when he is in distress, therefore, he was not his Father before. The scope of the place is not to show when God did become their Father, but rather the faithfulness and condescension of God towards his people in their low estate, for though they were pilgrims and strangers in this world, hated and despised of all, yet God did own and honour them. {See Ps.105:12-15} So that in I Pet.2:10, where the Apostle speaking to the saints, says, in times past, you were not a people, but are now the people of God, is to be understood, in reference to the external administration of the Covenant, and not the real participation or interest in the blessings of it. Indeed

¹⁰² Franciscus Junius, 1545-1602, a Reformed scholar and theologian. Born in Bourges, he initially studied law, but later decided to study theology in Geneva under John Calvin and Theodore Beza. He became a minister in Antwerp, but was forced to flee to Heidelberg in 1567. He wrote a major translation of the Bible into Latin with Emmanuel Tremellius, and his *De Vera Theologia* was an important text in Reformed scholasticism.

in the first consideration, none are the people of God, but they that do profess the fear and worship of the true God, who walk in the name of the LORD their God, {Micah 4:5,} that is, in the laws and ordinances of Christ. In which respect the elect before Faith, as said to have been without God in the world, Eph.2:12; and in this sense, all that do profess the truth, are the people of God, though many of them are hypocrites; who are therefore said to be of Israel, Rom.9:6, though they are not Israel; and some that are but fruitless branches, Jn.15:2, are notwithstanding said to be in Christ; which must be understood in respect of external profession, and not of internal implantation. But in the latter consideration; none are the people of God, but they that do belong to the Election of Grace, who are the spiritual seed, and Israel in truth; and thus, all the elect, whether called or uncalled, are the people of God, though before conversion they have not the comfort, yet they have a good right and title unto all the purchases of Christ's death. God knows them to be his people, though they know not that he is their God.

Chapter XXI

Wherein the remaining arguments which Mr. Woodbridge hath brought to prove, that the New Covenant is not an absolute promise, and that the elect have no right to the Covenant before they believe, are answered.

Mr. Woodbridge towards the close of his book hath cast in three or four arguments more, for the confirmation of his opinion, which he things superfluous, "I might {saith he} spare the pains of further proof;" and truly, I think so too, unless he had bestowed his pains in a better cause, I must tell him, that when he hath said all that he can, in defense of this cause, he will at last sit down a loser; for when the day shall come, which shall try every man's work of what sort it is; this hay and stubble of

man's righteousness, and men's pleading for it, shall be consumed to ashes; though I am persuaded better things of him, and such as do accompany salvation. In the meantime I shall gladly hear the utmost that he hath to say, in the defense of his opinion. His first argument of this last rank, is grounded upon those words, Isa.55:3, "come unto me {that is, believe in me, Jn.6:35,} and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you," therefore, "the New Covenant is not an absolute promise, and none have any interest in the Covenant before they believe." To which I answer that the particle "and I," may be taken illatively, {as in some other places it is,} thus read, "for I will make an everlasting Covenant;" so that the Covenant is the ground of our coming, and not our faith. Or, if we take it copulatively, as our translators do, no prejudice can come thence to our assertion; for, I will make an everlasting Covenant, is all one, as if he had said, I will perform, or give to you, all other benefits promised in my Everlasting Covenant, even the sure mercies of David, as the Apostle expounds it. {Acts 13:34} Those promises which are proposed conditionally by the Prophets, are rendered absolutely by the Apostle; as for instance, that of the Prophet, "and the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD;" {Is.59:20;} the Apostle, Rom.11:26, renders it, then "shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" implying, that Faith and Repentance, are parts of the Covenant, which God will give unto them, for whom Christ hath procured them.

His second argument is that "the voice of the Gospel, which is the Covenant of Grace, is everywhere, believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, in opposition to the Covenant of works, which saith, {do this and live;} therefore, before believing, none have interest in the Covenant." We grant, that this precept or exhortation, "believe in the Lord Jesus," is frequently found in the New Testament, but that this doth formally contain the tenor of the Gospel, or New Covenant, we have before disproved. The Gospel properly and strictly

taken, consists neither in the precepts, nor promises of the Testament, but in the declaration of these glad tidings, that the promises which God made unto his people in the Old Testament are now fulfilled in Christ; namely, the promises concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the clear exhibition of all the fruits and effects of his Mediatorship. So that the sum of the gospel is rather comprised in this, that Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners, yea, the chief of sinners; and that by his one offering, he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. {Acts 13:32,33; Lk.1:54,55,69,70; Acts 26:22,23; Lk.4:18-21; I Tim.1:15; Heb.10:14} "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." {Mt.1:21} Now they that are sent forth to publish and declare these glad tidings are to command all men everywhere to believe in him whom God hath sent; assuring them in the name of God, that all that do believe in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. The command of believing, with the promise of life to believers, are parts of our ministry, they are not the tenor of the gospel, or New Covenant. The Covenant whereof Christ is the Mediator is said to be better than the former, because it doth consist of better promises, Heb.8:6, now what those better promises are, he tells them immediately out of Jeremiah, "I will put my laws into their hearts, &c.," wherein the Lord promises all good things unto them, without the least re-stipulation from them. It is said indeed, they that are called, that is, do believe, shall receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. It doth not follow, that their calling unto Faith, was the condition whereby they obtained the inheritance; no more, than because it is said, Heb.5:9, that "Christ is the author of salvation to them that do obey him;" therefore, works and obedience are conditions on our part to obtain salvation, which places do describe the persons that are saved, but not the terms or means by which they do obtain salvation; they that are called do receive, that is, enter into the promised inheritance; he doth not say, that by virtue of their calling, they do enter, or were invested with a right and title thereunto;

the repeating of his consequence is answer enough. They that are called shall receive the eternal inheritance; therefore, the called have any interest in the Covenant before believing, and the New Covenant is an absolute promise of grace in Christ.

His next argument is to this effect, "the Covenant of Grace is to be preached to every man; but the absolute promise is not made to every man, and therefore, the Covenant of Grace is not an absolute promise." Answer, this argument is faulty both in matter and form; the assumption should be, but the absolute promise {of mercy and forgiveness in Christ, without works and conditions performed by us} is not to be preached to all men, which is false. But we will take things as they lie before us, he goes on, "the Covenant of Grace is preached to every man, and every man called upon to fulfill the conditions of it, that he may receive the blessings of it, which condition is Faith, Heb.4:1,2." Here is a grain of corn in a heap of chaff; for it is true, that the Gospel, or Covenant of Grace, ought to be preached unto every creature, Mk.16:15; Mat.28:19; but it is not true, that the preaching of the Gospel is to call upon men to fulfill the conditions of the Covenant, or that Faith is the condition of it. The place alleged says no such thing, for the words are an exhortation to sincerity and perseverance in our Christian profession, by a similitude taken from foolish racers, who by giving over before they come to goal, do lose the crown. We also have a race to run, there is a crown set before us, and therefore we ought to take heed, least by any means we fall short thereof; though no man shall enter into the heavenly Canaan without Faith, yet it follows not, that Faith is the condition whereby we get an interest either in that, or the other blessings of the Covenant. The absoluteness of the New Covenant is no ways inconsistent with the preaching of the gospel unto every creature. For what is it to preach the gospel; but to publish those joyful tidings, that the Son of God is come into the world to save men from their sins; that in the sacrifice which he hath offered, there is plenteous redemption for the chief of sinners;

and to press and exhort all men without exception to believe in him, with the assent of their minds, that all things which are written of him, chiefly concerning the merit of his sufferings, and the efficacy of his death, are true and infallible; and with the embraces of their hearts, namely, with such affections as are suitable to so great a good; and more particularly to trust, rely, and roll themselves upon Christ, for all the purchases of his death; and in so doing, confidently to expect the fruition of them in the fittest times. Now the absoluteness of the New Covenant is so far from being any impediment to Faith, as that it affords men the greatest encouragement to believe, both to cast themselves into the arms of Christ, and to put on a strong confidence of inheriting the promises, seeing that in their accomplishment, they depend not upon works and conditions performed by themselves.

Mr. Woodbridge next demands, "whether there be an absolute promise made to every man, that God will give him Grace?" Though there be not, yet are the general promises of the Covenant a sufficient ground for our Faith, forasmuch as Grace therein is promised indefinitely to sinners; which all that are ordained to life, shall believe, and lay hold of. "But, says Mr. Woodbridge, is it sense to exhort men to take hold of God's Covenant or to enter into Covenant with God, if the Covenant be only an absolute promise on God's part?" What contradiction is there unto sense in either of these? For, what is it to lay hold of the Covenant, but {as Benhadad's servants did by Ahab's words, I Kings 20:33,} to take up those gracious discoveries which God in his Covenant hath made of himself to sinners in Christ, and to resolve with the woman of Canaan not to be beaten off with any discouragements? {Mt.15:22-28} Which motion of Faith is called, the taking of the kingdom of heaven by violence, {Matt.11:12,} that is, when a soul appropriates general promises to himself in particular, and against hope, believes in hope. The Apostle calls it, fleeing for refuge to lay hold on the promise, Heb.6:18, which promise is the same which God confirmed by an oath, to "more abundantly to show

unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel." {vs.17} Now we do not find that God did ever confirm any conditional promise of his Grace; Isa.54:9,10; Ps.89:34,35; and as for the other phrase of entering into Covenant with God, though we never find it in the New Testament, that the Apostles did exhort men to enter into, or to make a Covenant with God; yet I conceive that it may be used, in reference to the external administration of the New Covenant; as men may be said to enter into Covenant with God, when they take upon them the profession of Christianity, and give up themselves to be the Lord's people. In this respect we may exhort men, as the Apostle doth, to give up themselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, and to abide steadfast in the Covenant of God; or rather as the Apostles phrase it, "to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." {Heb.3:6} It were absurd to exhort men either to make or concur to the making of the Covenant of Grace, which is his act alone, who sheweth mercy unto whom he will.

His next interrogative is a very strange one, for he asks us, "whether if the Covenant be an absolute promise, it be sense to accuse, blame and damn men for unbelief, and rejecting of the Gospel? Was it ever known that men should be counted worthy of death, for not being the objects of an absolute promise?" Now did ever we say that men are damned for not being objects of an absolute promise? We say, the condemnation of reprobates doth inevitably follow upon their not being included in that Covenant, which God hath made with Christ, or God's not giving them unto Jesus Christ; but this is, *antecessio ordinis*, {the antecedence of God's order and sovereign predetermination,} and *non causalitatis*; {not the causality} of their exclusion from this Covenant, it is but an antecedent, and not the cause of their destruction. Men are damned for not believing that Grace which God hath manifested to sinners, for not receiving it with that esteem, and such affections as it doth deserve; so that formally, the cause of their damnation, is not their non-being objects of God's

absolute promise, but their dis-obedience to the command of God. If he say {as the Remonstrators have said before him,} that they are unjustly blamed and damned for their unbelief, seeing they have no object for their Faith, no Christ to believe in; we shall answer, that there is a real object proposed to their Faith, though there be no such absolute promise that God will give Grace to every man in particular; the object of Faith is Christ, as set forth in the written Word, and more especially the free promises of mercy unto wretched sinners, for the sake of Christ, for the which all men are commanded to believe, both *assensu intellectus*, {with the assent of their intellect,} and *amplexus voluntatis*, {the affectionate embrace of their will,} and for their unbelief they perish everlastingly. If he shall ask, why God doth command them to believe in Christ, seeing he never intended they should have any good or benefit by Christ? I must say with the Apostle, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" {Rom.9:20} O man, what art thou that disputest against God? We ought to look to his commands, and not curiously to search into his councils. We know that the preaching of the Gospel was ordained principally for gathering God's elect; now because ministers know not who are elected, and who are not; for it was necessary that the proclamation of Grace and command of believing should be universal, which will be embraced and obeyed by all that are ordained to life. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." {Acts 13:48} "And they shall hear my voice." {Jn.10:16} "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." {Rom.11:7} "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." {II Thes.2:13,14}

His fourth and last argument against the absoluteness of the New Covenant is, "if the Covenant of Grace be an absolute promise, then no men in the world, but wicked and ungodly men, are in Covenant

with God." To which I answer that it is very true, that the Covenant of Grace is made with Christ in behalf of sinners, and none else, for Christ "will have mercy, and not sacrifice;" for he came not to "call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" {Mt.9:13,} for "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." {Mt.9:12} "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." {Rom.5:6} "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." {Rom.5:8} If men were not sinners and ungodly, there would be no need at all of the Covenant of Grace, for the Covenant of works would have been sufficient; either it is made with sinners, or none. It will not follow that when men are in Covenant, or do partake of some blessings of the Covenant, that immediately the Covenant ceases; when we are in glory, the Covenant shall not cease, for the continuance of glory is promised in the Covenant, no less than glory itself; for which cause it is called an Everlasting Covenant. So that his inference is very irrational, "if the Covenant be an absolute promise, then none but wicked, that is, unregenerate persons, are perfectly in Covenant with God." It follows rather from his own opinion, for if the Covenant be a conditional promise, when the condition is performed, the Covenant is so far forth fulfilled, and performers of it so far forth do cease to be in Covenant, and so consequently none but wicked men, or such as have not yet fulfilled the condition, shall be the objects of the Covenant, or the persons to whom it doth belong. Or else it must follow, that none at all are perfectly in Covenant with God; the performers of the condition are not, because the condition being performed, the Covenant is fulfilled, and thereby ceaseth to be a Covenant; and the non-performers of the condition are not, for until the condition be performed, men have no right or interest in blessings promised. By this sophistry a man may soon dispute himself out of the Covenant, and consequently out of hope.

I have now {through the assistance of a good God, and the advantage of a good cause} followed Mr.

Woodbridge to the end of his race. He seems weary of his walk as well as I. "It is {says he} beyond my purpose and work, to follow this pursuit any further;" rather, "I have no more to say," for I dare say, if he could have thought upon anything else, either to color his own, or to vilify the cause which he doth oppose, he would not have held it in; his last argument sufficiently shows he hath pumped to the bottom. I must confess I am as glad as he, that I am arrived so near to my journeys end; though the passage hath not been very difficult, yet I must needs say, it hath been to me somewhat {more perhaps than ordinary} troublesome, in regard I have so little time and strength to bestow upon these paper-conflicts. And therefore, though my adversary {who I know wants neither words nor confidence} shall offer a reply, I shall not engage to make a rejoinder; for having declared my judgment, with the reasons of it, I shall submit myself to the censures of the godly reader; beseeching the Father of lights to lead both him and me into all truth, and more especially into a fuller manifestation of our free redemption by Jesus Christ.

But before I can take my leave of the reader, I must request his patience, whilst I take notice of a passage or two, in Mr. Woodbridge's conclusion to his worthy Sir; first, he tells him "though it is likely, something is, or will be said against my sermon, which at this distance I am never like to hear of, yet sure I am, that nothing can be answered consistent with the truth of the Scripture." Concerning his sermon, I have said no more in his absence than I was ready to have spoken unto his face, had the time, and the patience {had almost said the passions of some of his friends} given me leave; I confess I had not made my replies so public, had he not offered such open wrongs, both unto the truth and to myself. His bravado, {"sure I am, that nothing can be answered, &c.,"} argues rather his conceit of himself, than the soundness of the doctrine which he would maintain. A bold face is usually the last refuge of a bad cause, which the advocate puts on to uphold his credit amongst the simple, who are apt to

think, that he hath the strongest argument who shows the greatest confidence. I remember Campion¹⁰³ the Jesuit, in his epistle to the Universities, tells them that "he was as sure he had gotten the victory, as that there is a God, a Heaven, a Faith, a Christ." I shall not answer Mr. Woodbridge as Dr. Whitaker doth the Jesuit, but I must needs say, that he talks at too high a rate, and not as a man sensible in how many things we offend all; doth he know as much as all men besides? Or can he judge of men's answers, before he hath heard them? Had Parker, Twisse, Pemble, &c., nothing at all to say in defense of their doctrine? Doth he think this sermon such a solid piece, that all men living will be struck dumb therewith? Though I am not conscious of deviating a syllable from the sense of the Scripture in this discourse, yet I dare not say, that nothing can be answered unto what I have written; I shall say of my writings, as the Apostle of himself, "but with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." {I Cor.4:3,4} And so, though I know nothing in them inconsistent with the Holy Scriptures, yet are they not hereby justified; for all that I desire, here is, that the reader would bring them to the standard of truth, and hold fast that which they shall find agreeable thereunto. This I am as sure of as Faith can make me, {whose certainty is greater than that of science,} that the whole glory of our Justification and Salvation ought to be given to the Grace of God, and the merits of Christ alone; which would not be done, if either of them did depend and were obtained by works and conditions performed by us.

¹⁰³ Edmund Campion, 1540-1581, an English Roman Catholic Jesuit priest. While conducting an underground ministry in officially Anglican England, Campion was arrested. He was arraigned and indicted in 1581, with several others at Westminster on a charge of having conspired to raise a sedition in the realm and dethrone the Queen; and thus convicted of high treason, he was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn in the same year.

Next he tells him, "how sorry he is, for the breaches that are amongst us." Truly, if he be not, I think he may, having contributed not a little to the widening of them; for before his sermon, we were upon the matter agreed, concerning the point which is now in difference; we had oftentimes friendly and Christian communion; which ever since hath been interrupted. It was not a month before, that I had conference privately with my reverend neighbor {my first antagonist} about this thing, who told me, "that he held the New Covenant to be conditional, no otherwise, than in respect of God's order, and method, in bestowing the blessings of it." To whom I replied, that if he asserted conditions in the Covenant in no other sense, we were agreed; and he knows, that in the letter which had passed between us, I had yielded as much, namely, that in improper speech, the Covenant may be called conditional; though for the causes before mentioned, I use not the phrase. And therefore, if any new breach hath happened about this matter, the guilt of it must rest on others, and not on me. For my own part, I am not conscious in myself of the least breach in affection with any of my neighbors; being ready to serve them in love, as opportunity is offered; though some of them have used me spitefully, refusing {as of old the Jews did towards the Samaritans} to have any dealings with me, so much as in civil affairs. I confess, I have forborn some of their lectures, because I would not, by my silence, give testimony to that which I know to be heterodox and unsound; and I thought good a while to desist from making open exceptions, until I had given a more public account of my practice in this particular. For the future, I shall not put myself to the trouble of writing more books, unless it be to answer the exceptions of my reverend neighbor {who first engaged me in this controversy} either against my doctrine or practice. But if in any congregation of this City {where the charge of souls is incumbent on me} I am present, when these fundamental truths of the gospel are darkened and undermined by strangers, or others, I shall {God willing} put on the Apostolic resolution, {though the

weakest and un-worthiest of my brethren,} not to give place to them "by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth" and simplicity of the gospel may continue amongst us; {Gal.2:5;} and yet with due respect unto all men's persons; let any man do the like by me, I shall not account it a breach of peace. If Mr. Woodbridge had any intent to heal our breaches, I must say, he was very unhappy in the choice of means. No prudent man will judge it a probable way to compose differences, to use calumniating and opprobrious language toward them that dissent, or to lay unto their charge such things as they abhor. But to Mr. Woodbridge's prayer for peace, in the close of his discourse, I shall add mine, both for him and myself, that we may do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. {II Cor.13:8} "Wisdom is justified of her children." Matthew 11:19.

FINIS.