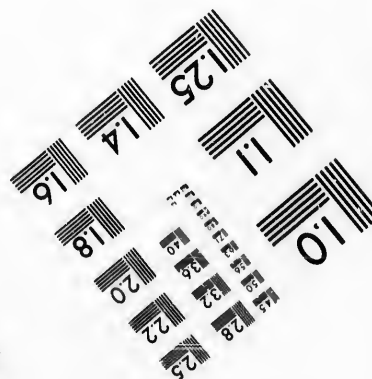
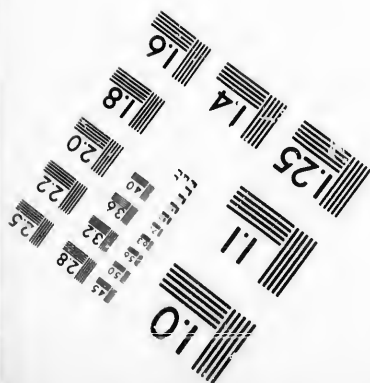
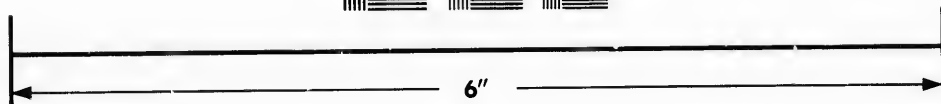
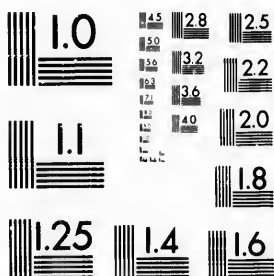


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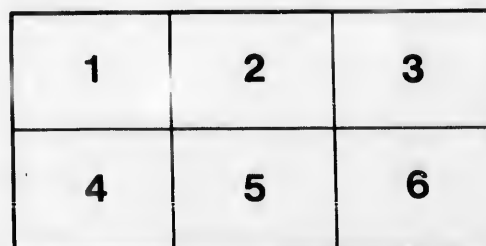
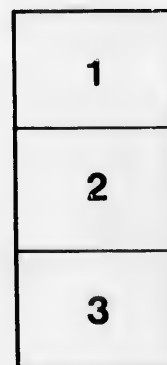
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W. H. Miller
(1829)
STRICTURES

ON

Donald Fraser

**A PUBLICATION ENTITLED
BELIEVER IMMERSION,
AS OPPOSED TO
UNBELIEVER SPRINKLING,**

IN

**TWO LETTERS ADDRESSED TO
ALEXANDER CRAWFORD,**

By DUNCAN ROSS.

Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.

Matthew.

*If a man think himself to be something,
when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

Paul.

P R E T O U :

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LETTER I.

SIR,

WHEN I perused your letters at first, it occurred to me, that an answer would be quite needless; as your mistakes are so evident, as to render a refutation useless to any intelligent person: but on second thoughts, I find that you afford occasion for clearing more fully, several topics mentioned in my former letters. Besides, when I wrote my letters to Mr. Elder, I laboured under one mistake, I then thought, that the law of Moses contained no express precept for circumcising infants; and when Lev. xii. 3. was shewn me by a friend, I was surprised. The reason is plainly this, as we are free from the rites of the Mosaic dispensation, I concluded, that it would afford little edification to my congregation or family, and be of little service in my private studies, to pry into all the circumstances of Israelitish females during their confinement. I therefore seldom read such passages. This accounts for the above text not occurring to me, when writing those letters.

I have no intention of following you in all your wanderings, which would lead to a real wild-goose-chase, which few would be willing to follow. I shall, therefore, review the first section of your reply to my letters, as a specimen of what might be done, and then clear up the leading to-

pics which you have laboured so hard to darken.

You, p. 74, give the following quotation from my letters, "Any special purpose of mercy and grace, toward man in general or the church in particular, is in scripture language termed a covenant; and the revelation of such a purpose is called making a covenant. Hence, the word, as found in the sacred records, is of greater extent than in other books. It includes not only agreement by mutual consent, but likewise any arrangement by decree, command, promise, or even testament. Inattention to this has given rise to much needless controversy. The system of ordinances given to the church of Israel, is by Moses called the covenant; by Paul in his epistle to the Galatians, the law; and in the epistle to the Hebrews, according to our version, sometimes covenant, and sometimes testament. The term in the original is the same."

You add, "If the same original term is rendered indifferently *covenant* and *testament*, why do you say in stating what it includes, *or even testament*? Was it because you did not know that the two words, being indifferently the translation of the same Greek word, in the same epistle, from the same pen, in reference to the same transaction, must in those writings be synonymous? or was it because you were afraid others would know it, and then look into Heb. ix. 16, 17. and see your view of a covenant completely overthrown by the apostle? Or even testament, as if it was a great wonder the word covenant should ever mean testament, and therefore we should seldom meet with it in that sense. Now the word testament, as used among men, comes much nearer the scripture

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"covenant than the word covenant itself, in its
 "common acceptation. Allowing a covenant
 "might be revealed in the form of a promise,
 "command, &c. still it is of no force till ratified.
 "But the very design of making a covenant is to
 "bind forcibly by that covenant: therefore what
 "has no force to bind, is not a covenant. It is
 "impossible to separate the divine covenants
 "from the confirming victim. This at once de-
 "stroy's your idea of two covenants with Abra-
 "ham. What you call the second covenant, and
 "which only you allow to be everlasting, not be-
 "ing separate from what you call the first, ratifi-
 "ed according to scripture, is of no force.
 "There must of necessity be the death of the tes-
 "tator. See the preceding essay on the Abra-
 "hamic covenant."

As you refer to the preceding essay, I shall
 take a look at it, before proceeding to review
 the above assertions.

You, p. 3. say "The principal parts of a co-
 "venant are three: a promise, a ratification sa-
 "crifice, and a token." Just before these words,
 you cite a number of texts containing the term
 covenant, and it is rather remarkable, that they
 are all deficient, as not one of them has all the
 principal parts, yet you say "As far as I re-
 "member, these are all the covenants that Jeho-
 "vah ever made with, or revealed to man."
 Whence, Sir, did you learn your notion of the
 parts of a covenant? If you look Exod. xxxiv.
 28. you will find these words, *And he wrote up-
 on the tables the words of the covenant, the ten
 commandments.* Here is a covenant which has
 neither promise, confirming sacrifice nor token.

About the blessings of the covenant, you had
 not any fixed views when you wrote your essay,

for p. 4. you say, "The Abrahamic covenant deserves our serious consideration, because it is intimately connected with all the spiritual blessings we can enjoy, either in time or in eternity." And again, p. 9. you say, "By referring to the covenant itself, as described in Genesis, it appears to be just the land of Canaan and nothing else." What, are all the blessings we can enjoy, either in time or in eternity, confined to the land of Canaan and nothing else? You are not pleased with this, and p. 17. you say, "The third blessing in the covenant is, Jehovah to be their God." This is something different from the land of Canaan and nothing else. Had you dropped the term third, we would now perfectly agree, and as this will seldom be the case, I make no more remarks on this part of your essay.

You, p. 21, enter on another title, namely, "The ratification of the covenant," and say "There is good authority for saying that, while the ratification sacrifice liveth, a covenant is of no force, Heb. ix. 17." Before proceeding farther, it is necessary to remark that in every language, as far as I know, the same term has often different meanings. In English for instance, the term pound signifies the sum of twenty shillings, and likewise an inclosure for confining cattle. To mistake the one of these for the other would lead to very absurd conclusions. When you hear that a man's cattle are put into a pound, do you suppose they are confined in twenty shillings? Yet the conclusion would be quite as rational, as the one you endeavoured to establish.

The Hebrew term *berith* signifies, as I remarked in my former letters, both a covenant and a testament, yet they are quite distinct, and no

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conclusion can be drawn from the nature of the one to the other. A testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. A covenant is of force while the parties live: so was the covenant between Abraham, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. It would have been of little service to the Gibeonites, that Joshua made (*berith*) a covenant with them, if it were to be of no force while they lived.

Your reference therefore to Heb. ix. 17. is nothing to the purpose; for the apostle is not speaking of a covenant, but of a testament. Besides, I have referred you to two covenants which were of force, while the parties were living; and if that will not suffice you, a dozen more are at your service, and all of them without a ratification sacrifice. You refer xv. 6. for what purpose, I do not understand. That chapter however we have an account of a sacrifice and a covenant; but by consulting v. 18. you will find them mentioned as distinct transactions, in these words, *In the same day God made a covenant with Abram.* These words imply something else taking place that day, as when it is said, *The same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven.* Again the day that Pilate sent our Lord to Herod, it is said, *The same day Pilate and Herod were made friends.* You refer in the same section, to Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19. I remark here, that the covenant mentioned by Jeremiah is the only one, which I recollect, having a ratification sacrifice, and it was worst kept of any on record. The Sinaic covenant will be considered in its proper place. It is certainly no ordinary effort of genius, to bring the testament mentioned by the apostle, and the covenant mentioned by Jeremiah

to bear on the same subject.

This is sufficient to shew what light the essay can cast upon the subject, and so I shall return to review the long quotation given above. The reader has it before him in its connected form. I shall now consider every part of it.

You say, "If the same original term is rendered indifferently *covenant* and *testament*, why do you say, in stating what it includes, *or even testament?*"

I said, that the term is sometimes rendered *covenant*, and sometimes *testament*; this no intelligent person can deny, that the term is rendered so, indifferently, no intelligent person would assert. You justly remark, p. 85. that "True canons of criticism ever tend to precision." It is a pity that you never made use of those canons, if you know them. Your remarks are thrown before the reader in such a jumbled manner, that the reader must be at a loss to know what you intend. Do you grant or deny my assertion? Your words do neither, but instead of this make a supposition, that the terms *covenant* and *testament* are used indifferently. The translators were too well acquainted with the use of terms, to be guilty of such a blunder. You ask, "Why did you say—even *testament?*" My reason was, that the reader might pay particular attention to this meaning of the term, as it is very uncommon. You proceed, "Was it because you did not know that the two words, being indifferently the translation of the same Greek word, in the same epistle, from the same pen, in reference to the same transaction, must in those writings be synonymous?" I really did not know that *covenant* and *testament* were *indifferently* used, and when you inform me of it, I

do not believe it, for I have shewed above, they are so essentially different, that none would use them indifferently, unless one whose upper story was to let unfurnished. You add, "Or was it because you were afraid others would know it, and then look into Heb. ix. 16, 17. and see your view of a covenant completely overthrown by the apostle?" If I wanted to have my readers kept in the dark, I took a very uncommon way of accomplishing it. But by looking into the text referred to, my view is no-wise overthrown, but confirmed. If you mean the English term covenant, the apostle is not reasoning concerning such. As has been shewed above, covenants are of force while men live. If you intend the term in the original, then the text proves that it means or includes even a testament. You add, "Or even testament, as if it were a great wonder the word covenant should ever mean testament, and therefore we should seldom meet with it in that sense." The word covenant never means testament, but the Hebrew term *berith* frequently means covenant, and sometimes, but very rarely, testament. The covenants mentioned in scripture, are many in number, and various in their natures, as every one who reads his bible may observe: whereas all the testaments on record amount only to two, the former of which was never confirmed by the death of the testator, and therefore is superseded by the latter. We have, therefore, but one instance in the whole scriptures, of a testament confirmed by the death of the testator. You proceed, "Now the word testament, as used among men, comes much nearer the scripture covenant than the word covenant itself, in its common acceptation." I take your meaning

to be, that the term testament would be a better translation of the Hebrew term *berith*, than the term covenant. This I question. Jacob and Laban made a *berith*, was it a covenant or a testament? Abraham and Abimelech made likewise a *berith*, and the reader may judge whether they made a covenant or testament. Do you suppose, that the Gibeonites sent to Joshua to advise him to make his testament?

You proceed, "Allowing a covenant might be revealed in the form of a promise, command &c., still it is of no force till ratified." I would have thought no christian could have made such assertions. What! is not *faithful is he that hath promised*, sufficient ground of confidence for a christian? and is not *this saith the Lord*, enough to enforce a command? But you add, "The very design of making a covenant, is to bind forcibly by the covenant; therefore what has no force to bind is not a covenant." God made a covenant with Noah; pray, Sir, who is to be bound forcibly? Is God to be bound forcibly not to send another flood? Or was Noah bound forcibly not to suffer another flood? Who is now bound forcibly by this covenant? But perhaps you reckon this a testament. If so God is the testator; and you know a testament is of no force while the testator liveth. When will this testament be of force? Some of our readers will still be disposed, after all you have said, to prefer my account, and think it was a revelation of God's gracious purpose not to send another flood. You say farther, "It is impossible to separate the divine covenants from the confirming victim." You, p. 3. of your essay, give an enumeration of all the divine covenants you could recollect. Consider them again,

and see if they are all, or how many of them are connected with confirming victims. I cannot help remarking that your sentiments expressed concerning the divine covenants, p. 3. are very different from those under review. You say there, "All Jehovah's covenants with men, are "gracious intimations of his merciful designs of "doing good to man." Had you retained these views, there would be no difference between us. You proceed, "This at once destroys your idea "of two covenants with Abraham." You expect, that your readers will be all very great believers, and take your bare word for sufficient proof; but I expect, that some of our readers would like to see assertions supported, therefore I shall shew why I distinguish these two covenants.

1. They were made at different times. 2. They confer different privileges, the former a right to the land of Canaan, the latter a peculiar relation to God. 3. The former was made with Abram as the father of a numerous seed constituting one nation; the latter as the father of many nations. When Paul says to the Galatians, *And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*, the reader will judge, whether he means, you have the God of Abraham for your God, or you have a right to the land of Canaan. 4. The privileges of the latter are vastly more important and extensive, than those of the former; it was by confounding them, that you fell into the contradictions noticed above. When you say, p. 9. "It appears to be "the land of Canaan and nothing else," Gen. xv. 18. you would not been far wrong, had you inserted and a seed to inherit it, before the words "and nothing else." Again, when you say,

p. 17, "The third blessing in the covenant is, 'Jehovah to be their God,' if you had omitted the term 'third,' the sentiment would be correct concerning the latter covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. The latter of these privileges extends, and will extend, to all christians, but all christians cannot be crammed into the land of Canaan.

You proceed and say, "What you call the second, and which only you allow to be everlasting, not being separate from what you call the first, ratified according to scripture, is of no force. There must of necessity be the death of the testator."

With the first part of these sentences I meddle but little, because I do not understand it, the one half contradicting the other. I only remark that instead of saying ratified according to scripture, you should have said, ratified according to my essay: for the general manner of ratifying covenants recorded in scripture, is by oath; but in your essay, is by a 'confirming victim'. I shall suppose that your meaning is, what you express in the next section, in these words, "I understand it to be one and the same covenant." It seems then, those covenants, or that covenant, cannot be confirmed without the death of the testator. I am not a little surprised, when in your essay you mentioned the principal parts of a covenant, you did not give one head upon the testator of the covenant. In the case before us, I am really at a loss where to fix; I find in the bible that God made a covenant with Abraham. If you reckon him the testator, when will the covenant be confirmed and of force? Perhaps you will fix on the heifer; still I am at a loss, for I did not, till I saw your book, ever hear of a heifer making a covenant, or even a tes-

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tament. But allowing for once that this heifer made a testament, it adds not a little to the wonder, that she made a part of it about fourteen years after she was divided in the midst. I have named the heifer only because you say testator, perhaps the other animals have as good a claim. If I have injured them, you will do them justice no doubt, when you write again.

This is a fair specimen of what might be done, were I to review the whole of your performance: but I fear, if I had patience to proceed, few would have patience enough to read, and even you would be very tired before you would come to the end.

I shall therefore make a few remarks on some of the leading topics.

Your plan through the remaining part of what you say concerning the covenants, is to jumble them all together, and if you can find one of them come to an end, then conclude they are all ended. I shall therefore make some remarks on them.

1. Each covenant which I mentioned in my former letters, has a definite privilege attached to it. The covenant with Noah you call 'a covenant of safety' properly enough. The first covenant with Abraham, conferred on him and his seed a right to the land of Canaan; the second, the privilege in your own words, of having Jehovah for their God; the Mosaic covenant gave the church a system of laws and ordinances. This covenant was more complex than any of the former; it contained a body of laws, a system of ordinances, a formal covenant, and participated of the nature of a testament, and is therefore called by each of these names. The kingly dignity conferred on David, and continued in

his line, is distinct from each of the former covenants.

2. All these were in full force, when David was king. Israel had possession of the land of Canaan, had Jehovah for their God, the law of Moses in force, and David for their king. Not one of these covenants interfered with or superseded another.

3. A new covenant was revealed by Jeremiah, which differed from these, in that it was to supersede, and when turned into a testament by the death of Christ, actually did supersede one, and but one. Both the prophet and apostle shew which it was, plainly mentioning the covenant made with Israel upon taking them out of Egypt. You needed not have been at so much pains to shew that this covenant is superseded, all christians will grant it; and you have done nothing to shew that the relation between God and his church is dissolved. This is what you should have done, had you met my argument. This leads naturally to enquire into the duration of these covenants.

You say, p. 76, "As a linguist, a controversialist, and a teacher of the scriptures, you are doubtless prepared to inform us what is the meaning of Gen. xvii. 8. *The land of Canaan for an everlasting possession?* Yes, Sir, perfectly prepared. You justly remark, p. 128. "It is incumbent on those who write for the public to elucidate, not to darken." As you have succeeded to admiration in darkening the subject, I shall endeavour to elucidate it. Then the reader has both before him, and may choose for himself. You say, same section, p. 76. of the term everlasting, "In its literal sense,—it has an end: in its spiritual sense—it has no end."

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Now this is glaringly false; for every one knows that the literal meaning of the word everlasting is, perpetual, without end. Again, this is leaving the reader completely in the dark, if it have an end, when is this end to come? besides, literal and spiritual is no proper division of meaning; literal is opposed to figurative, and spiritual to carnal. That you should be at a loss respecting the meaning of a Hebrew term, is no matter of wonder or reflection, but that you should be so positive, in a matter you do not understand, is not quite so excusable.

I remark, then, that the Hebrew term, rendered everlasting and for ever, just as it suits the idiom of the English language, is, in scripture, applied to durations of different lengths, and means,

1. During natural life. *Exod. xxi. 6. And he shall serve him forever*, Heb. to everlasting. *1. Sam. xxvii. 12. Therefore he shall be my servant forever*, to everlasting.

2. During the Mosaic dispensation. *Exod. xl. 15. For their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood*. Heb. vii. 12. *For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law*. This shews, that the Mosaic dispensation and the Aaronic priesthood were of equal duration.

3. During the political existence of Israel as a nation. *Gen. xvii. 8. All the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession*. This was the country given to Israel, while out of it they are strangers in a land not their own, and, in my opinion, will continue so, till restored to their own.

4. During the continuation of the present

state of this world. In this sense we read of the everlasting hills, everlasting mountains.

5. Duration absolutely without end. The everlasting God. Everlasting life.

From this view of the scriptural meaning of the term everlasting, its signification may appear to a superficial observer vague and uncertain; but upon a closer review it will be found definite and plain. It means the longest duration of which the subject is capable. When the body mouldered in the grave, the everlasting covenant *in the flesh* ended; death ended the service of him who was to serve his master for ever; and the dissolution of the Mosaic dispensation put an end to the Aaronic everlasting priesthood.

The question now submitted to your consideration is, Does the relation between God and his people still continue, or is it ended? If you grant that the relation continues, then the Abrahamic covenant, by which infants were admitted into the church, or, in other words, into the assembly of God's people, is still in force; but if you hold that this relation is ended, then there is not on earth a people who have a right to be called God's people.

You may now see, why I paid more attention to the term everlasting when connected with some subjects, than when connected with others. There is a great difference between the period which one man could serve another, and the duration of the everlasting hills.

You proceed, p. 85. to give your views of the people who stand in this relation to God, or in other words of the church. It is a little remarkable, that when you make such a shew of accuracy in ascertaining the meaning of the term

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church, you cite only two texts of scripture. On the first of those, I make no remarks, the second you introduce thus, "In Acts vii. 38. we read "of the church in the wilderness. This means "the Jewish church." It would have been a little more accurate, had you said the Israelitish church. You add, "It was a visible, earthly, "temporal model of the invisible, heavenly, eternal church above mentioned." Please inform me when you write next, of what service it is to give a visible model of an invisible church. It however answers your purpose, as it will prevent some of your renders from comparing the church and model. But as the model contained persons of all ages, from the infant on the breast to the hoary head, the church, if it answer to the model, must do the same. You add, "To this body, "the term church is applied but this once in the "whole bible." This is rather a rash assertion. The Greek term rendered church occurs, as often, at least, in the Greek versions of the Old Testament, as in the New: for instance, in 2. Chron. xxx. it occurs four times; v. 2. *All the congregation* (Greek, *ekklesia* church) *in Jerusalem*; v. 17. *There were many in the congregation* (church) *that were not sanctified*; v. 23. *The whole assembly* (church) *took counsel to keep other seven days*; v. 25. *All the congregation* (church) *of Judah*. Accordingly, we find it so rendered in Psalm xxii. 22. as cited by Paul, Heb. ii. 12. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee*. Though you cannot read the Greek, yet you can consult Parkhurst; and he would have afforded you sufficient information on this subject, as he takes eleven of his examples of the meaning of the term (*ekklesia*) church

from the Old Testament. You proceed and say, "When the term church does not mean the whole body of the redeemed as united in Christ, it means invariably (except the church in the wilderness) a particular society of believers, called out of spiritual darkness by divine energy accompanying the divine word; united together, in a state of separation from the world, by the bond of that love which the faith of the true gospel begets in the heart of all believers; and the constant habit of meeting together on the first day of the week, in a place agreed upon from a regard to the authority of Christ, and an earnest desire of mutual edification, by unitedly observing all things which Christ commanded his disciples to observe." May I ask you, upon what authority do you found this strange definition of the term church, for it agrees neither with the English term church, nor with the Greek term *ekklesia*. Try the seven Asiatic churches, and see if they all agree with the definition. You say, "No visible society which does not answer this description, *can* be called a church." You, however, refute this assertion when you say, "the church of Scotland, the church of Rome." You add, "No two or more of these societies are ever called a church in the singular number; but whenever two or more are referred to they are invariably called churches in the plural number." As you thought it needless to prove this, I might rest satisfied with denying the assertion. I shall, however, give another view of the meaning of the term, and let the reader decide for himself.

A writer must pay some respect to the current meaning of the language in which he writes,

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and such phrases as the church of England, the church of Scotland, &c. are in use; and it would require a good deal of authority to banish them from the English language, yet they will in no-wise agree with your definition.

The signification of the Greek term *ekklesia*, is still more extensive; for it means, 1. An assembly of any kind. In this sense it occurs three times in Acts, xix. V. 32. *The assembly (ekklesia) was confused*, v. 39. *It shall be determined in a lawful assembly*, (ekklesia), v. 41. *He dismissed the assembly*, (ekklesia). 2. Among christians, and in the scriptures in general it is confined to a religious assembly, and means, either the professed christians belonging to one place, as the church (*ekklesia*) of Ephesus, of Smyrna, &c., or the collective body of christians in the world. Mat. xvi. 17. *Upon this rock I will build my church*. 1. Cor. xii. 28. *God hath set some in the church*, (ekklesia) *first apostles, secondarily prophets, &c.* Your definition of the term church is liable to many objections; I shall notice only a few of them.

1. You confine the meaning of the term when used in the singular number, to one assembly which meets regularly in one place. The texts cited above are a sufficient refutation of your notion, for the privilege of being founded upon the rock, cannot be confined to any particular church, neither were the apostles set in any particular church; to these, many more examples of church in the singular might be added; such as, Eph. i. 22. *And gave him to be head over all things to the church*, Col. i. 19. *And he is the head of the body the church*, v. 24. *For his body's sake which is the church, &c. &c.*

2. You confine the term to an assembly of real

believers possessed of saving grace; but the church has always contained some who were christians only in profession. Christ says, Mat. xxv. 1, 2. *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened to ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.* You would restrict the kingdom of heaven to five, but our Lord says ten. Your notion is inconsistent with the apostolic exhortation to the church, 2. Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own-selves:* and warning, 2. Peter ii. 1. *But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.* It is contrary to the best authenticated facts. Read the epistles to the seven Asiatic churches, and see if all of them answer your description.

3. Your notion is most dangerous to the souls of those who believe your doctrine. You have, at the conclusion of your pamphlet, an address to Baptists without any discrimination, whether they be Calvinists, Arminians, Socinians, Universalists, Sabbatarians, all are on the way to everlasting life, you find no occasion to exhort any of them to examine themselves, no reason to call any of them to repentance. What think you of the last of these, they do not meet on the first day of the week, but on the last, are they churches? they are Baptists.

How different is your address to the Baptists, from Christ's to the churches of Asia, Rev. ii, iii. You encourage all to expect heaven, he calls the greater part to repentance, and concludes his addresses with *he that hath an ear, let him hear*

what the spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give &c. Do you believe, that the Baptist churches of the present day are purer, than the christian churches of the Apostolic age?

You proceed to review what I advanced concerning the continuation of the church, but, with no common degree of ingenuity, contrive to keep the subject in debate out of view, or rather shew plainly, that you do not understand it; for you ask, p. 81. "Why is not the church of Scotland a continuation of the Rome?" The very proposing of such a question is enough to make the reader stare, and enquire, does he understand what he says? Did the church of Rome end at the commencement of the church of Scotland? if not, how could the one be a continuation of the other? Your answer is of a piece with your question. You say, "Because their polity, their laws, and their offices are different." Continuation does not depend upon any or all of these, but upon succession.

From a person who could propose such a question, and give such an answer, accuracy on the point of continuation cannot be expected.

You say, p. 86. "When you attempted to prove the continuation of the same church under the Jewish and christian dispensations, I should suppose your first attempt ought to be, to ascertain what is essentially necessary to constitute any body of people a church." It is a little surprising, that you should answer a letter without reading it; and if you read it all, did you not see these words, p. 8. "By this covenant a line of distinction was drawn between God's professing people and the world?"

It has been shewed above, that the Greek term

rendered church, means an assembly, and among christians, an assembly of God's people by profession at least.

Relation to God, is what is essential to constitute any body of people a church. This relation is in some saving, in others merely professional. This line is recognized in scripture, Is. lxiii. 19. *We are thine, thou never bearest rule over them, they were not called by thy name.* You find fault with this line, because it does not answer your notion, and make a separation between the righteous and the wicked. If you consult your bible, you will find, that in every age, and under each dispensation, there were wicked persons on the church's side of the line; you will hardly deny, that there were such in the church in the wilderness, and, if you consult the second and third chapters of Revelations, it will be no easy matter for you to shew, that the church under the New Testament is free from them.

You propose nine subjects of enquiry in order to ascertain whether the christian church be a continuation of that which existed among the Jews, or a new and distinct one. Now the point which I maintain is, that the church under the present dispensation, stands in the same relation to God, in which she stood under the former; and is to be considered the same society or body politic in every age from the days of Abraham. To this relation you pay no attention, though stated with sufficient plainness in the ninth page of my former letters. This truth may be further confirmed and illustrated by considering what Paul says, Gal. iv. 1, 2, 3. "Now, I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is

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under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." Here the Apostle compares the church under the tutors and governors of the old dispensation to an heir in his minority, and under the present, to the same having arrived at majority; but still an heir, and the same person, though in different circumstances.—When this heir's privileges are called in question you are for enquiring, Does he enter the same door? does he keep the same servants? does he attend the same schoolmaster? &c. I am for ascertaining his relation to the granter. This is the Apostle's way, for he says, "then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Your second argument for the discontinuation of the same church, is drawn from the new covenant recorded Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, 33, 34. You say, "Here is a new covenant different in kind "from the Sinai covenant." Granting this, the church did not commence with the Sinai covenant, nor end when it was superseded. You contrive to say a good deal round about this subject, but keep at sufficient distance from the argument. I hold that the new covenant was promised, and the promise performed to the same body: according to your view, there is a privilege promised to one society or church, which was never performed; but that privilege is bestowed upon another society or church to which it never was promised.

Again, you will not deny, that christians enjoyed this privilege from the very commencement of the christian era, therefore to them it cannot be new; but considering the church as the same from the days of Abraham, the in-

troducton of christianity was something new.

You have not told your readers how the Gentiles have a right to the privileges of the church of Israel. Paul, however, explains the matter, he informs us, that the Gentiles, in their heathen state, were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise; but by embracing christianity, they became fellow-citizens with the saints, and were of the household of God. Eph. ii. 11, 19. Again, he informs us, that they were grafted in among the natural branches, Rom. xi. 17.

Your next argument is, if possible, more absurd. You say, "When the Messiah should come, he was to act as a purifier," and add, "When a church—is so purified,—it is not the same church." The clauses which I have omitted may have hidden the meaning of your words from yourself, and from some of your readers; but what is given above, in your own words, contains your assertion. If this be true, a thing may be so purified, as not to be what it really is, but something else. Any further remarks would be an insult to the reader.

You, p. 96. quote these words from my letters, "The spirit of inspiration denominates baptism circumcision." You add, "If this were not a direct falsehood charged on the spirit of inspiration, we might at once give up this part of the contest." Before you bring such a heavy charge against another, you should have examined the text cited. Paul says to the Colossians, "Ye are circumcised," will you say, they were not? He tells us, it was with the circumcision of Christ, or, which is the same, christian circumcision. Will you tell what christian cir-

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cumcision is? they had it by baptism, What can be plainer?

You add, "I have fully discussed the phrase *"made without hands."* In the Greek, it is not a phrase but a word, and you have explained it as well as could be expected of one who did not know this. If one were to explain the terms *under* and *stand* separately, would he give the meaning of the term *understand*?

The following quotations from two of the Greek fathers, will shew how the term was used by those who spake that language, They will answer as a comment both on the text, and the term *made-without-hands*.

Basil says, "A Jew does not delay circumcision,—and doest thou put off the circumcision *"made-without-hands,* which is performed in *"baptism."* Chrysostom says, "But our circumcision, I mean, the grace of baptism, one that is in the beginning of his age, or one that is in the middle of it, or one that is in his old age, may receive this circumcision *made-without-hands."*

Your's &c.

D. ROSS.

LETTER II.

SIR,

You, p. 97, begin to review my reasons for admitting infants into the church, and seem displeased with my pleading antiquity and possession of privilege. This is prudent in you, who cannot prove the existence of a single society which you call a christian church earlier than the eleventh century. See Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap.

From my letters you cite these words, "It is 'certainly incumbent on those who would exclude them, to shew their authority.'" This appears to me so evident, that I did not expect any would deny it; you, however, deny this plain principle, but seem not pleased with that course, and, therefore, try to find some authority. You frequently mention, 'the qualifications of church members' as 'raised,' but have forgotten to prove that admission to the church is rendered more difficult under the present, than under the former dispensation.

You make two suppositions, p. 98. and when you can shew such restricting clauses in our Lord's testament, as you have put into your's, it will alter the case. You seem sensible of this, and add, "I refer you for point blank, positive, 'divine authority, to Gal. iv. 30. *Cast out the bond woman and her son.*" This seems strange proof, what you should prove is, that infants do not follow their parents; but in this text it is the woman and her son. It was the same, when the unbelieving Jews were broken off, the children were broken off with their parents. Besides, as you maintain that the son of the bond woman never was in, how was he cast out?

You, p. 100. cite these words, "At what period was the church of God not the gospel 'church?'" You do not answer the question, but say a number of things, and ask several questions. You ask, "Why then quibble on a 'word?'" Very far from it; our views of the state of the church under the old testament are very different. This you shew by asking, "Do 'you believe that the gospel preached in the wilderness, was exactly the same as that preached 'to us?'" I do believe it. The gospel is essen-

tially the same in every age, Acts xv. 11. "We believe that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, *even as they.*" The gospel preached to Abraham in these words, *In thee shall all nations be blessed*, is continued under each dispensation, though under the new testament the revelation is much clearer.

You assert, p. 102. that "It is to them (believers) the new covenant was promised, and that as believers, and as believers only." This is an error of no small magnitude. If the new covenant is promised to believers only, and as believers, how is any unbeliever to become a believer? When Paul addressed the Jews in these words, Acts xiii. 26. *To you is the word of this salvation sent*, did he address them as believers, and as believers only? Christ commanded his apostles to preach the gospel to every creature. Were they to preach the gospel to them as believers? The fact is, the new covenant is a revelation of God's gracious purpose, as I stated in my former letters, and this purpose will be accomplished to all who believe, but revelation must be before believing.

You say, p. 102. after citing the words of our Lord, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*, and giving your three reasons for objecting to infant church-membership, "If these reasons influenced the disciples, they must have a foundation in truth." What! Sir, do you assert that the disciples were right and their Lord wrong!!!

You come, p. 106, 107. to the instance of the Philippian Jailor, and in the latter page cite these words, "The words rejoiced and believed are in the singular number," and you add, "Truly so, because *with* governs all his house;" but, Sir, there is neither *with* nor *house* in the Greek

text, only *panoiki* an adverb. Here I must remark, that there is no English term in use which answers the Greek term; Mr. Edwards translates it domestically, and were this term in current use, it would answer exactly. The words of Luke would then run thus, He rejoiced domestically, believing in God. Compare this with what he has x. 2. *A devout man, and one which feared God* (syn panti to oiko auto) *with all his house*. The mere English reader has not an opportunity of observing the difference, but you, who pretend to know Greek, should have considered the matter. You ask, "Do you feel no guilt in thus disposing of the words of inspiration?" Pray, wherein does my guilt consist? I said, that *with all his house*, as we have it in English, is expressed in the original by *panoiki* an adverb; you, on the other hand, have thrown out this term, and substituted five other terms in place of it. The reader will determine on which side guilt lies. You add, "An ounce of common sense is worth a pound of learning." Common sense is very useful, but one who writes on controversy, should have as much learning, as to be able to distinguish the singular from the plural, especially when the argument rests on that circumstance. Now, Luke says, He rejoiced, you say, They rejoiced. One of you must be in a mistake.

You proceed, p. 108. to the argument from 1. Cor. vii. 14. and cite these words, "The children of married heathen were quite legitimate, but still unclean," and add, "pray, who told you that?" I reckon the ounce of common sense you mentioned quite sufficient. You proceed, "Your reference to Tit. i. 15. will help you nothing; for to apply it to the case in

"hand it will run thus: To the pure or believing partner the impure or unbelieving partner is pure or holy. — He is holy to his believing partner i. e. as far as his relation to the believing partner is concerned, he is sanctified to "and for the use of the believing partner." This is just what I mean, and what do you say to the contrary? You again cite the following words, "The term holy is applied to what was dedicated, or ought to be dedicated, to the Lord," and you ask, "Cannot you tell which? or were you afraid of inspection?" I was not very much afraid, providing the inspector had "an ounce of common sense"; and if you inspect Lev. xxvii. 32, 33. you will find both called holy.

You proceed, and p. 110. referring to Rom. ix. 7, 8. you say, "I challenge you to produce a single passage in the new testament, where the phrase *The children of the promise* includes any but real believers." The passage quoted above will answer the purpose. Please read the next verse and you will find these words, *For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come and Sara shall have a son.* Abraham's children descended from Sara are the children of promise, and you will hardly say that they were all real believers; they were all the fruit of this promise.

You, p. 111. cite these words, "Your principles place a barrier in the way of accomplishing the promises made to Abraham and his seed Christ," and you add, "All the promises you refer to relate to nations, and you suppose that as nations include infants, the promises can never be fulfilled to them *as nations* unless infants are included in the promises, and regarded as members of the church. This is

"the pith of your objection." So far, you are correct: but when you add, "Now, Sir, I apprehend the promises are to be accomplished individually, not nationally," we differ; for I maintain that promises are to be accomplished just as they are made, such as respect individuals are accomplished to individuals, and such as respect nations, to nations.

You, p. 115, 116. cite these words, "Does not the spirit of inspiration call the children of believers holy," and with great humility add "So are the children of unbelievers, just in the same sense." You forgot however to tell us where they are so called; I regret this because I am unable to find the passage in which persons out of the church are called holy. You yourself likewise seem to reckon the term peculiar to members of the church, when you say, "See the address in the beginning of all the apostolical epistles." I have seen the address in several epistles, and find that the apostles style the members of the church *Hagioi*, the very term applied to children in the text to which I referred. Now as relation to God is implied in the term, I conclude that relation belongs to children. The nature of this relation will be shewn in its place.

Connected with this, I referred to Paul's address to the churches of Ephesus and Colosse, and you, after some genteel scolding, say, "Take your concordance and turn to the word children, and you will find that, in the infallible standard, it is as frequently applied to persons of twenty or thirty years old, as to those under that age." A concordance is very useful, but the question here may be decided by the words with which the term children is connected. The apostle, Eph. vi. 4. orders to bring up those

children; now, I reckon children of twenty or thirty years old, are brought up already. Again, he recommends admonition, and, if you consult Parkhurst, you will find, that *paideia*, the term used by the apostle, means correction, chastisement; I would suppose that it would be rather out of season to apply the rod of correction to a child twenty or thirty years old.

You, p. 124. cite these words, "Again, when your children survive infancy, your principles cast impediments in the way of their instruction, of which you are not aware," and p. 125. you give a very good illustration of my position, for you say, "Were you placed among the heathen, you would have to lay aside the authority of Christ, except over yourself, till some choose to become converts; for you would not be so inconsistent as to urge the authority of Christ, or, which is the same thing, the sanction of his law, by which he maintains his authority, in his kingdom, as a reason why they should repent and believe the gospel of the kingdom. Mark i. 15." Now, I ask you, is a christian parent among his children in this situation? The apostle thought otherwise.

I asked formerly, were the children of christians heathen or christian; you however did not answer this, but raised a huge mass of cavils. Now, Sir, if you answer that plain question, I shall answer every one of your cavils.

I shall now conclude this letter with a few remarks, which will in some degree dispel the cloud of darkness in which you have involved the subject.

In many ordinances of religion, there are two parts, the one external and visible, the other internal and invisible: these must be carefully dis-

tinguished. Under the old testament there were the circumcision of the flesh, and the circumcision of the heart; in like manner, under the new testament, there are baptism with water, and baptism with the Holy Spirit: under each dispensation, many had the former, who never attained the latter. When these two ordinances are compared, this distinction should be kept in view, and the circumcision of the flesh compared with baptism with water, and circumcision of the heart with baptism with the spirit. You have taken a contrary course; in circumcision you consider nothing but the carnal part, and in baptism you keep your eye on the spiritual part. Now, the present controversy is concerning the external ordinance only. Agreeably to this, there is a two-fold relation to God recognized in scripture, the one merely professional, the other real and saving, Isa. lxiii. 19, *We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.* None will suppose, that all the people of Israel stood in a saving relation to God in the days of Isaiah. The same is the case under the present dispensation. All the members of the seven Asiatic churches stood in external relation to Christ, and were called christians after his name; but can you suppose, they all stood in a *saving* relation to him? There is a plain contrast between your address to Baptists and Christ's to the churches. You send all the Baptists to heaven, but Christ confines salvation to him that overcometh, and adds *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* Compare Rev. ii, iii. with your address, and admire your own faithfulness to your fellow-professors if you can. I may here answer one of your cavils, as a specimen of

what might be replied to them all. You, p. 119. say, "If any of them perish,—Jehovah's being a "God to a person is no security to him from ruin." If you mean mere external relation, it is granted; for Jehovah was the God of all Israel, yet many of them went to ruin. For a reply to the other part, "The everlasting covenant is "broken," consider Rom. iii. 3, 4. and you will find, that the stability of God's covenant does not depend on the faith of any, neither can it be affected by their unbelief.

You have recourse, on almost every occasion, to types, a subject which you do not understand. Under the old testament, you find every thing typical, and under the new, you allow none. Now there are typical persons and ordinances under the new testament, as well as under the old, though not so many ordinances. 1. Tim. iv. 12. *Be thou an example* (Greek *typos* a type) *of the believers*. Phil. iii. 17. *As you have us for an ensample*, (Greek *typon* type). When you find the dispensations of God towards his church denominated typical, you, from this consideration, attempt to deprive her of all reality and reduce her to a mere shadow. Would you do the same with respect to Timothy and the apostles?

There are likewise typical ordinances under the new testament. The bread in the Lord's supper is a type of the body of Christ broken for his people; the wine is a type of his blood shed for the remission of sins.

Again, there are several things connected with religion which cannot be represented by types, such as infinitude, immensity, eternity, therefore, when you speak of a period typically everlasting, you use words to which no meaning can be

attached. The rest of Israel in Canaan may represent the rest of the church in heaven, but any limited duration cannot represent duration without end ; for how can what has an end, represent what has no end, and the very essence of which consists in having no end.

Your manner of treating the scriptures deserves severe animadversion. Some instances of this have been given, and I shall only add two out of many, as a specimen.

You give an instance of your critical powers in the application of scriptures, p. 22. Your words are, "The verb translated *confirmed* Heb. vi. 17. is derived from the noun translated mediator, and that again from the noun rendered middle. Christ as the ratification sacrifice, was the confirmer, interposer, or mediator between God and sinful man." Any person reading the above quotation, would suppose Paul was referring to the death of Christ in the text cited ; but notice his own words, *God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.* Is the death of Christ and an oath the same?

Again, p. 81. speaking of the covenant of royalty, you say, "In examining this covenant, neither the token nor the confirming sacrifice being given us, all we have to do with is the promise." What a pity that you did not give the inspired writer a friendly hint, and say, as there is neither token nor confirming sacrifice, this is *no covenant*, see my essay.

Yet this is not quite so bad when taken by itself, as when connected with what you say p. 75. "Allowing a covenant might be revealed in the form of a promise, command, &c. still it is of

"no force till ratified." So you reduce the covenant to the form of a promise, and then the promise is of no force!!!

You, p. 93. say, "As the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant did not run in the female line, a token was given which was inapplicable to females."

This reason for the nature of the token, I question. The first distinction in the line of the blessing had a respect to the female line, the son of the bond maid, and the son of the free woman; and our Lord is the son of David, the son of Abraham in the line of the virgin Mary.

You, p. 129. tell your readers of "A Baptist minister in the United States, who, on a certain occasion, advertised in a newspaper, twenty dollars reward to any person who would produce, from the new testament, any passage proving infant baptism. A certain minister gave the editor of the paper a passage which was published. He then demanded his reward. The Baptist replied he had not fulfilled the condition.——After going through the regular process, the court brought in the verdict. The condition had not been fulfilled; for it was impossible a text could prove what was not mentioned in it." This story has strong marks of being a mere fabrication for the purpose of imposing on the thoughtless. I however shall give you another rather better authenticated. We are informed, Mat. xxii. 23. That the Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, Acts xxiii. 8. came to our Lord with a cavil, and our Lord cited the following words as a refutation of their error, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of*

the dead, but of the living. What verdict would you and your American court bring in this case? The text does not mention the term resurrection or rather future state of existence. If the principle which you maintain be true, there are many passages in the new testament which need correction.

There are many errors in your pamphlet to which I have paid no attention. Some of them are of such a nature, as would lead the reader far from the subject; for you seem to have a peculiar faculty of running away from the point under discussion to something else, which has not the most distant relation to it: for instance, in my former letters, I produced Rom. xi. 16,—27. as a proof of the continuation of the same church, and concluded the argument thus, "When the Jews shall be converted, they will be grafted into their own olive tree. But if the christian be another church than the Jewish, it will be impossible to graft them into *their own* olive tree again; for on that supposition it does not exist." When you come to answer this, you refer your readers to what you had said before, and on consulting that, I found that as soon as you came to the argument, you stopped short, and ran away. Your words, p. 35. are, "Yes, some of the branches were broken off, believers of the Gentiles were grafted in among those that remained, and with them partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree." So far you are correct; but instead of informing your readers, how the Jews at their conversion are to be grafted into their own olive tree long after it is, on your principles, extinct, you gravely say, "The period from the birth of Ishmael to the birth of Isaac, corresponded to the period from

“ the Sinai covenant to the birth of Christ. The
 “ period of Isaac’s remaining on the breast, cor-
 “ responded to the period from the birth of Christ
 “ to the famous day of Pentecost.” &c. &c.
 These correspondencies may amuse the fancy,
 but how can they account for grafting the Jews
 again into their own olive tree? To pay any at-
 tention to such stuff, could answer no good pur-
 pose.

You say, in the conclusion of your pamphlet,
 “ My first care was to apprehend the precise
 “ meaning of my opponent.” If this was the
 case, none could fail more completely; for the
 whole discussion respects Abraham’s federal
 seed: you frequently mention his natural and
 spiritual seed, and under the former dispensa-
 tion, your eye is upon the former of these, and
 under the present dispensation your eye is on the
 latter, so that the federal seed, which should be
 kept in view, is entirely overlooked. You con-
 sider all which are in the church as Abraham’s
 spiritual seed. This is however a very incorrect
 and dangerous mistake. That there were false
 brethren in the church in the apostolic age, can-
 not be doubted by any who believe the new tes-
 tament. It is to the members of the church that
 the command is addressed, *Examine yourselves
 whether you be in the faith.* It is of church-
 members that Christ saith, Mat. vii. 22, 23. *Ma-
 ny will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have
 we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy
 name have cast out devils? and in thy name
 done many wonderful works? And then will I
 profess unto them, I never knew you: depart
 from me, ye that work iniquity.* You teach
 that all who are in the mediator’s kingdom must
 be saved, but mark his own words, Mat. viii. 12.

The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness. It is a dangerous thing to flatter the members of any church with the notion that their state is safe, because they are in the mediator's kingdom; and faithfulness cannot be used without shewing the difference between an external federal relation, and an internal saving relation; but of this necessary distinction, I cannot find a trace in your letters. Now an external ordinance, such as circumcision of the flesh, can be the token or seal of an external relation; it requires circumcision of the heart or baptism with the Spirit to form a saving relation. Now, it is the former of these which is the subject of dispute, and to it I confined myself; for I do not know that evangelical Baptists and evangelical Pedobaptists have any dispute concerning the necessity or nature of baptism with the spirit generally called regeneration.

If you enquire then what advantage has the church from this federal relation? Paul answers the question, Rom. iii. 2. *Much every way: chiefly, because that to them were committed the oracles of God.* ix. 4. *To whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.* These are the privileges which the Jews lost, and which the christian church now enjoys. These are privileges peculiar to the church, yet many enjoy an external dispensation of them, who have no saving relation to God.

Your's &c.

D. ROSS.

