

Above and Beyond: Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptist Covenant Theology

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INTRODUCTION

It is well known that many Baptists of today trace their theological lineage to the early decades of the seventeenth century when priests and parishioners in the Church of England began to question the biblical validity of the baptism of infants. This reevaluation was neither sudden nor unexpected, considering the preceding one hundred years of history known as the Protestant Reformation. Like the larger Reformation movement, the reexamination of the subjects and mode of baptism was a matter of studying what the Scriptures taught, with special regard for the positive institution of the ordinance by Christ in Matthew 28 and the illustrative examples of baptisms in the books of Acts. Based on these passages, and others, some concluded that the Scriptures commanded baptism to be administered upon profession of faith in the mode of immersion.

What is less well known is that the practice of exclusive administration

of baptism to professing believers, or credobaptism, was not only based on an argument from positive law, but also on a complementary foundation of covenant theology. This article focuses on the covenant theology of one group in the seventeenth century which later came to be known as “Particular Baptists” and are identifiable by their two confessions—the First London Confession of Faith, published in 1644, and the Second London Confession of Faith, published in 1677.¹

Those who practiced credobaptism did not have a clear name or identity in the early decades of the seventeenth century. There was no “Baptist” denomination made up of “Baptist” churches. In fact, the most consistent name applied to credobaptists was that of “anabaptists,” an epithet attributed to them by those who believed that the baptism of infants, or paedobaptism, was biblically faithful. Among those who endured this label, despite disowning it over and over, there were very diverse groups with diverse geneses. It would be a mistake to conflate these various groups simply based on the similarities of their baptismal practices.

Narrowing the focus down to the group which came to be known as Particular Baptists, their historical origins can generally be traced to two main streams. The first is the community of English Separatists or “semi-Separatists” who established congregational churches which governed themselves independently of the Church of England. The second is the Church of England itself. To state it simply, the Particular Baptists were partly comprised of Congregationalists who came to baptistic convictions, while others were priests and parishioners of the Church of England who skipped the intervening phase of paedobaptistic congregationalism and joined the early Particular Baptist churches directly.² In 1644, there were seven Particular Baptist churches in London. By 1677, there were over one hundred throughout the country.

This article argues that the covenant theology of the Particular Baptists in the seventeenth century reflects their historical genesis and is a natural development of Protestant, Reformed, and Congregational covenant theology.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

To understand Protestant covenant theology, one must understand the law and the gospel, distinguished in different ways—first, doctrinally, second, historically.

At the heart of the Protestant Reformation was the contrast between the law and the gospel as two opposite paths to a right standing before God, sometimes referred to as two opposite “doctrines.” Martin Luther said,

The law and the Gospel are two contrary doctrines ... For Moses with his law is a severe exactor, requiring of us that we should work and that we should give... Contrariwise, the Gospel giveth freely and requires of us nothing else but to hold out our hands and to take that which is offered. Now, to exact and to give, to take and to offer are clean contrary and cannot stand together.³

As explained by Luther, the law and gospel are opposite doctrines. Righteousness is obtained through a perfect record of personal obedience, or a perfect record of obedience received by faith. This doctrinal (or dogmatic) distinction between the law and the gospel is a common foundation of Protestant covenant theology, and it is a point of connection and continuity with the Particular Baptists, as will be shown below.

In addition to the doctrinal contrast between the law and the gospel, Protestants also spoke of the law and the gospel in a historical sense, referring to two successive historical periods, the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament could be identified as the “law” in a broad sense due to the prominence and pedagogical function of the law of Moses during that time. And the New Testament could be identified as the “gospel” in a broad sense due to the clarity afforded by the incarnation, Christ’s earthly ministry, and the subsequent writings of the New Testament.

A proper understanding of Protestant covenant theology must account for the interplay of these two distinctions.⁴ The doctrinal contrast between the law and the gospel was mutually exclusive throughout history. Righteousness is obtained either by works or faith. But the historical contrast between the law and the gospel simply marked two successive epochs, during which the law and the gospel, as doctrines, were both present.

As covenant theology developed in the sixteenth century, its rhetoric was built on the preceding logic of the contrast between the law and the gospel in its doctrinal and historical senses. As the law and the gospel could refer to opposite doctrines, so some theologians spoke of a *legal* covenant and an *evangelical* covenant as two opposite covenants relating to righteousness. Later writers expressed the same truths in different terms. They spoke of the *fædus*

operum and *fædus gratiæ*, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.

These covenants were opposed doctrinally, commonly distinguished by a difference in substance (or essence) and condition. As the law cannot be the gospel, so also the legal covenant cannot be the evangelical covenant; the covenant of works cannot be the covenant of grace. This logic runs through the Protestant writers and is used repeatedly in the arguments of the Particular Baptists.

The historical distinction of the law and the gospel was incorporated into the vocabulary of covenant theology by speaking of the covenant of grace under the time of the law, and under the time of the gospel. These were commonly called “administrations” or “dispensations,” of the covenant of grace.⁵ It is necessary to note that the historical distinction between the law and the gospel locates two phases within *one covenant*, whereas the doctrinal distinction between the law and the gospel differentiates *two covenants*.

The “administration” of the covenant primarily referred to the external organization of the covenant, namely its rites and ordinances. For this reason, most Reformed writers identified two administrations within the covenant of grace, marked by the institution of circumcision with Abraham and the institution of new ordinances by Christ.⁶

The law and the gospel, distinguished doctrinally and historically, stand behind the common formula of covenant theology which states that the old and new covenants are not two different covenants; rather, they are the same covenant in substance, differing only in two outward administrations. For example, baptism replaced circumcision and the Lord’s Supper replaced the Passover as new sacraments that convey the same saving grace (or substance).

But here a difficulty arises—the Mosaic covenant. The diversity of Protestant and Reformed covenant theology derives, in large part, from the question of how to understand the Mosaic covenant and its relation to the covenant of grace.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT

As theologians studied the Mosaic covenant, they wrestled with whether it simply contained the law, or whether it was a covenant founded on the law. For some, the Mosaic covenant conditioned its blessings on obedience to the law and was therefore a covenant of works substantially distinct from, and

doctrinally opposed to, the covenant of grace. For others, the law was merely a response to blessings already given, and therefore the Mosaic covenant was part of the first administration of the covenant of grace.⁷

For Luther, as quoted above, *Moses* was the “severe exactor” whose law was opposite to the gospel. Many followed this understanding and determined that the Mosaic covenant was a covenant of works. The law was commonly identified as a line of connection between the Mosaic covenant of works and the covenant of works made with Adam. John Bunyan (1628-1688), for example, highly praised Luther’s commentary on Galatians as having had a profound influence on him. He said, “When I had but a little way perused, I found my condition in his experience, so largely and profoundly handled, as if his Book had been written out of my heart ... I do prefer this Book of Mr. *Luther* upon the *Galatians*, (excepting the Holy Bible) before all the Books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience.”⁸

Elsewhere, Bunyan taught specifically that the covenant of works made with Adam was the same as the covenant made through Moses. Bunyan argued, “That which was given to *Adam* in Paradise, you will grant was the Covenant of Works; for it runs thus. *Do this and live*; do it not, and die ... Now there is but one Covenant of Works: If therefore I prove, that that which was delivered on Mount Sinai, is the Covenant of Works, then all will be put out of doubt.”⁹ It is Luther’s influence on Bunyan which accounts for Adam’s and Moses’ brutal treatment of Christian’s companion Faithful at the Hill Difficulty in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.¹⁰

Bunyan illustrates the natural extension of the law/gospel contrast from the Adamic covenant of works to the Mosaic covenant of works. Others, such as John Owen (1616-1683), made similar comments, arguing for a substantial identity between covenants that share the same demands of the law. Owen said,

The whole entire Nature of the *Covenant of Works*, consisted in this; *That upon our Personal Obedience, according unto the Law and Rule of it, we should be Accepted with God and Rewarded with him.* Herein the *Essence* of it did consist. And what ever Covenant proceedeth on these terms, or hath the Nature of them in it; however it may be varied with Additions or Alterations, is the same Covenant still, and not another... So whatever Variations may be made in, or Additions unto the Dispensation of the *First Covenant*, so long as this Rule is retained, *Do this and*

Live; it is still the same covenant for Substance and Essence of it.¹¹

In a preface to Samuel Petto’s (1624-1711) treatise on covenant, Owen said, “Besides [the covenant of works and the covenant of grace] ... there is mention in the Scripture of sundry particular intervening Covenants that God made with his Church, or single persons, at several seasons.”¹² These other covenants, however, were “emanations from and particular expressions or limitations of one or other of the two solemn Covenants.”¹³

The Baptist minister and author Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) offered the same arguments. For Keach, the foundation of the covenant of works and covenant of grace was the distinction between the law and the gospel. “The difference betwixt the Law and the Gospel (as all our true Protestant Divines teach)” is “that the one requires doing, *Do this and live*; but the other, no doing but believing for Life and Salvation: their Terms differ not only in degree, but in their whole Nature.”¹⁴ For Keach, covenant theology could be reduced to the covenants built on the law and the gospel. “We read of *Two Covenants*, an *Old*, and a *New*, a *First*, and a *Second*, a *Covenant of Works*, and a *Covenant of Grace*.”¹⁵ All other covenants were repetitions of these two. Echoing Owen’s preface to Petto, Keach said, “Both these covenants had several Revelations, Ministrations, or Editions.”¹⁶

So, for some, like Luther, Bunyan, Owen, and Keach, a covenant based on the law could not be the covenant of grace, in substance. The Mosaic covenant, therefore, was not the covenant of grace, but a, or *the*, covenant of works.

Anthony Burgess (d.1664) illustrates the contrary position, i.e., that the Mosaic covenant is the covenant of grace, merely under a more legal dispensation. He said, “If we consider the good things annexed unto this [*Mosaic*] covenant, it must needs be a covenant grace: for there we have remission and pardon of sin, whereas in the covenant of works, there is no way for repentance or pardon ...”¹⁷ This forgiveness was proffered in circumcision and the sacrificial system. Burgess said,

Now we all know that the sacrifices were evangelical, and did hold forth remission of sins through the blood of Christ... Now all must confess, that circumcision and the sacrifices did not oppose Christ, or grace, but rather included them. And this hath been always a very strong argument to persuade me [that the Mosaic covenant is the covenant of grace].¹⁸

For Burgess, where there is forgiveness of sins, there is the covenant of grace. But Burgess clarified that typology was at work in this arrangement. “When therefore Moses is called the Mediator it is to be understood typically, even as the sacrifices did wash away sin typically.”¹⁹ Burgess’ identification of typology in the Mosaic covenant and its ordinances raises the question of whether its mediator or its sacrifices were in themselves the reality to which they pointed.

Despite his argument that the Mosaic covenant is the covenant of grace, Burgess recognized that the Scriptures propose strong contrasts between the old and new covenants. He said,

Now to all this, there are strong objections made from those places of Scripture, where the Law and faith, or the Promise, are so directly opposed... If they should be rigidly, and universally true, then that doctrine of the Socinians would plainly prevail, who from these places of Scripture do urge, that there was no grace, or faith, nor nothing of Christ, vouchsafed unto the Jews.²⁰

For Burgess, the old and new covenants are the same because the grace is the same. And if one regards the Mosaic covenant as not being the covenant of grace because of the Scriptures’ strong contrasts, then one allows the argument that there was no saving grace prior to the new covenant, a conclusion which he refuses to accept.

So, one faces a dilemma. The Scriptures make strong law/gospel contrasts between the old and new covenants and speak of the inferiority and inutility of the old covenant and its ordinances. The Scriptures also state that the new covenant is established on better promises. And yet the saving grace won by Christ Jesus is received and enjoyed by old covenant saints. What is the resolution? How does one resolve the unity of salvation in history with the disunity of the covenants in history? One solution was found in John Cameron’s *fædus subserviens*, or subservient covenant.

JOHN CAMERON’S SUBSERVIENT COVENANT

In 1608 at the University of Heidelberg the Scottish theologian John Cameron (c.1579-1625) defended 82 theses concerning a threefold covenant of God with man.²¹ Cameron’s threefold covenant model taught that the

Mosaic covenant was neither the covenant of works made with Adam nor the covenant of grace, but a distinct covenant of obedience given to Israel concerning life in Canaan. Israel must obey to remain in Canaan.

Cameron called the Mosaic covenant the “subservient covenant” because it fulfilled a subordinate function in God’s unfolding purposes. The subservient covenant echoed the covenant of works in Eden but was not the covenant of works. It commanded obedience, but for life in Canaan. And as the Israelites failed to keep it, it also drove them to Christ in the covenant of grace.

Cameron’s subservient covenant resolved the law/gospel dilemma of whether the Mosaic covenant was the covenant of grace through his articulation of a two-tiered typology, in theses 74-78.²² Cameron taught that “The Sacrifices and Sacraments of the Old Testament are deservedly called carnal” and differ from those of the new covenant for two reasons. First, “the Sacrifices, Sacraments, and Ceremonies of the Ancients had their carnal use, over and besides the spiritual signification. But the Sacraments of the New Covenant have, by God’s appointment, no carnal use at all, now, but merely spiritual.” Second, “the Sacraments, Sacrifices, and Ceremonies of the Old Testament did set forth Christ, and the benefits by Christ; not primarily, but secondarily, and that too, but darkly; but the Sacraments of the New Covenant do shew forth Christ primarily, and that clearly.”

To illustrate his theses, Cameron exhibited,

So Circumcision, primarily, did separate between the seed of Abraham and the rest of the Nations; it did seal unto them the earthly promise: secondarily, it did signify out sanctification. In like manner the Passover, primarily, the passing over of the destroying Angel; secondarily, Christ: so also the sacrifices, and the cleansings, they represented, primarily, a certain carnal holiness: secondarily, they figured out Christ, and the benefits of the New Covenant.²³

For Cameron, typology functioned on two levels, a “carnal use over and besides the spiritual signification.” There is an initial typical historical level with its own significance and promises. This is a picture of something above and beyond itself, an antitypical historical reality with its own significance and promises. The type reveals the antitype but is distinct from it. The type, if not understood by faith, does not distribute the antitypical benefits which it portrays.

Cameron said that the old covenant, i.e., the subservient covenant, was “a *Type*, and a *similitude* of the *new* Covenant.”²⁴ And his theses make it clear that the old covenant sacrifices restored “a certain carnal holiness.”

Anthony Burgess also acknowledged a typological character in the Mosaic covenant, but his typology makes the Mosaic ordinances the future reality in a provisional form, and nothing more, whereas Cameron directly acknowledged two levels or two referents for types. They signify and accomplish one thing primarily, and another thing, secondarily.

CAMERON, CONGREGATIONALISTS, AND AN ANTIPAEDOBAPTIST ANGLICAN

So, where did Cameron’s typology and covenant theology find a home? It was among the Congregationalists. In 1645, Samuel Bolton (1606-1654) translated the entirety of Cameron’s theses from Latin into English and appended them to his *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom*, adding his express appreciation and approval of Cameron’s covenant theology. Bolton said,

[John Cameron’s *fædus subserviens*] is the Key to the Gospel, and the best resolver that I have ever met with all of those intricate controversies, and disputes concerning the law; we read often in Scripture that the Law was a Covenant, and more frequently among Divines, that we are free from the Law as a Covenant, but to tell us what Covenant this was, hath not been the work of many.²⁵

In Bolton’s estimation, Cameron’s contribution was insufficiently known and appreciated. Earlier in *The True Bounds*, Bolton summarized and endorsed Cameron’s arguments, “In regard it may be the thing [Cameron’s *fædus subserviens*] hath not been *observed* by all, and many who have not the *Author* by them, And others if they had it could make no use.”²⁶ To Bolton, Cameron’s covenant theology was “the Key” to the law/gospel question in the Mosaic covenant because it acknowledged that “though it [the Mosaic covenant] stand upon *opposite terms*, yet it hath its *subservient ends* to the Covenant of Grace; and was given by way of *subserviency* to the Gospel.”²⁷

Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646) followed Cameron’s model, teaching that the covenant made through Moses was “a temporal Covenant annexed unto [the covenant of grace], that concerned their living prosperously in

the Land of Canaan.”²⁸

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) likewise adopted Cameron’s view of the Mosaic covenant. Though not published in his lifetime, Goodwin’s *A Discourse of the Work of the Holy Ghost in our Salvation* expresses his views in Book VII, chapter 4.²⁹ There Goodwin asserts that the Mosaic covenant “was *Fædus Subserviens* to the Gospel, (as Learned *Cameron* calls it)” and “was truly the promulgation of the covenant of nature made with *Adam*.”³⁰ Following Cameron’s two-tiered typology, Goodwin called the Mosaic covenant an “outward covenant with the Jews” whose ordinances “besides their spiritual use in typifying things Heavenly to Spiritual Believers then, they had an outward carnal use to the whole Nation.” The forgiveness provided by the sacrificial system was “a Forgiveness of reprieval, not to be destroyed for their sin ... and so had a *Sanctification* and a *Justification* which were not really such, that is, not of the heart and conscience.”³¹ The subservient Mosaic covenant was “truly, and *toto genere*, differing from that Second Covenant of the gospel ... and was that old Covenant God found fault with.”³² For Goodwin, typology both distinguished and related the old and new covenants.

John Owen articulated the same views in his third volume on the book of Hebrews, though never mentioning John Cameron. Owen introduced the question, “Here then ariseth a difference of no small importance, namely, whether these [the old and new covenants] are indeed *two distinct Covenants*, as to the *essence and substance* of them, or only *different ways of the dispensation and administration of the same Covenant*.”³³ Owen acknowledged that “The judgment of most *Reformed Divines* is ... they are not to be said to be under *another Covenant*, but only a *different administration* of it.”³⁴ Owen, however, disagreed on the basis of typology.

The issue was not whether the grace of Christ was available to Old Testament saints. Owen said, “All who contend about these things, the *Socinians* only excepted, do grant that the Covenant of Grace considered *absolutely*, that is, the Promise of Grace in and by Jesus Christ, was the only way and means of Salvation unto the Church, from the first entrance of sin.”³⁵ As for Cameron, Bolton, Burroughs, and Goodwin, the question was whether the old covenant and its ordinances promised and bestowed distinct blessings that were typical of the saving grace of Christ.

Owen described the relation of the old and new covenants as one of “Type and Antitype.” The old covenant was “legal and carnal, and had respect

only unto outward things.”³⁶ Referring to the Levitical priesthood and its duties, Owen said, “There were some lines and shadows, to represent the body, but the body itself was not there. There was something above them and beyond them, which they reached not unto.”³⁷ And yet, the Levitical system did serve its own purpose. Owen stated, “All the *Levitical Services* and Ordinances were in themselves carnal, and had carnal ends assigned unto them, and had only an obscure representation of things spiritual and eternal.”³⁸ Thus, “The Old Covenant was *typical, shadowy and removeable*, Heb. 10.1. The New Covenant is *substantial and permanent*, as containing *the Body which is Christ*.”³⁹

Through typology, the old covenant portrayed salvation in Jesus Christ, but it did not offer salvation in and of itself. Owen distinguished between being saved “under” the old covenant, and “by virtue” of the old covenant. He affirmed the former and denied the latter.

If *Reconciliation and Salvation by Christ* were to be obtained not only *under the Old Covenant*, but *by vertue thereof*, then it must be the same for substance with the New. But this is not so; for no *Reconciliation with God*, nor *Salvation* could be obtained by vertue of the Old Covenant, or the Administration of it.⁴⁰

As Cameron and Goodwin had, Owen was acknowledging the argument of Hebrews that the animal blood of the old covenant could not purify the conscience or perfect its members. The saving grace which one obtained *under* the old covenant, came from the promise of the Christ to come. “The spiritual benefit which was obtained under [the old covenant], proceeded from the *promise*, and not from *the efficacy of the Law*, or the Covenant made at *Sinai*.” The old and new covenants were not merely two administrations of the same covenant, but two covenants distinct in substance yet related in typology.

Cameron’s influence among the Congregationalists is readily apparent.⁴¹ Bolton and Goodwin name him while Burroughs and Owen resemble him. Meanwhile, the Presbyterians rejected his subservient covenant.

Now we can introduce John Tombes (1602-1676), the Anglican anti-paedobaptist. Tombes was a minister in the Church of England who came to reject infant baptism but remained in the Church of England all his life. Tombes is important for at least three reasons. First, Tombes represents

part of the internal debate of the clergy of the Church of England. Second, Tombes appealed to John Cameron’s typology various times throughout his writings. Third, Particular Baptists appealed to Tombes repeatedly and recommended his work. It is in Tombes’ works that the debates over John Cameron’s typology appear more clearly.

In 1645 John Tombes argued that the Abrahamic covenant was a “mixed covenant,” by which he meant that the covenant consisted of “temporal benefits ... and spiritual blessings.”⁴² To support this duality, Tombes appealed to John Cameron’s typology. He argued, “*Yea, Cameron thesibus de triplici fœdere Dei, thesis 78. saith, ‘That circumcision did primarily separate Abraham’s seed from other Nations, sealed the earthly promise, it signified sanctification secondarily.’*”⁴³

Tombes was arguing that the Abrahamic covenant promised earthly benefits, which were distinct and separate from the spiritual blessings they typified. In this way, the promise of the gospel had always been the same and was present among the Jews, but the Jews had received additional promises and blessings that were limited to the earthly realm.

Tombes used two-tier typology to respond to Anthony Burgess’ arguments, already reviewed above. Tombes said,

[Burgess’ argument that the Mosaic covenant is the covenant of grace] is not from the tenor of the covenant, but from some adjuncts of it, as *because there were sacrifices and other rites appointed, it must be a covenant of grace*.⁴⁴ Answer, the sacrifices as they were commanded, so they did belong to the covenant of works. But as God used them as shadows and types of Christ to come, so they signify God’s purpose of Gospel-grace in Christ, but by another Covenant, not that at mount *Sinai*.⁴⁵

Notice that the sacrifices fulfill two functions simultaneously, but these two functions belong to two different covenants. The sacrifices themselves belong to the Mosaic covenant of works and function within it. But, as types, they signify the grace of another covenant, the covenant of grace.

Earlier in the same work, Tombes said, “Christ it is true is the substance of the things promised as they were Types; yet the things promised in respect of their natural being had a substance besides, and in relation to the Covenant were as much the substance or substantial parts of it as the spiritual promises.”⁴⁶ Tombes is saying that a type/antitype relationship involves things distinct

in substance. Types have their own substance, function, and meaning, but, *qua* types, they point above and beyond themselves to another substance, namely Christ and his benefits.

Another clergyman, Stephen Marshall (1594-1655), replied to Tombes' use of Cameron, and expressed his distaste,

As for that expression of the learned Cameron that *Circumcision did primarily seal the earthly promise, &c.* if by *primarily* he meant *immediately, though not chiefly*, that it sealed these things *first in order, as they were types* of spiritual things, it may then pass *cum grano salis* [with a grain of salt], but if by *primarily* be intended principally, that Circumcision did *chiefly seal earthly blessings*, the opinion is too unsavory to be received.⁴⁷

Marshall disliked Cameron's typology, questioning what Cameron meant by "primary" and "secondary." For Marshall, if this refers to a sequence of time in which one thing replaces another, then it is acceptable. But Marshall will not accept Cameron's typology if primary means "chief" or "principal." If the old covenant's blessings are chiefly and principally earthly and distinct from secondary spiritual blessings, Marshall rejects it as unsavory. It does not pass his typology taste test.

Stephen Marshall's rejection of Cameron's typology in his interaction with John Tombes is important not only to illustrate the diversity of views in the 1640s, but also to demonstrate the centrality of Cameron and his articulation of typology to this diversity.⁴⁸

THE PARTICULAR BAPTISTS' DISTINCTIVES

When one reads Particular Baptist literature about covenant theology, one does not find extensive treatises of covenant. It may seem difficult, therefore, to describe "Particular Baptist covenant theology." Without developed and extensive works on the subject, how can one characterize their position?

The answer lies in recognition of the fact that Particular Baptist works on covenant theology have a narrow focus on specific polemical arguments. The lack of additional literature is easily explained by the significant quantity of doctrine which the Particular Baptists held in common with their Congregationalist or Presbyterian brothers.

Because it was unnecessary for the Particular Baptists to rehearse the arguments with which they already agreed, there are certain features of covenant theology that find little treatment in their literature. For example, among these shorter and more focused publications, arguments about the covenant of works made with Adam are absent. This is simply because it was not a point of disagreement between the Particular Baptists and their polemical counterparts. The covenant of works is present in Particular Baptist literature as an accepted doctrine without need for defense or debate.⁴⁹

Having surveyed the development and diversity of covenant theology, having recognized that the Particular Baptists held much in common with others, and having recognized that their works tend to be narrowly focused on specific polemical arguments, we are well poised to obtain a precise understanding of the distinctives of the covenant theology of the Particular Baptists.

That which distinguished Particular Baptist covenant theology from others, to state the matter simply, was the application of Protestant law/gospel logic and two-tier typology to the Abrahamic covenant. In so doing, they distinguished themselves from others such as Cameron and the Congregationalists who had identified the Mosaic covenant as a subservient typical covenant based on obedience but treated the Abrahamic covenant differently.⁵⁰ The Particular Baptists took the hermeneutical principles that had been applied to the Mosaic covenant and extended them to the Abrahamic covenant.

The Particular Baptists argued that the Abrahamic covenant was of the same nature as the Mosaic covenant. It, too, was a subservient typical covenant of works. Indeed, they argued that the Mosaic covenant was merely an expansion of what was instituted in the Abrahamic covenant, which they often called by the name given to it by Stephen in Acts 7:8, "the covenant of circumcision." The logic of the doctrinal law/gospel contrast and two-tier typology upheld these beliefs.

For example, in 1642 Andrew Ritor argued that circumcision was "both a Covenant and yet also but a signe of another Covenant (to wit) of that everlasting Covenant made with *Abraham*, and all his spirituall seed ... which is only to be enjoyed by faith."⁵¹ By distinguishing the covenant of circumcision from the covenant of grace, Ritor was not saying that the grace of Christ was absent from the time of Abraham, but rather that the Abrahamic covenant did not, in itself, grant the saving grace of Christ which was to be

found only in the new covenant. For Ritor, circumcision is a covenant and “a sign of another covenant.” It was typical of the covenant of grace in the blessings that it did grant.

Ritor specifically deals with circumcision because in Genesis 17, circumcision is called the covenant, and the one who contemns it is cut off from the covenant. To the Particular Baptists, a breakable covenant that disinherits its members if they disobey a positive law could not be the covenant of grace. A covenant that disinherits its members for disobedience to a positive law was, in their view, a covenant of works. This is the fundamental logic of the law and the gospel as opposite doctrines. If the covenant demands your own obedience and threatens you relative to the same, it cannot be the gospel covenant.

Here it must be remembered that John Cameron himself had identified circumcision within his primary/secondary two-tiered typology, which separated the Jews according to the flesh from the rest of the world and granted them a “carnal holiness.” The Particular Baptists’ view makes the same point, applying this to the entirety of the Abrahamic covenant.

In 1644, the Particular Baptist Christopher Blackwood (1607/8-1670) argued that the old and new covenants “are two Covenants essentially differing ... The first Covenant was carnal and typical.”⁵² Then he distinguished circumcision from baptism as being applied to distinct subjects and signifying distinct blessings.⁵³

A decade later, a Particular Baptist pastor, Thomas Patient (d.1666), argued that “The covenant of Circumcision is no covenant of eternal life, but a typical covenant, yea a covenant of works.”⁵⁴ As a typical covenant, “The Temporal *Israel*, and the typical Election of them into the temporal covenant, did point out this Spiritual Election in a Spiritual Covenant, confirmed of God in Christ Jesus.”⁵⁵ He added, “For [Israel’s] sacrifices for sin, typed out Christ, but they were not Christ, and their typical remissions ... can be understood to be no other but typical.”⁵⁶ This is nothing other than what the Congregationalists believed, but extended to the Abrahamic covenant and not only the Mosaic covenant.

Similarly, in 1658 the Particular Baptist ministers Abraham Cheare (1626-1668) and Robert Steed (d.1699) asserted that the old covenant was “a covenant ministering or serving to [a] doctrine above or beyond it self.”⁵⁷

In 1676, the Particular Baptist Edward Hutchinson (d.1676) argued that

“There is a twofold seed of Abraham ... and a two-fold inheritance ... But the heavenly inheritance was not given to the fleshly seed, but only in Types offered to them, and confirmed to the spiritual seed.”⁵⁸ For Hutchinson, the Abrahamic covenant was a covenant of works. He said,

That Covenant made with *Abraham*, and his natural seed called the Covenant of Circumcision, or Covenant of the Law was not the Covenant of Eternal life and salvation, which was made with all the elect in Christ upon the condition of faith: but a distinct Covenant of it self concerning the worship and service of God, and so may be called a Covenant of works, rather than a Covenant of grace; though there was also grace in it, as there was in all the Covenants that God ever made with men.⁵⁹

Hutchinson acknowledged the presence of grace in all covenants, but the benefits of saving grace are found only in the new covenant. The old covenant, in itself, only provided typical shadows.

The principal proponent of the Particular Baptist view that the Abrahamic covenant was not the covenant of grace but a subservient typical covenant of works was Nehemiah Coxe (1650-1689), minister of the Particular Baptist church in Petty France, London alongside William Collins (c.1644-1702).⁶⁰ In 1681, Coxe published *A Discourse of the Covenants That God made with Men before the Law*, a work widely praised by contemporary and subsequent Baptists as the best on the subject. The focus of Coxe’s work was proving that the Abrahamic covenant was a distinct covenant from, typical of and subservient to, the covenant of grace.

Coxe said that “Circumcision did not only oblige to the keeping of the Law... but did also (as subservient to the Promise) point at the *Messiah* ... that thro’ Faith in his Name such a Righteousness [that circumcision required] might be obtained.”⁶¹ In a few words, one can see Coxe connecting the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants as united covenants of works. All the circumcised must keep all the law. But the righteousness which this arrangement requires is beyond any fallen creature. So, circumcision points ahead to Christ through whom perfect righteousness can be obtained by faith.

Coxe explained that the typology of the old covenant prompted the Israelites according to the flesh to see something beyond their ordinances and their covenant. Coxe said,

The State of *Israel after the Flesh* being typical; *The Israel of God* among them, were taught to look above, and beyond their external privileges, unto those things that were shadowed by them, as set before their Faith in the promises of Grace by Christ; and so to live upon the Grace of that Covenant, which their outward State, and Covenant of Peculiarity [i.e., the Abrahamic Covenant] was subservient to; And unto them, all these things had a *spiritual, and evangelical Use*, which being their principal End and Intent, a fair Occasion is ministred for *such an Intermixture* of the Promises of *Typical*, with those of *real Blessings*, as we have now had under Consideration; Because of the Covenant of Grace, and that of Circumcision have their *mutual respect*, as the *Type to its Antitype*.⁶²

Coxe demonstrates that the typology of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants establishes the means of the presence and communication of the saving grace of Christ in the Old Testament. And yet, the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants do not, themselves, grant this saving grace. They make it known through typology, which the Israelites were taught to see, by looking “above, and beyond their external privileges.”

So then, in the seventeenth century, both Particular Baptists and Presbyterian and Congregational paedobaptists affirmed that the Old Testament is full of the gospel through typology. But for some, typology was a matter of two phases of the same thing. So, circumcision and baptism were two outward forms of the same thing. Passover and the Lord’s Supper were two outward forms of the same thing.

John Cameron, the Congregationalists, and John Tombes disagreed with this understanding of typology, distinguishing types and antitypes in the old and new covenant as two different things. The Particular Baptists’ distinctive was that they applied these principles to the Abrahamic covenant. It was not just the Mosaic covenant that was based on obedience, but also the Abrahamic covenant. It was not just the Mosaic covenant that granted typical blessings, but also the Abrahamic covenant.

Philip Cary (fl.1682-1692), a Particular Baptist minister, sums up what was a *non sequitur* to the Particular Baptists. Cary said,

We do indeed acknowledge the subserviency of the law to Christ, and the covenant of grace ... But it does not therefore follow, that the law is a covenant of gospel-grace ... The law is not the gospel, nor the gospel the law. And therefore

though the one of them is plainly subservient to the other, yet they ought not to be mixed, blended, or confounded the one with the other, as if they were but one and the same covenant, and no difference to be made between them; only in respect of the different degrees of the discovery of gospel grace, as has been suggested ... A subserviency in any thing to promote the ends of something else, does not make it to be the thing itself; the ends whereof are promoted thereby.⁶³

For Cary and the Particular Baptists’ law, gospel, typology, and subserviency distinguished the old and new covenants in substance, while uniting them in revelation and redemptive purpose. The Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants did not lead anywhere other than to Christ and the new covenant. They were temporary, provisional, typical, subservient covenants. The conclusion of all this was, of course, that since the new covenant is not a new administration of the Abrahamic covenant, but rather its antitype, there was no biblical foundation for the automatic inclusion of the children of believers in the new covenant or the administration of baptism to them.

THE PARTICULAR BAPTISTS’ DIVERSITY

The view described above, namely that the Abrahamic covenant was a covenant based on obedience, granting life in Canaan for Abraham’s natural offspring, typical of and subservient to the covenant of grace, was the most common argument advanced by the Particular Baptists in their writings on covenant theology. There are variations in nuance in the ways that Baptists articulated this argument, but the overall argument was advanced by a very high majority. Notwithstanding this majority, there were Particular Baptists of another mind on the matter.

The Particular Baptist pioneer and minister John Spilsbury (1593-1662/1668) published some of the earliest Particular Baptist arguments about covenant theology. In 1643 he stated,

That the outward profession of the said Covenant [of grace], hath differed under severall Periods, I shall not deny: and of the Scriptures speaking of the annulling and abolishing the old Covenant and making a new, is to be understood of the Period from *Moses* to Christ, and not of that from *Abraham* to *Moses*. This also in part I confesse, but not the whole.⁶⁴

He continued, “So that the opposition the Scripture holds forth between Covenant & Covenant, is between Testament and Testament, with reference to the order and forme of profession thereof.”⁶⁵ For Spilisbury, the old and new covenants were two different outward arrangements of the same covenant of grace.

To resolve the relation of Abraham, Israelites, and believers to the covenant he distinguished a double seed in Abraham, “There was in *Abraham* at that time a spirituall seed and a fleshly seed.”⁶⁶ The promises of the covenant were directed diversely towards these seeds, “Some of which were proper unto both the seeds, and some not.”⁶⁷ Here he utilized a typological argument to say that the land of Canaan was given conditionally to the physical seed of Abraham (some of which were also spiritual) and that this promise was confirmed by circumcision. The promise of Canaan “pointed at a spirituall inheritance” which was “absolute, and confirmed onely upon the spirituall seed.”⁶⁸

Arguably, Spilisbury differs little from the authors quoted above. He distinguishes earthly and heavenly blessings via typology and affirms that the enjoyment of the earthly blessings was conditioned on obedience. Whether Spilisbury is simply not as clear as later writers or whether his thought represents a true disagreement with them is debatable. For now, his inclusion is intended to demonstrate diversity among the Particular Baptists.

A much clearer example of diversity is found in the Particular Baptist minister Thomas Hardcastle (1637-1678). In a manuscript of lectures given on the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Hardcastle said,

Q: Were those under the Old Testament, the Jews, under a covenant of works?

A: No, Adam was under a covenant of works, but the Jews were under a covenant of grace. Adam was under a covenant of works, *Do this and live*. The Jews were under a covenant of grace, which was obscured by types, sacrifices, and figures which did typify and prefigure Christ, and these sacrifices [were] the gospel they had. Through this they looked to a Christ to come. Through the type they could behold the antitype. Through the blood of beasts they could see the blood of the lamb, though many of them very obscurely.⁶⁹

He added,

Although the old administration was such, as made it to be looked upon (the outside of it) as a Covenant of works, if you look to Mount Sinai, there you find nothing but working: if you look to the sacrifices there you have a glimpse of some relief by a Saviour.⁷⁰

Hardcastle’s view is identical to that found in the Westminster Confession or in Anthony Burgess, described above. Though acknowledging the typology of the old covenant, Hardcastle understood this to be the reason why the old and new covenants were the same covenant under two different forms rather than two distinct covenants. Most Particular Baptists drew the opposite conclusion.

THE PARTICULAR BAPTISTS’ UNITY

After surveying the diversity of covenant theology, in which the Particular Baptists are a natural branch and development, and after surveying the distinctive arguments of the Particular Baptists, especially with regard to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, one may be surprised by the Particular Baptists’ *Confession of Faith* in its comments about covenant in chapter 7. The Particular Baptists’ arguments presented above do not seem to be present, especially in paragraph 3.

This *Covenant* is revealed in the Gospel; first of all to *Adam* in the promise of Salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament; and it is founded in that *Eternal Covenant* transaction, that was between the *Father* and the *Son*, about the Redemption of the *Elect*; and it is alone by the Grace of this *Covenant*, that all of the posterity of fallen *Adam*, that ever were saved, did obtain life and a blessed immortality; *Man* being now utterly incapable of acceptance with *God* upon those terms, on which *Adam* stood in his state of innocency.⁷¹

To understand this paragraph, one must recognize that the Confession was not a polemical document or expression of the finer points of covenant theology, but a document which represented the faith of those “who jointly concur in this work.”⁷² The Confession was edited and written in a way that could accommodate the Baptists’ diversity on this subject.

Though most of the Confession is drawn directly from the Savoy Declaration and the Westminster Confession, this paragraph is a new addition, penned by the editors, likely Nehemiah Coxe and William Collins. Whoever is responsible for this paragraph, it demonstrates wisdom in that it can be affirmed by all of the Particular Baptists, whether they held to the majority view or one like Hardcastle’s. It therefore is a document in which the Baptists could unite.

The Confession affirms the presence of saving grace in all postlapsarian history but avoids specifying the precise nature of the relation of the old covenant(s) to the covenant of grace. The same truth is taught later in the Confession in chapter 8, paragraph 6, and in chapter 20, paragraph 1.

Although the price of Redemption was not actually paid by *Christ*, till after his *Incarnation*, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefit thereof were communicated to the Elect in all ages successively, from the beginning of the World, in and by those Promises, Types, and Sacrifices, wherein he was revealed, and signified to be the Seed of the *Woman*, which should bruise the Serpent’s head; and the Lamb slain from the foundation of the World: Being *the same yesterday, and today, and forever*.⁷³

The covenant of works being broken by sin, and made unprofitable unto life; God was pleased to give forth the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling the elect, and begetting in them faith and repentance; in this promise, the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed and therein effectual, for the conversion and salvation of sinners.⁷⁴

While it may be surprising to some to note the *absence* of a developed covenantal argument in the Confession, the reality is that the Confession demonstrates wisdom in its affirmation of common concepts and its avoidance of particular points that might have disunited the Particular Baptists. To grasp Particular Baptist covenant theology, one must look beyond their Confession and read the treatises which they wrote on the subject, a task

sadly and largely neglected by Baptists.

CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated that the diversity of Protestant covenant theology depended, in large part, on the application of the law/gospel distinction and the use of typology. For the Particular Baptists, as for the larger Protestant community, whether Christ’s saving grace was present throughout history was not a debated point (John Owen said, “the *Socinians* only excepted”). However, one’s view of typology profoundly affected one’s understanding of *how* this saving grace was made known and communicated, i.e., imparted, to the faith of saints before Christ’s incarnation. For some, typology represented two phases of the same reality. For others, typology represented a progressive unfolding and unveiling of a future reality through distinct, temporary, and provisional realities.

Particular Baptist covenant theology can be understood as a natural development of a preexisting Protestant diversity. Specifically, Particular Baptist covenant theology can be understood as an extension of Protestant law/gospel logic and Cameronian, Congregationalist, and Tombesian typology to the Abrahamic covenant. Just as others had concluded that the Mosaic covenant was a covenant of obedience typical of and subservient to the covenant of grace, the Particular Baptists concluded that this was also true of the Abrahamic covenant, and that the Mosaic covenant, thus understood, was merely an amplification of what had already been established in the Abrahamic covenant. The typology of the old covenant pointed, as Owen, Cheare and Steed, and Coxe had said, “*above and beyond*” itself to the everlasting realities of the new covenant.

This view was advanced and defended by a large majority of Particular Baptists from the early 1640s to the end of the seventeenth century, though a few instances of alternative expressions or views have been identified and described above. The Baptists’ Confession did not express this view in detail, most likely to accommodate a diversity among them, a diversity which seems to have been minimal when measured by the content of their publications.

- ¹ *The Confession of Faith, Of those Churches which are commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1644); *A Confession of Faith Put forth by the Elders and Brethren Of many Congregations of Christians (baptized upon Profession of their Faith) in London and the Country* (London: Benjamin Harris, 1677).
- ² On "Baptistic Congregationalists" see Matthew C. Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Reformation* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019). These are generalizations, to which additional cases could be added.
- ³ Martin Luther, *A Commentarie of M. Doctor Martin Lvtther Vpon The Epistle of S. Paul to the Galathians* (London: Thomas Vautroullier, 1575), fol. 97. Spelling updated.
- ⁴ Willem J. van Asselt stated that the *ordo salutis* and the *ordo temporum* or *historia salutis* "seem to be the two characteristic features of a fully developed and mature covenant theology." Willem J. van Asselt, "Covenant Theology as Relational Theology: The Contributions of Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669) and John Owen (1618-1683) to a Living Reformed Theology," in Kelly M. Kopic and Mark Jones, eds., *The Ashgate Research Companion to John Owen's Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 66.
- ⁵ It is important to pay attention to how the language of "legal covenant" and "evangelical covenant" is used. For some authors, the legal and evangelical covenants refer to two opposite covenants. For others, they refer to two historical stages of the covenant of salvation or the covenant of grace. This does not point at disagreement, necessarily, but diverse concepts sharing identical terms.
- ⁶ Some authors further subdivided these two administrations into more detailed epochs.
- ⁷ For a survey of the development of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century covenant theology, with a special eye for the Mosaic covenant, see Samuel Renihan, *From Shadow to Substance: The Federal Theology of the English Particular Baptists (1642-1704)* (Oxford, UK: Regent's Park College, 2018), 22-66.
- ⁸ John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding To the Chief of Sinners* (London: Nathaniel Ponder, 1680), 50-51.
- ⁹ John Bunyan, *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded* (London: M. Wright, 1659), 17.
- ¹⁰ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrims Progress* (London: Nathaniel Ponder, 1678), 90-93.
- ¹¹ Owen, *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith Through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, & Vindicated* (London: R. Boulter, 1677), 397.
- ¹² Samuel Petto, *The Difference Between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained: With An Exposition of the Covenant of Grace in the Principal Concernments of it* (London: Eliz. Calvert, 1674), vi.
- ¹³ Petto, *The Difference Between the Old and New Covenant*, vi-vii.
- ¹⁴ Keach, *The Marrow of True Justification; Or, Justification without Works* (London: Dorman Newman, 1692), 22.
- ¹⁵ Keach, *The Everlasting Covenant, A Sweet Cordial for a drooping Soul: Or, The Excellent Nature of the Covenant of Grace Opened: In a Sermon Preached January the 29th. At the Funeral of Mr. Henry Forty* (London: H. Barnard, 1693), 4.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ¹⁷ Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis: Or, A Vindication of the Morall Law and the Covenants, From the Errours of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and more especially, Antinomians. In XXIX. Lectures, preached at Laurence-Jury, London* (London: James Young, 1647), 224.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 225-226.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 226.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.
- ²¹ John Cameron, *De triplici Dei cum homine foedere theses* (Heidelberg, 1608), also in *Joh. Cameronis S. Theologiae in academia Salmuriansis nuper Professoris, Praelectionum in selectoria quaedam N. T. loca Salmuri habitatum*, 3 vols. (Saumur, 1626-1628), III, 609-630; and in translation, *Certain Theses, or, Positions of the learned John Cameron, Concerning the Three-fold Covenant of God with Man*, trans. Samuel Bolton, in *The True Bounds of Christian Freedome* (London: J. L., 1645), 353-401.
- ²² Cameron, *Three-fold Covenant of God*, 398-400. Spelling updated.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 399-400.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 395.
- ²⁵ Bolton, *The True Bounds*, 351.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 138-139.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 145.
- ²⁸ Jeremiah Burroughs, *Gospel-Conversation: Wherein is shewed, How the Conversation of Believers must be above what could be by the Light of Nature, beyond those that lived under the Law, and suitable to what*

- Truths the Gospel holds forth* (London: Peter Cole, 1648), 43-49.
- ²⁹ Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin, D.D.* (London: R. Tookey, 1703), V:330-332.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, V:330. Emphasis original.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, V:331-332. Emphasis original.
- ³² *Ibid.*, V:332. Emphasis original.
- ³³ John Owen, *A Continuation of the Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews* (London: Nathaniel Ponder, 1680), 224, 226. For this view, Owen referred the reader to Calvin, Vermigli, and Bucanus.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 225.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 227. Emphasis original.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 287.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, Emphasis original. Elsewhere, Owen called Israel a "Typical Church State, with a great number of Religious Laws and Ordinances, in themselves *carnal* and *weak*, but mystically significant of spiritual and heavenly things." Owen, *Exercitations Concerning the Name, Original, Nature, Use, and Continuance of a Day of Sacred Rest* (London: R.W., 1671), 230. Emphasis original.
- ³⁹ Owen, *A Continuation of the Exposition*, 241. Emphasis original.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 228.
- ⁴¹ For another instance of two-tier typology in the seventeenth century, see John Brinsley, *MESITHS, Or, The One and Onely Mediatour Betwixt God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus* (London: Thomas Maxey, 1651), 101-103.
- ⁴² John Tombes, *An Examen of the Sermon of Mr. Stephen Marshall, About Infant-Baptisme* (London: R.W., 1645), 39. Benjamin Coxe, William Kiffin, and Hanserd Knollys recommended this work by Tombes. Cf. Benjamin Coxe, William Kiffin, Hanserd Knollys, A Declaration Concerning the Publike Dispute... Concerning Infants-Baptisme (London: n.p., 1645), 18.
- ⁴³ Tombes, *An Examen of the Sermon of Mr. Stephen Marshall*, 39. Emphasis original.
- ⁴⁴ Referring to Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis*, 225-226.
- ⁴⁵ John Tombes, *Antipaedobaptism: Or the Third Part* (London: E. Alsop, 1657), 309. Emphasis original.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.
- ⁴⁷ Stephen Marshall, *A Defence of Infant Baptism* (London: Ric. Cotes, 1646), 98-99. Emphasis original.
- ⁴⁸ Marshall was not alone in rejecting Cameron's typology. On the reception of Cameron's covenant theology, see Renihan, *From Shadow to Substance*, 56, 64, 99-100.
- ⁴⁹ I am aware of at least twenty instances of a positive use of the covenant of works in seventeenth-century Particular Baptist literature, and not one single instance of a rejection or redefinition of it. For example, Edward Hutchinson stated, "As Protestant Divines say; that God made a Covenant of works with Adam, concerning perfect obedience, which he had then power to perform." Edward Hutchinson, *A Treatise Concerning the Covenant and Baptism Dialogue-wise, between a Baptist & a Poedo-Baptist, Wherein is shewed, That Believers only are the Spirituall Seed of Abraham; Fully discovering The Fallacy of the Argument drawn from the Birth Priviledge* (London: Francis Smith, 1676), 94. Nehemiah Coxe said, "Altho it [the covenant of works] be not in Scripture expressly called a Covenant, yet it hath the express Nature of a Covenant, and there is no reason for Nicety about Terms where the thing it self, is sufficiently revealed to us." Nehemiah Coxe, *A Discourse of the Covenants That God made with Men before the Law* (London: John Darby, 1681), 27. Philip Cary said, "We suppose none will (or can at least Rationally) deny [the covenant of works]: Forasmuch as Life was Implicitly promised unto our First Parent upon his Obedience, and Death was Explicitly threatned... And upon these terms he was to Stand or Fall; which was plainly and undeniably a Covenant of Works." Philip Cary, *A Solemn Call Unto all that would be owned as Christ's Faithful Witnesses, speedily, and seriously, to attend unto the Primitive Purity of the Gospel Doctrine and Worship: Or, a Discourse concerning Baptism* (London: John Harris, 1690), 121. Cary added on the following page, "It is generally Acknowledged, that [Adam] was then under a Covenant of Works."
- ⁵⁰ The Particular Baptists argued that John Owen contradicted himself and granted their arguments in his treatment of the Abrahamic covenant in his first commentary on Hebrews. See Samuel Renihan, "Dolphins in the Woods": A Critique of Mark Jones and Ted Van Raalte's Presentation of Particular Baptist Covenant Theology" in *Journal of the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies* (Palmdale, CA: RBAP, 2015) 63-89.
- ⁵¹ Andrew Ritor, *The Second Part of the Vanity & Childishnes of Infants Baptisme* (London: n.p., 1642), 24. One must exercise caution when dealing with Andrew Ritor. The name on these works is merely A.R., and it may simply be a pseudonym or *nom de plume* for someone else, perhaps even Henry Denne the

General Baptist, as some have suggested. Ritor is mentioned here because his two works resemble other literature published by Particular Baptists and because his books form part of the literary exchanges in which the Particular Baptists participated.

52 Christopher Blackwood, *The Storming of Antichrist In his two last and strongest Garrisons; Of Compulsion of Conscience, and Infants Babptisme* (n.p., 1644), 31.

53 Blackwood, *The Storming of Antichrist*, 32.

54 Thomas Patient, *The Doctrine of Baptism, And the Distinction of the Covenants* (London: Henry Hills, 1654), 42.

55 Ibid., 99.

56 Ibid., 125.

57 Abraham Cheare and Robert Steed, *A Plain Discovery Of The Unrighteous Judge and False Accuser* (London: Henry Mortlock, 1658), 13.

58 Hutchinson, *A Treatise Concerning the Covenant*, 27.

59 Ibid., 93.

60 Before moving to London, Coxe served as a gifted brother and record keeper in John Bunyan's church in Bedford. He was called by the Bunyan congregation to serve as a gifted brother in the same meeting that Bunyan himself was formally called as pastor of the church.

61 Coxe, *A Discourse of the Covenants*, 171. Emphasis original.

62 Ibid., 181-182. Emphasis original.

63 Cary, *A Solemn Call*, 167.

64 John Spilsbury, *A Treatise Concerning the Lawfull Subject of Baptisme* (London: n.p., 1643), 1.

65 Ibid., 1.

66 Ibid., 7.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Thomas Hardcastle, Manuscript Exposition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, 52. This manuscript is held at Bristol Baptist College.

70 Hardcastle, Manuscript Exposition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, 109-110. One of Hardcastle's copastors, Robert Purnell (d.1666) also seems to have taught that the Jews were under a covenant of grace. Cf. Robert Purnell, *A Little Cabinet Richly Stored with all sorts of Heavenly Varieties, and Soul-reviving Influences* (London: R.W., 1657), 19-57.

71 *A Confession of Faith Put forth by the Elders and Brethren Of many Congregations*, 26-27.

72 Ibid., 110.

73 Ibid., 32.

74 Ibid., 67.