

*Solomon Stoddard's 'Arguments'
Concerning Admission to
the Lord's Supper*

Edited with an Introduction by
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SOLOMON STODDARD'S role in the modification of New England's Congregational Way has often been discussed.¹ From the Reforming Synod debate of 1679 concerning communion requirements to the organizing of the Council of the Churches of the County Hampshire to promote a national church polity, Stoddard was a key figure in the movement of reform which, in the latter years of the seventeenth and the initial decades of the eighteenth centuries, significantly altered the Puritanism that had been practiced by the founding fathers. His career at Northampton, Massachusetts, spanned almost sixty years; and, before its course had run, New England witnessed not only the implementation of many of the changes he had proposed, but, concurrently, the decline in power of his most important adversaries—the Mathers of metropolitan Boston.

The development of Stoddard's thought has not been easy

¹Following Perry Miller's early study, 'Solomon Stoddard, 1648-1729,' *Harvard Theological Review* 34 (October 1941):227-320, several studies have dealt with the impact of Stoddard's thought. The most comprehensive treatments are James A. Goulding, 'The Controversy Between Solomon Stoddard and the Mathers: Western Versus Eastern Massachusetts Congregationalism,' Ph.D. Diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1971; and E. Brooks Holifield, 'The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Piety in Old and New England, 1570-1720,' Ph.D. Diss., Yale University, 1970.

to define; scarcity of extant materials, for one thing, makes it difficult to date precisely the evolving stages in his ideas and practices. In addition, his views are primarily expressed in the context of the controversy with the Mathers; these published interchanges, however, do not begin until the first decade of the 1700s, leaving the early course of Stoddard's actions somewhat ambiguous. Further, the import of the meager information that exists is not always clear; it had been argued, for example, that Stoddard eliminated the requirement of a public relation before the 1679 synod. Recent studies have demonstrated, however, that he did not abandon half-way membership requirements at Northampton and advocate that other churches in the Connecticut Valley do the same as early as the 1670s.² In 1677, Stoddard did alter his practice of keeping church records, no longer distinguishing between full and half-way members, and he was also apparently thinking of modifying the Half-Way Synod's requirements for admission to the Lord's Supper. In *A Discourse concerning the Danger of Apostasy* (Boston: John Foster, 1679), Increase Mather warns, 'I wish there be not teachers found in our Israel, that have espoused loose, large Principles here, designing to bring all persons to the Lord's Supper, who have an Historical Faith, and are not scandalous in life, although they never had experience of a work of Regeneration upon their souls' (p. 84). Stoddard may be the 'teacher' referred to here, yet neither the change in keeping church records nor Mather's statements in the *Discourse*—the only presumptive evidence prior to the 1679 synod of Stoddard's possible modifications of the half-way compromise—supports Perry Miller's contention that Stoddard 'suddenly, in 1677, without

²Miller asserts, for example, that Stoddard eliminated half-way requirements when he ceased keeping his double-entry ledger system ('Solomon Stoddard,' p. 298); and Harry E. Swanhart attempts to demonstrate that Stoddard eliminated the requirements as soon as he arrived in Northampton ('Solomon Stoddard: Puritan Patriarch, A Biography,' Ph.D. Diss., Boston University, 1961, pp. 120ff.). Cf. Goulding's rejection of these views, pp. 399-409.

warning, without asking anyone's permission' began to admit half-way members to the sacrament (p. 298).

After the debate between Stoddard and Mather at the Reforming Synod, Stoddard apparently submitted a written statement of his views to Increase, who later answered them in an unpublished manuscript, the 'Confutation of Solomon Stoddard's Observations Respecting the Lord's Supper 1680.' This document, recently edited by Everett Emerson and Mason I. Lowance,³ consists of Mather's rebuttal of nine Stoddardean arguments, all of which, according to Mather's transcription, emphasize eliminating an examination concerning a work of saving grace. How accurately the Mather document represents Stoddard's views is not clear; the 'Confutation' is an occasional piece, summarizing Stoddard's arguments rather than presenting them fully. Recognizing this, Emerson and Lowance write that 'It would be most useful to have an exact record of those arguments which Mather here refutes; however, none of the records of that Synod contain an exact account of Stoddard's argument. There appears to be no extant document that would provide a systematic Stoddardean argument to corroborate those points here debated by Mather' (p. 36). Fortunately, such a document does exist, transcribed by Edward Taylor in one of his manuscript books.

To observe the evolution of Stoddard's thought and practice, then, one must turn to the relationship between Stoddard and Taylor, the pastor of neighboring Westfield. As early as 1679, on the occasion of the gathering of the Westfield Church, Taylor was responding to Stoddard's 'espousals' regarding extension of the Lord's Supper to half-way members. In his Foundation Day Sermon, delivered with Stod-

³*Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 83 (April 1973):29-65. The text which Emerson and Lowance edited is a copy in Cotton Mather's hand; the editors suggested that the original document was 'either lost or no longer extant.' Subsequently, however, Increase's original draft was located among the Mather papers at the American Antiquarian Society (see William L. Joyce, 'Note on Increase Mather's Observations Respecting the Lord's Supper,' *ibid.*, pp. 343-344).

dard in the audience, Taylor clearly opposed the admission of the unregenerate into a full church state. Though Stoddard had not as yet initiated the practice, he prepared the way for it at the synod later that year by forcing a key compromise in the synod's actions. As a result of the debate between Stoddard and Mather, the synod elders were prevailed upon to change that portion of the resolutions dealing with the requirement of a public relation. As Stoddard later wrote, 'they blotted out that clause of Making a Relation of the work of God's Spirit, and put in the room of it, the Making a Profession of their Faith and Repentance.'⁴

Eight years later, Stoddard had apparently still not instituted 'open communion,' as demonstrated by a letter which Taylor wrote to him in February 1687/88, in response to a 'report that comes very hot to us upon some occasions afoot in your Church.'⁵ The report Taylor alludes to had indicated that Stoddard was about to 'cast off Relations, & to bring all above 14 yrs of age, that live morally, & having Catechistical knowledge of the Principalls of Religion, to the Lord's Supper. . . .' Taylor presents several arguments in an attempt to dissuade his colleague, further evidence that Stoddard had not yet taken action. And, unlike his later abrasive comments, Taylor ends the letter affectionately: 'These things I write in faithfulness, & as a friend. I entreat you not to be offended.'

Stoddard was apparently not offended. Four months later, in June, he wrote back to Taylor, 'I did & do accept your letter a Fruite of your Zeale for the Cause of God, & love to me.' Without responding directly to Taylor's arguments, Stoddard reaffirms his position, and his belief that he is upholding the will of God in the matter, explaining that 'our

⁴*An Appeal to the Learned. Being a Vindication of the Right of Visible Saints to the Lords Supper . . . Against the Exceptions of Mr. Increase Mather* (Boston: B. Green, 1709), pp. 93-94.

⁵Cf. Taylor's 'Commonplace Book' at the Massachusetts Historical Society, pp. 61-63. The letter, and Stoddard's response, also appears in Norman S. Grabo, 'The Poet to the Pope: Edward Taylor to Solomon Stoddard,' *American Literature* 32 (May 1960):197-201. We cite from our own transcriptions.

neglect' of attendance at the Lord's Supper 'is the occasion of the greate prophaness & corruption that hath over spread the land.' Reemphasizing the sincerity of his views, Stoddard writes that 'if I cannot carry it on in a way of Peace & according to a Rule, I am willing to submitt to the will of God: but I shall look upon it as a frown on the Lord.' In the meantime, Stoddard does not intend to ignore Taylor. Though he does not at this time consider it convenient 'to undertake to write a particular answer to all you say,' he assures Taylor that they will most likely see each other in the near future and can then discuss the matter. There is no record of the proposed meeting taking place, but Stoddard did provide Taylor a complete statement of his views, a revised version of the 'Observations Respecting the Lord's Supper,' the manuscript which he had given Increase Mather ten years earlier, and which Mather had recorded in the unpublished 'Confutation.' When Taylor received this document, which he calls the 'Arguments for the Proposition,' he transcribed it into his 'Extracts' volume, and began a systematic refutation of each Stoddardean argument.

The significance of Stoddard's 'Arguments' is twofold. On the one hand, it is the only complete manuscript presentation of the position Stoddard maintained at the 1679 synod. Taylor's version of the nine arguments corresponds almost exactly to those given by Mather in his 'Confutation.'⁶ And, barring major revisions by Stoddard (which does not seem likely from a comparison of the two sets of arguments), it is probable that Taylor's later version represents Stoddard's views more accurately. Taylor's manuscript copy is apparently complete, providing the full arguments, with all the subhead-

⁶The major difference is that in Mather's copy the phrase 'without an examination concerning a work of grace'—or a close variant—appears in each of the nine arguments. In Taylor's copy the phrase does not appear at all. Stoddard's emphasis is more positive here, as he wishes to extend the Lord's Supper to those who 'have knowledge to examine themselves & discern the Lord's Body.' It is possible that Mather added the 'examination' phrase to Stoddard's arguments to point up the essence of what he found objectionable.

ings. More importantly, however, the 'Arguments' makes it possible to date with more accuracy Stoddard's change from a proponent of unregenerate communion to an advocate of the sacrament's alleged converting property. This is an important shift because it marks Stoddard's first major deviation from New England orthodoxy. It has been assumed that Stoddard's open advocacy of the converting nature of the Lord's Supper began at some point following the change in 1677 in his method of keeping church records, the entire decade of the 1680s lying fallow as Stoddard waited for an opportune moment to begin publicly defending the idea. Taylor's copy of the 'Arguments' demonstrates that as late as 1688, Stoddard had not as yet adopted the more extreme position.

The evidence for dating the 'Arguments' is based in part upon Mather's only direct citation of Stoddard's text in the 'Confutation.' Stoddard had argued that the stipulation of a public relation was a recent phenomenon, and had not been required by New England's founders. In his refutation, Mather states that 'there is one expression I cannot but sett a remark upon. The words are these. *It will hardly be made to appear that one divine from the Apostles dayes till within these forty years did ever plead for relations in order to church communion.*'⁷ In Taylor's version, the italicized portion reads: 'I thinke I may say, that it will hardly be made appeare that one divine, from the Apostle's dayes till within these fifty years, did ever [plead] for Relations in order to Church-communion . . .' (p. 13). The alteration of 'forty years' to 'fifty years' indicates that approximately ten years have passed since the composition of the original document (1679-80), dating Taylor's copy in 1689-90, and certainly no earlier than the letters exchanged between Taylor and Stoddard in 1687-88. As of 1689, Stoddard was still primarily concerned with liberalizing the half-way procedures.

⁷Mather, 'Confutation,' p. 58.

Further, on October 5, 1690, in a sermon preached on Galatians 3:1, Stoddard defines the Lord's Supper as a converting ordinance, abandoning the views he had expressed in the 'Arguments.' This sermon is significant not only as a measure of Stoddard's 'innovations,' but because it establishes a *terminus a quo* for his 'Arguments for the Proposition.' In the 'Animadversions,' which is Taylor's response to Stoddard's nine arguments, Taylor refers specifically to the Galatians sermon.⁸ Enough time had elapsed after receiving Stoddard's manuscript to allow Taylor to begin his response (and probably to complete a large part of it), before he received the Galatians sermon, clearly indicating that Stoddard's 'Arguments' manuscript precedes the 1690 sermon. Had Taylor obtained a copy of the sermon first, it is unlikely that he would have been concerned to refute a position Stoddard had already substantially modified. It is more likely, given Taylor's methodical nature, that after receiving the sermon he decided to complete his 'Animadversions,' and then to confront the 'converting ordinance' issue separately. Other than identifying the inconsistency between Argument 6 and the sermon, Taylor makes no reference either to the Galatians sermon or to the converting nature of the Lord's Supper anywhere else in the 'Animadversions.' He would have much to say thereafter, devoting the eight *Treatise* sermons (1693-94) to rebutting Stoddard's latest position. The most likely date, then, for Taylor's copy of the 'Arguments' is sometime after Stoddard's letter of June 1688, and before October 1690, the date of the Galatians sermon.

Stoddard's view had changed rather suddenly. Taylor would later describe the events at Northampton during this period in an introduction to six anti-Stoddard syllogisms (c. 1690-91) in his 'Commonplace Book':

⁸Taylor identifies an inconsistency between Stoddard's position in the 'Arguments for the Proposition' and the Galatians sermon. In Argument 6, Stoddard had maintained that baptism does not beget faith; in the sermon, he acknowledges that this sacrament, like the Lord's Supper, is a converting ordinance.

Mr. Stoddard having preached up from Gal. 3.1 that the Lord's Supper was a Converting Ordinance . . . & urged till on an occasion of the ruling elder's absence by reason of Sickness, & many if not almost all the Ancient members of the Church were dead then he calls his Church to New Covenanting & among other Articles presented gains a major part to this Article to bring all to the Lord's Supper that had a knowledge of Principle[s] of Religion, & not scandalous by open Sinfull living. This done in the Winter of 1690. (p. 65)

The implementation of the practice of unregenerate communion might not have been much of a surprise; the rationale offered must have been. To this point, one could only suspect that Stoddard's thoughts were tending in that direction, as Mather had suggested in the 'Confutation': 'Inasmuch as my brother amongst all his qualifications fitting to partake at the Lords Supper, saith not a word about regeneration, one would think that he looketh upon the *sacrament* as a *converting ordinance*' (p. 56). But Stoddard had offered no indication that this was in fact where his ideas would lead.

The dating of the 'Arguments for the Proposition' demonstrates that Stoddard did not propose radical modifications of Puritan doctrine until the preaching of the Galatians sermon in October 1690. The requirements for admission to the sacrament promoted before this at Northampton were not technically unorthodox. He had seen to that by having the 'Relation' of Proposition 5 replaced by a 'Profession of Faith and Repentance' at the 1679 synod. Both the 'Arguments,' which stipulates such a profession, and the 1688 letter to Taylor demonstrate that in the late 1680s Stoddard was still attempting to convince his ministerial colleagues that the half-way compromise had not solved the problem of declining church membership. It is not until 1690 that Stoddard gave up on them. Because of Taylor's copy of the 'Arguments for the Proposition,' the very document called for by Emerson and Lowance, we can both date with more accuracy the evolution

of Stoddard's views, and establish a clearer picture of the position which he advocated at the Reforming Synod.

A Note on the Text

The manuscript of Taylor's transcription of Stoddard's 'Arguments for the Proposition' is described in *The Prince Library: A Catalogue of the Collection . . . Now Deposited in the Public Library of the City of Boston* (Boston, 1870), p. 159, item 9. We are indebted to the Trustees of the Boston Public Library, the Deacons of the Old South Church, and James Lawton, curator of manuscripts at the public library, for permission to publish this selection.

Certain characteristics of this manuscript are not usual in Taylor's script; we have, therefore, assumed that this transcription of Stoddard's views is relatively complete and accurate. With the following exceptions, all modifications of the text are enclosed in brackets: we have regularized the method of citing scriptural passages, the abbreviations for *Chapter*, *page*, *Mister*, *Doctor*, *Argument*, *Question*, *Answer*, and the paragraph indentations. We have also spelled out the *y* contractions (*ye* for *the*, *yer* for *their*, *y^t* for *that*, *y^m* for *them*, *y^y* for *they*, *y^r* for *your*) and such abbreviations as *Chcb*, *sd*, *bec*, *w^{ch}*, *wth* (for *Church*, *said*, *because*, *which*, *with*). To indicate words which are illegible, and all lacunae, we have used three asterisks. (In all but a few cases, the asterisks indicate portions of the manuscript which have disintegrated, not words or phrases which cannot be deciphered.) We have also italicized the Latin terms and citations, as well as the titles of books referred to. Special problems are discussed in the appropriate footnotes. Finally, page breaks in the manuscript are indicated by the convention [1/2], [2/3], and so on.

SOLOMON STODDARD'S
'ARGUMENTS FOR THE PROPOSITION'

Mr. Solomans Stoddard, Pastor to the Church of Christ at Northampton, (Son-in-Law to the foresaid Reverend Mr. Wareham by marrying the Widdow of Mr. Eliazar Mather, Mr. Warehams Daughter) being Contrarily opinionated, touching Admission into a Church State, hath Composed his thoughts in this matter in Arguing for this Proposition following as he resolves it thus.¹

All Such as do make a Solemn Profession of Faith, & Repentance, & are of Godly Conversation, having Knowledge to Examine themselves, & discern the Lords Body, are to be admitted to the Lords Supper.

Qu: What is ment by a Profession of Faith, & Repentance?

An: 1. Not an Affirmation that they have Saving Faith & Repentance. For then none were to be admitted but those that have the Faith of Assurance.

2. But an Assent unto, & Acknowledgement of the Doctrine of Faith & Repentance (as the onely Doctrine according to which they hope for Salvation) together with a Promise of Obedience to all the Commandments of God.

Qu: What is ment by a godly Conversation?

Ans: That whereby a person walks in all the Command-

¹Taylor's transcription of this Stoddard manuscript begins on the verso (the recto is blank) following Taylor's notes on a discussion of 'ecclesiasticall Matters' by the Rev. John Wareham of Windsor (see item 8, *Prince Catalogue*). The manuscript is not paginated; we have provided pagination for our citations.

The handwriting of this manuscript is less cramped and more open than the transcription of the Galatians sermon; this copy was probably transcribed in the late 1680s. The leaves have badly disintegrated near the spine, rendering several words and passages illegible.

ments of God, not living in the Practice of any known Sin, or Omision of any Duty.

Qu: What is that Knowledge to examine themselves & discern the Lords Body?

Ans: 1. Knowledge to examine a mans Selfe, is knowledge of those things that he ought to examine himselfe about, viz, Faith, Repentance, Love, New Obedience. What the nature of them is: & Competently to distinguish False Grace, from true.

2. Knowledge to Discern the Lords Body is a knowledge of the Nature, Necessity, & Use of the Lords Supper. Dctr. Ames, *de consi lib.* fol. 28, Thes. 7.²

Argu: 1. They that are Visible Saints, & walke as Such are to be admitted to the Lords Supper; if they have knowledge to examine themselves, & discern the Lords Body.

But the Persons thus qualified are visible Saints, and have knowledge to examine themselves & discern the Lords Body. Ergo.

The Major appears. 1. Because those that are visible Saints, walke as Such, & have this knowledge, are visibly fit to receive the Lords Sup-^[1/2]per with profit. & upon what pretence can we deny this ordinance to those that God hath fitted to make a right use of it? & made capable to receive that benefit which the Ordinance was appointed for? Is it not injurious to deny the Ordinance to those that God hath promised a blessing unto, in the use of it? May we not be said to hinder them of Spirituall Comfort? & the increase of Grace When we deny them those means that God hath appointed thereunto?

²Stoddard here refers to William Ames, *Conscience with the Power and Cases thereof* (London: Edward Griffin, 1643), Bk. iv, Chap. 28, Thesis 7. In Question 3, Ames has asked: '*What kind of Preparation is required to the holy use of the Supper?*' Stoddard paraphrases the answer of Thesis 7.2: 'This discerning stands in a right understanding and judgement concerning the nature, use, and necessitie of the Sacrament' (p. 84).

do we not obstruct their growth? When we deny Childrens bread unto them? how can we Censure them for their Falls, when we deny them that which is a means of Preservation from Falls? And I may well Suppose that none can deny visible Saints having such knowledge, to be visibly fit to receive the Lords Supper with profit. Nay, Saints that have this knowledge are really fitt. Therefore Visible Saints that have this knowledge are visibly fit. What more can be required of any man? Are not those fit that have Faith to feed on Christ, & knowledge to understand Christ discerning of himselfe as a Crucified Saviour, in that Ordinance? They are fit to improve that Ordinance for the strengthening of Faith & the Drawing forth of Repentance, Love, & New Obedience, are surely fit to partake of it. Fitness to partake of the Lords Table doth not depend upon the growth of Grace the Being of Grace with a Competency of knowledge do sufficiently intitle thereto. The Apostle requires to receive him that is weak in the Faith, Rom. 14. We finde the disciples immediatly before their partaking in that Ordinance, under Doubts, Matt. 26.22.

2. The Major also thus appears: because those that are visible Saints, & have knowledge to examine themselves, & discern the Lords body are visibly such, as God will have Communion with at the Lords Table in that Ordinance. If God will have Communion with them therein, we have no Cause to be difficult in having Communion with them. We ought to own them by having Fellowship with them in that Ordinance, if God will own them therein. But they are visibly such as God will have Communion with being visibly espoused to Christ, II Cor. 11.2. Sons, & Daughters of God, II Cor. 6.18, The Body of Christ, I Cor. 12.27, the Temples of the Holy Ghost, I Cor. 3.16,17. They are visibly such as have union with God, & will have Communion with God in that Ordinance by acts of Faith, Love, Repentance, etc., & Such God will have Communion with.

The Minor Proposition is both own'd & proved in the late

Synod booke Compiled in the yeare 1662, pag. 21,³ & in a Book intituled a *Discourse of the Subject of Baptism* by Mr. Increase Mather, p. 8, 11.⁴ & may further appeare, [2/3]

1. Because they have the proper Scripture Character of Saints. We are to judge of mens Saintship by such Characters as the Scriptures hath laid down for us to judge by. The workings of the heart are Secret. We ought to judge by such Signs as are warranted by the Word of God. The Scripture gives us these two Signs to judge men by:

1. Profession. Its one Scripture Sign, that men believe with their heart when they make Confession with their Mouth, Rom. 10.10. Its a sign that Christ will own men in the day of judgment if they own him here, Acts 20.32. Its made a Sign of Saintship when men call on the Name of Jesus Christ, I Cor. 1.2.

2. Holy Conversation. This proves the reality of their Faith to a judgment of Charity. Good works are made in Scripture the Evidence of Faith: they are set as a marke whereby we are to distinguish true Professions from false, Jas. 2.14, *ad finem*, Matt. 7.15.20, II Tim. 2.19.

2. Such Persons are the visible heirs of Salvation. Salvation is peculiar unto Saints, Heb. 12.14, Matt. 7.22. & when persons are thus qualified we ought to looke on them as

³Stoddard is apparently referring to Argument 4 in Proposition 5: 'They that are regularly in the Church (as the Parents in question be) are *visible Saints* in the account of Scripture (which is the account of truth:) for the Church is, in Scripture-account, a company of Saints. . . . Being in covenant and baptized, they have Faith and Repentance *indefinitely given* to them in the Promise, and sealed up in Baptism, *Deut.* 30: 6. which continues valid, and so a valid testimony for them, while they do not reject it' (see Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* [Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1960], p. 380). The synod statement, however, immediately adds: 'Yet it doth not necessarily follow, that these persons are immediately fit for the Lords Supper. . . .

⁴Stoddard here refers to Argument 2, Chap. III, of *A Discourse Concerning the Subject of Baptism* (Cambridge: Samuel Green, 1675): ' . . . the persons in question are visible Believers, which is demonstrated, 1. In that they are not Infidels, 2dly. Else there is no hope of Salvation either of them or theirs. 3. They are partakers of those gifts of the Spirit which are peculiar to Christians. 4. The Scripture calls persons so qualified . . . believers, which is shewed in sundry particulars. 5. The persons in Question are . . . Disciples or Christians, and therefore are believers, and baptizable' (pp. 8-9).

visible Heirs of Salvation. We have good ground of hope concerning any of our Relations that * * * [li]ved an holy life, & lived in the Profession of the true Faith. What do we know more than Profession, & Conversation concerning hund[reds] of persons that we looke upon as gon to heaven? Multitudes of emin[ent] men that have died in other parts of the World, never gave any other evidence of their Salvation.

3. If such be not visible Saints, then having been in the church from their Infancy, they ought to be ejected. The Church is a Society of saints, Church Communion with the Communion of saints. We must own such persons for Saints: or Cast them out of the church. Churches do Consist of Saints * * * 1.2, Col. 1.2, Phil. 1.2. Its an horrible corruption for the church to [admit] such as are not visible Saints. But what an unscripturall thing. [It is] unheard of in the World to Cast out men of holy Profession, & conversation for want of Saintship?

4. Because the Church expects true Repentance from those persons, & Members in case of Falls. Nothing less will do to take off Church Censures because the end of Censures is the Saving of the Soule, I Cor. 5.5, because the church must not forgive, but where they judged that God forgives. Because nothing less than true Repentance to Charity, removes the Scandall, & keeps the Church pure. Now if nothing less than true Repentance, will Serve the term to Continue then in the state wherein they were in the Church, that shews that the Church looks on such persons as Saints when by Scandalous living they appeare not to be Saints, the Church may not Continue in Fellowship with them. & till they shew true Repentance they are not to be received again which shews that their standing in the Church is on the account of their vi-³/₄sible Saintship.

Arg: 2. Such Qualifications as were sufficient in adult persons in order to Communion in all ordinances in

the Jewish Church, are sufficient with the addition of knowledge to examine themselves, & discern the Lords Body, in order to such Communion in the Gospell Church:

But these Qualifications of Profession, & godly Conversation were sufficient in adult persons in order to Communion in all ordinances in the Jewish Church. Ergo.

1. The Major appears partly from hence that the Jewish Church did Consist of visible Saints, as well as the Gospell Churches. Gods visible people in all ages have been distinguished from the visible Servants of Satan, & Subjects of his kingdom. Ordinances were not to be polluted under the old Testament, no more than under the New. God doth oftimes acknowledge the Jewish Church to be an holy people, Deut. 7.6, & 14.7. & those that were wicked amongst them were violators of their Holy Covenant, Dan. 11.32. The Profession of the Jewish Church, was of the Hope of eternall Life, & of Faithfull Serving God, Acts 26.6,7, etc.: When persons did appeare unholy they were to be cast out of that Church, as was Ishmael, Gen. 21.9,10. & tho' Scandalous persons did often continue in that Church: that argues not that the Church was lawfully Constituted of such; but onely the sinfull neglect of Church Discipline. Cottons *Holiness of Church-membership*, p. 21.⁵

2. The Major will further be cleare, if we Consider that the Sacraments of the old Testament were Seals of the same Spiritual Grace, as the Sacraments of the New. Baptism answers to Circumcision, Col. 2.11.12: the Manna, & the Water that Came out of the Rock Signified Christ, I Cor.

⁵Stoddard is paraphrasing John Cotton's statements in *Of the Holinesse of Church-Members* (London: F. N. for Hannah Allen, 1650): 'Whatsoever . . . is alledgd from the pattern of the Church of Israel, for the lawfull constitution of a Church, where many notorious scandalous persons are found, it onely argueth the sinfull neglect of Church-discipline' (p. 21).

10.3,4. The Paschall Lamb was a type of Christ, I Cor. 5.7,8. As the Passover had a respect to the Deliverance from Egypt, So to the Deliverance by Christ.

3. It further appears, because there are no new Qualifications added in the time of the New Testament but onely examining of themselves & discerning the Lords body. Its true, there is some alteration now in the Profession of Faith, viz, whereas they were to acknowledge this Christ to come as the Seed of David. So in those dayes they were to acknowledge Christ already Come, & that Jesus of Nazareth was he. Upon which Profession Members of the Jewish Church were received Members of the Gospell Church. So the Euneuch, Acts 8.37.

Obj: The Church of the Jews was nationall: the Churches in the times of the Gospell are Congregationall.

1. Ans: The Church of the Jews was not calld nationall because all of that nation were of that Church: For Wicked, & Scandalous Jews were not by Constitution of that Church: but were by the Ordinance of God to be cut off. But partly because it was Confined to that Nation: So that they onely, together with some Proselytes that joyned with them were the Church of God. Whereas now in the dayes of the gospell there are Churches in many other nations. Partly because that nation was one Church under the government of one nationall officer, the High Priest: & had one Nationall place of Worship, viz, Jerusalem. [4/5]

2. The Churches now are called Congregationall, because e'ry distinct Congregation of saints in Covenant is a distinct Church, having power within themselves to dispense all the Ordinances of Christ: So that if the Whole English Nation were in Church fellowship it would not be a nationall Church: but Severall Congregationall Churches.

The Minor Proposition appears thus.

1. Because there was nothing more than Profession, & Holy

Conversation required of the adult Children of the Jews, in order to their Continuing in Church-Priviledges, Profession was required of them: they were to profess their Faith, & Obedience, Deut. 26.5,15, & an Holy Conversation, Deut. 14.2, & nothing more. They did profess the Doctrine taught by Moses, I Cor. 2 compar'd Acts 8.16.

2. Because there was nothing more required of Proselytes. When persons tendred themselves to become Proselytes, there was care taken to be satisfied in their Profession, & Conversation, & so they were admitted, Cotton his *Holiness of Church-Memb*: p. 22.⁶ They that were such as visibly served God & loved his Ordinances were regularly accepted to be members of that Church, tho' Strangers by birth, Isa. 56.6,7.

Argu: 3. Those that are Qualified for Church membership are Qualified for Full Communion, if they have knowledge to examine themselves, & discern the Lords body.

But the Persons in Question are qualified for Church-Membership, & have this knowledge. Ergo.

The Major appeares thus, because those that are Saints are qualified for Full Communion, if they have this knowledge. & none are qualified for Church-Membership but saints, Eph. 1, Phil. 1.1. There are none Regularly in the Church but Saints. There are two sorts of Saints in the Church.

1. Infants, & they are reputed Saints by vertue of Gods Covenant when he promiseth to be the God of his people, & of their Seed.

2. Adult persons; who are reputed Saints by vertue of their personall profession. So that there are none whether Infants,

⁶Cotton argues that, in comparison to those admitted to the New England churches, '... the like or greater care was had of the profession and conversation of such proselytes, as were admitted into the Church of Israel . . .' (p. 22).

or Adults qualified for Church-Membership, but onely saints.

The Minor also, that the Persons in question are qualified for Church Membership, appears at large in the Synod Book written 1662 & * * * hath these Expressions, viz, He will have an hard taske, who shall undertake, out of Scripture, or orthodox Divines, to Show the persons qualified, as in the 5th Proposition of the Synod Booke may be denied Church-membership, or Baptism upon their desire thereof, adding that its not easy to believe that the Multitude baptized by John, & Christ, & the thousands after Christs Ascension, baptized; So those baptized by Phillip in Samaria, that they did excell the persons described in the Synods Fift Proposition, or had more to render than visible Believers, upon a just account than those have. *Defence of the Synods Proposition*, Pag. 39.40.⁷ But this Proposition may be further proved because [5/6]

The Profession of that which makes men members in the Mystical Church fits them for membership in the visible Churches: Its passt for a Maxim among Divines, Nortons *Answer to Apollonius*.⁸

If the reality of Faith makes a man a Member of Christs Mystical Body: then a Profession thereof, not Scandalized by an unholy Conversation makes him visibly one of the Body of Christ, & so fit to joyn to an instituted Church. How can we deny Membership to those who are to Charity members of Christs Mystical Body. Those who seem to Charity to be of Christs Invisible Church, are indeed of the visible.

Arg: 4. Those who do Sincerely make that Profession which the Church is built upon, are to be admitted

⁷Stoddard is here paraphrasing the statements of Richard Mather in *A Defence of the Answer and Arguments of the Synod* (Cambridge, Mass.: S. Green, 1664), pp. 39-40.

⁸The reference is to John Norton, *Responsio ad . . . Apollonio* (London, 1648). Norton begins by establishing the necessary qualifications for membership in the church by insisting, in this section and elsewhere, that '*professione nominis Christi, & in externa conversatione puritatis donis absque scandalo fit ornatus*' (pp. 2-3) are necessary for admission to church fellowship.

to the Lords Supper, if they have knowledg to examine themselves, & discern the Lords Body.

But the Persons in Question do Sincerely make that Profession that the Church is built upon. Etc.

The Major is evidentt because such are built upon the right Foundation, & have knowledge for the Lords Supper. That Profession that is sufficient for the Church, is sufficient for the Particular Members of the Church, that Profession which makes a Church a true Church, is sufficient to make a particular Person meet for membership in that Church, if it be sincerely made. Higher qualifications can't be required in a particular person that desires Fellowship with the Church, than Christ requires in the Church. That Profession that the Church is built upon is the Proper Qualification of each Church Member.

The Minor appears. 1. If we Consider what Profession the Church is built upon, which is Set down, Matt. 16.16,17,18. The Profession that Peter made is that which the Church is built upon. This is generally agreed on. Mister Davenport said, Christ Believed on is the Foundation, or Rock of the Catholick, invisible Church. But Christ Believed on, & Professt is the Rock on which a Particular Church is built. In this Exposition Sundry of Ancient Writers, as the Orthodox Modern generally Consent, *Against Paget*, p. 9.10.⁹ Mr. Cotton saith, Christ makes his Confession revealed to him by the Father, believed on, & Professed by himsele to be the Rock on which his Church is builded. *Holin: of Church-Mem:* p. 57. Mr. Allin, & Mr. Shephard, say, the Visible Church is build upon this Rock, viz, the Profession of the Faith of Christ, *Def: of*

⁹This reference is to John Davenport's *The Power of Congregational Churches Asserted and Vindicated—In Answer to a Treatise of Mr. J. Paget Intituled the Defence of Church-Government exercised in Classes and Synod* (London: Richard Chiswell, 1672); Stoddard is paraphrasing, as he notes, the material on pp. 9–10.

the 9 Positions, p. 194.¹⁰ & the sincere of Profession of Faith is that whereby we distinguish True, & Pure Churches from those that are False, & Impure. Such as make not this Profession we count fals Churches: Such as do it, but not with that uprightness, inasmuch as they tolerate ignorant, & Scandalous Persons in their Communion we account impure. But such as make this Profession, & tolerate no manifest Hypocrites we account both True, & Pure Churches of Christ. [6/7]

2. The Persons in question make this Profession Sincerely. Such a Profession, as is solemn, & upon due Deliberation made in the presence of God, & his people, & accompanied with a Godly Conversation, is to Charity Sincere. There is so much evidence of sincerity as a Church may rest satisfied in. There is ground to Charitable Discretion to judge it Sincere. It hath a reall sincerity in it, not being discernibly Hypocritical.

Arg: 5. Such Persons as were received to Full-Communion by the Apostles are to be received by us to Full-Communion.

But Persons thus Qualified were received etc.

Ergo.

The Major is without Question. For the Primitive Church

¹⁰Stoddard's reference to Cotton's *Of the Holinesse of Church-Members* is somewhat misleading; Cotton's complete statement reads:

If the Lord Jesus make the Profession of the Faith of his Name (and such a Profession, as Flesh and Blood hath not revealed to a man, but his Heavenly Father) to be the Rock, or Foundation upon which his visible Church is built, then we shal build a Church without a Foundation, by receiving such Members into the Church as doe not hold forth such a Profession, but either through Ignorance make no Profession at all, or such a verball Profession as savoureth not of any gracious work of the Father upon their hearts. (p. 57)

The statement cited from John Allin and Thomas Shepherd, *A Defence of the Answer made unto the Nine Questions or Positions* (London: R. Cotes, 1648), appears in the discussion of whether a public 'profession' should be judged by the church. Allin and Shepherd argue that the officers are first to examine privately and then present the matter to the full body (pp. 194-95).

was the Patterne of other Churches in succeeding ages. The Apostles were guided by an extraordinary Spirit in their Administrations. And the Lord requires no higher Qualifications in Church-members now, than he did in Church-Members then.

The Minor will also appeare, if we Consider

1. That the Apostles did receive Such members of the Jewish Church, as were not Scandalous, upon their Profession of Faith in Christ: where there was nothing evident to the Contrary, they accepted them into the Gospell Church if they Professt Jesus of Nazareth. This appeares in the Examining of the Euneuch, Acts 8.37,38. He was a Proselyte, who were Commonly called worshippers of God, v. 27. & upon the Profession of his Faith in Christ he was forthwith baptized. So also in Lydia, who was a Proselyte. Her heart being open'd that she attended unto Paul (Whereby is held forth her visible receiving of his doctrine,) she was baptized, Acts 16.14,15.

2. That the Apostles did receive such Members of the Jewish Church, as were scandalous, upon their Repentance of their Scandalous Offenses, & Profession of their Faith. Thus those that were guilty of Persecuting & Crucifying Christ, were received by them upon their Repentance, & Profession of Faith, Acts 2. That these were guilty of Scandall appears v. 36, they had Crucified Christ. They had many of them an hand in it. That they were received into the Gospell Church, appears, v. 41, they were baptized. That this was upon their Repentance & Profession of Faith appears v. 37, & 41, which Profession they are said to continue Steadfast in, v. 42. They continued steadfast in the Apostle's Doctrine.

3. That the Apostles did receive Gentiles into the Church, if they did profess the Faith, & not Scandalize that Profession. Those that received their Doctrines were the Matter of those Churches which they Gathered: All that Were Disciples, that entered & attain'd the Doctrine of the Apostles were accepted

as Church-Members, Acts 14.21,22,23. The Disciples made the Church. And when a greate multitude are said to believe at the hearing of one Sermon, it can't be understood any other way than that by their manifesting their approving of, Consent to, & Rejoycing in what they heard, they appeared to be believers. It can't be understood that they did all really believe, or that they made the manifestation of Faith any other way than by assenting to what they heard. [7/8]

4. That all Adult persons, who were taken into the Church by the Apostles were admitted to the Lords Supper when Sufficiently instructed to examine themselves, & discern the Lords Body. There is not the least foundation in Scripture, for two sorts of adult members, one that might, an other that might not come to the Lords Supper; unless they were under offense, or wanted sufficient knowledge for that Ordinance.

Obj: A Profession with good Conversation might Serve the turn in the Apostles times, because men ran a greate hazard when they professt Christ but now its a way of Credit, & Profit.

Ans: 1. By this arguing it will follow that Relations are not any ordinance of God: but a way of Prudence for such times wherein there is no danger of Persecution. If an Ordinance, then it must be attended in all ages, & times of the Churches; unless it may appeare to be appointed to Supply the want of persecuting times, by discovering of Hypocrites.

2. Its true, that its more easy for Hypocrites to get into the Church at one time than at another: & part of the Apostles time were so. There was a Considerable time of peace, that the Churches did enjoy, Acts 9.31. So in Claudius his reign; & the Apostles foretold, that God would send a tryall upon them to discover False Hearts by suffering Heresies to be broached, I Cor. 11.19.

3. It is not our Concernment to keep all Hypocrites out of the Church. God often makes them by their Guifts, Estates,

Countenancing of Saints, to be of benefit to his Church. We are onely Concern'd to keep visible Hypocrites out of the Church. Not such as are visible Saints.

4. A Profession, & Holy Conversation may be as Evidentiall in some other times, as times of Persecution. They are far from being infallible * * * it an other time, as in times when Errors & false Opinions that are * * *, have been broached. Such a tryall sometimes hath discovered many Hypocrites, as a dreadfull Persecution: as the Arrian Heresie. * * * of greate Temptation to holy Conversation. The thorny ground * * * endured Persecutions: but the Deceitfulness of riches & lusts of * * * things discovered them, Luke 8.14.

Argu: 6. Such as are fit to be baptized, are fit likewise for the Lords Supper, if they have knowledge to Examine themselves, & discern the Lord[s] Body. But these Persons are fit to be Baptized, etc.: Ergo.

The Major appears. 1. Because none are to be baptized but those that are [believers.] So the Children of the Faithfull are Called I Cor. 7.14. & those Adult persons which were Baptized in the Primitive times are Sometimes called Believers, Acts 19.4,5. John required that they should believe on him that should come after him. The Corinthians, when they heard Paul preach, believed, & were Baptized, Acts 18.8. Paul judg'd Lydia faithfull, & so baptized her, Acts 16.15. Baptism is Confined to visible Saints.

2. Because Baptism is a Sacrament for the strengthening, & Confirming of a Faith, as well as the Lords Supper. Baptism is a Seale of Initiation: but its to those that are already initiated: its a Confirmation of a Covenant already [8/9] made, the Proper end of it, is not to beget Faith; but to draw forth Faith already wrought in the Heart. And its profaneness for such to be baptized as are visible unbelievers. Baptism doth

suppose Holiness; & the very end of it is to Strengthen Faith, Rom. 4.11.

3. Those that were qualified for Circumcision, were qualified for the Passover: i.e., in any orderly way, being first Circumcised. So such as are qualified for Baptism, & have sufficient knowledge, are qualified for the Lords Supper, in an orderly way, being first Baptized, Ex. 12.48.

The Minor also, that the Persons in question ought to be baptized is evident.

1. Because They are equally qualified with such as have been baptized in Infancy, & Continue regular, & inoffensive members of the Church. And if any that live among us of our own nation, or any other, are as well qualified, as our own Adult Children, there is no reason, but they should enjoy Equall Priviledges with them, both for themselves, & theirs. The Priviledges of our Adult Children, depent not on their being in Covenant from their Infancy: But upon their personall qualifications. If they are not Personally qualified for Covenant Priviledges, they ought to be cast out of Covenant. If not personally Qualified, then visible unbelievers. How then can the Church have Communion with them? What part hast he that believes with an Infidell, II Cor. 6. When Children come to be Adults they are reputed to be Believers, or Unbelievers: not according to the Stock they come from, but according to what they Profess, & the nature of their Carriage. Personall Qualifications indeed give Infants the right to Church Priviledges But Personall Qualifications manifest by mens actions give Adult Persons their right.

2. Because such Persons do bring forth fruits of Faith; they can't be denied to be visible Believers who bring forth the fruits of Faith, Matt. 7.15. Its * * * fallible, but hopefull; & that is all we can expect. Tho' such Conversation & Profession may be where there is no Grace, yet its not to be despised. Such persons do openly avouch God to be their God: declare their * * * another World to be onely in the Media-

tions of the Lord Jesus. Cleave to the * * * Churches of Christ: Promote his Ordinances & not withstanding the great temptations that abound, walke according to Rule in all the Relations they stand in as Children, Husbands, Wives, etc. Suppose the Body of a Countrey should consist of Such persons, who can with any shaddow of reason deny such people to be the Visible people of God?

Argu: 7. Such as have the same Scripture Qualifications with those that we admit to the Lords Supper, are to be admitted.
But the Persons in Question have the same. etc.
Ergo.

The Major appeares because those we do admit have all those Scripture Qualifications, that members in Full Communion ought to have & we ought not to require any other qualifications but what the Scripture directs us because nothing is to be introduced into the Church for triall of members but what is [9/10] instituted. We must not be stricter than the Rule: we must own the Sovergnity of Christ in neither adding to, nor taking from his Institution. We have no Promise of a Blessing in any such way of triall as is not appointed, Matt. 28.20. That which is not of Faith is Sin, Rom. 14.23.

The Minor also appeares because those persons have these three qualifications of Holy Profession, I Cor. 1.2, Holy Conversation, Jas. 2.18, & knowledge to examine themselves, & Discern the Lords Body.

Obj: The Scripture seems to require a Relation of the manner of Gods working Grace in the heart. One Scripture that holds it forth is I Pet. 3.15, be ready alwayes to give an answer to every man that asks you a Reason of the Hope that is in you. This seems to shew that men must not onely profess an Hope, but shew a Reason of it, that its Well-grounded.

Ans: 1. The Apostle speakes not of any account of the reason of their Hope in order to a Coming into the Church. Partly because he said, they must be ready to give to every man that asks them: & partly because he writes to those that were in Church-Fellowship already. And there is as much ground from this Scripture to put such to give an account of their experience, who have been in Church-Fellowship many years, as those that tender themselves.

2. By reason of their Hope here, we are to understand the ground of that Doctrin their Hope is built upon. The meaning of the place is, that they should be ready when brought before Authority to prove their Faith, & answer mens Calls; as if a man were brought before Authority for professing Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ, he should be ready to defend it from the Word of God. If for the Doctrine of the Resurrection: he should be able to defend it by Scripture if it should be objected to him, that naturally Bodies can't rise again: & he aver yet they shall by the Supernaturall Power of God. This is giving a reason of his Hope. This Precept seems to be in Substance the thing with that [I Cor.] 4.12. They should be establisht in the present Truth. That this is the reason of it appears. 1. The Apostle speakes of their Carriage under Persecutions, as is cleare from the verse preceding. If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are you: & so by the verse following. 2. Because the Word rendered Answer, is, Apology, or answering with a Defense. They must be ready to answer, as to defend the ground of their Hopes: that Doctrin that its built * * *. From the manner of Doing of it, viz, with Meekness, & Feare. Which is added they should carry respectively to Authority, tho' persecutors, & meekly * * * had temptations to the Contrary.

Obj: Another Scripture alledged is Rev. 2.2, Thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles.

Ans: Whether this triall was in answer to Church Fellow-

ship or not, is uncertain, more probably that it was onely out of their Care lest they should be * * * with false Doctrine. Somewhat before this time Corinthus broached his * * *, & soon after him the Nicolaitans. We have no cause to thinke that by searching for evidences of Seducers, they did finde them Liars: but rather by trying their * * *, & their Mission by the Word of God: as we try Quakers, Socinians, etc. Tho' they never offer to joyn with our Churches. Its the Duty of the Angells especially of the Churches to try Opinions, I John 4.3. [10/11]

Another is Acts 9.26,27. Paul sought to joyn to the Disciples, & they were affraid of him. But Barnabas declared to the Apostles how he had seen the Lord in the Way.

Ans: 1. Paul did not seeke to be one of the Church in Jerusalem but onely in a Transient way to have Communion with them.

2. What was declared was not to the Church but to the Apostles: & that not by Paul but by Barnabas.

3. Here was an Extraordinary occasion. Paul had been a Bloody Persecutor. & the Disciples thereupon under feares that he would betray them to their Enemies. And the Providence of God Extraordinary, & Miraculous in working a Change in him.

4. That which was declared by Barnabas was not the particular workings of his heart under the work of Conversion: but a generall account that in a miraculous way there was a Change wrought in him. As if one that was formerly very vitious in one of our towns, should after some years absence return, & offer to communicate with the Church: & they being jealous, one of the brethren should give an account, that God had met with him in such a place, & had wrought a greate Change in him. What is this to a Relation made by all that come into the Church, of the Particular manner of Gods Awakening, Humbling, & Bringing them to Close with

Christ. Tho' I may adde, * * * this Scrupulousness of the Disciples, of receiving one that offered himself, is related as Extraordinary, & an unusuall thing.

Another place is Ps. 66.16. I will declare what God hath done for my Soule.

Ans: 1. That this which David offers to declare was Gods wonderfull preservation of him; & Deliverance from Affliction, & Death, v. 11,12. God did * * * his Soule, that is for his Person. 2. If it be Supposed that it was his Spirituall Experience, It follows not, that it was the Work of Conversion that it would prove, Church members are to tell the Church their after experiences as well as their first, If it were the Worke of Conversion; yet * * * not in order to his Admission.

Argu: 8. If those thus Qualified do not deserve to be laid under censure, they are to be admitted to Full-Communion.

But they do not deserve to be laid under Censure.

The ground of the Consequence is because the Deniall of Full-Communion is a Censure. They are in effect Excommunicate Persons. The Denial of full-Communion indeed to some Church-Members is not a Censure: as to * * * & Ideots: because they have not knowledge to fit them for this Ordinance * * * otherwise to such Adult persons, who are Believers, but have not the opportunity to be sufficiently instructed for the Lords Supper: Who were in the Primitive times kept from the Lords Supper. But setting aside these two Cases Denying of the Lords Supper must be by way of Censure. That Church-Members who are not censurable, should be kept from Full-Communion till * * * years of age, is a Riddle, utterly unheard of in the Christian World. If * * * not fit for the Lords Supper, that unfittness is either thro' defect in their age, or of

Opportunity; & then ought to be born with all: or else thro' their gross defau[lt, and] then its not to be born with. The Deniall of persons thus qualified for the Lords Supper must be upon pretense of some greate Guilt. They are of age to [11/12] be fit, & have had Opportunities to be fit. If then they are not fit, they breake their Covenant with God. & upon some such account must be denied the Supper. Now when persons are denied the Supper because of guilt there is the substance of a Censure: tho' the Formality of it be wanting. It is an act of Church Justice to keep men from the Sacrament when they are offenders.

The Minor, that Such persons do not deserve to be laid under Censure, is asserted by the Synod Booke made 1662 p. 25,26: It saith persons are broken off, onely for notorious Sins, or incorrigible impenitency, or Unbelief. So p. 20.¹¹ And what should such persons be Censured for? Not for unbelieve: for they are visible Believers. Nor for Scandall in Conversation for they carry holily. Not for gross Ignorance: for they have knowledge. The persons have the same qualifications, as are required in most Churches of the World; & as the Scriptures require of any Churches.

Argu: 9. Those that are fit to be Confirmed Members of the Church, are fit for the Lords Supper.

But persons thus Qualified are fit to be Confirmed Members of the Church. Ergo.

The Major appears from the practice of the Primitive Churches, whose practice was to Confirm the Members of the Church: & so admit them to the Lords Supper.

Hence Mr. Cotton used this Word, Confirmation, for Admitting to the Lords Supper: as he Explains himselfe. *Hol:*

¹¹See Walker, *Creeeds and Platforms*, pp. 232-33 and 227 ff.

Church-Mem: p. 19.¹² It was their manner to confirm Members; & so admit them to the Lords Table. So Mr. Davenport * * * Tertullian saith, Such as had been baptized in their Infancy when * * * *Non nihil adolescere* were Catechized, & being found to be believers were Confirmed by imposition of hands; & admitted to the Lords Table.¹³ Against * * * is proved at large by Hammer upon Confirmation & its * * * its intended, at least included, in that laying on of hands spoken of Heb. 6.2. So Piscator, Pareus, Beza, & the Leyden Divines understand it. The Place (saith Calvin) doth abundantly shew that the Originall of this * * * did flow from the Apostles. & Cessander saith it was alwayes most * * * observed in the Church.¹⁴ This Rite was in after ages much abused especially by Papists, making it a Sacrament, using many superstitious Ceremonies in the Observation of it. But after the Light of the Gospel brake forth & * * * Errors were discovered, the Waldenses received the Doctrine, & Practice of Confirmation, as an Apostolicall Institution: & Calvin wished that it was ever * * * restored, when such persons as were confirmed Members were without mor adoe, declared to be Capable of

¹²Cotton's statement is:

That such as are born, and baptized members of the Church, are not orderly continued, and confirmed members of the Church, unlesse when they grow up to years, they do before the Lord and his people, professe their repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ, and subjection to him in his ordinances; and do not scandalize their profession with an unchristian conversation.

When I say they may not be confirmed, I mean they may not be admitted to the Seal of the Lords Supper, (which is a Sacrament of confirmation) and so are not to be admitted to all other rights of a Church-member, as the election of officers, admission of members, censure of offenders. (p. 19)

¹³Stoddard is apparently referring to John Davenport's discussion of the practice of the early church, citing Tertullian's comment on baptismal practice, in *Another Essay for Investigation of the Truth, in answer to two questions, concerning . . . The subject of baptism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1663), pp. 6 ff.

¹⁴The allusions to Piscator, Pareus, Beza, Cessander, and Calvin are references to citations from their works as collected in Matthew Poole, *Synopsis Criticorum*, 5 vols. (London: E. Flesher, 1669-76), '*Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Hebraeos*,' 4, cols. 1255-56.

the Lords Supper, as Corderius * * * Cited by Ham: p. 99.¹⁵

The Minor also, that the Persons thus Qualified are fit to be Confirm'd, is according to the judgment of the former Synod, An^o 1662. Who would have them own the covenant & be acknowledged by the Church. And its so cleare, because they do manifest Fair Faith & knowledge, Profession, & Conversation.¹⁶ Mr. Deering in his lectures on Hebrews saith, it was an use in the Church of God that Christians Children should be taught the Principals of Faith, which when they had well learnd, then in open Congregation they were openly to be received as partakers of Graces, & Sacraments of the Church.¹⁷ So the Leyden Divines say, Children were instructed in the Doctrine of Catechism before they were admitted to the Lords Supper & were required by the Church to give an account of their Faith. In syn. Dis. 47.¹⁸ [12/13]

Against this Position sundry things are objected. 1. This Opinion is New, Contrary to the Received Practice of the Churches.

Ans: The Contrary Opinion is New, & unheard of in the Churches till of late years as may appeare by abundant evidences. Scarpus putting that question, Who are by the Church to be admitted to the Supper? Answers, All baptized Adult persons professing the Gospell without Scandall,

¹⁵Stoddard seems to be referring here to Henry Hammond, *De Confirmatione, sive Benedictione, post Baptismum, solemnem, Per Impositionem Mannum* (Oxford: R. Roystow, 1661). We have been unable to locate any reference to Corderius, though the substance of what Stoddard paraphrases appears on pp. 134–35 in a Hammond citation from Cessander.

¹⁶Stoddard is apparently referring to the arguments in support of Proposition 5 (see Walker, pp. 328 ff.).

¹⁷In his paraphrase from Edward Deering, 'XXVII Lectures, or readings, upon part of the Epistle Written to the Hebrews,' *Workes* (London: E. Griffin, 1614), Stoddard omits a rather crucial stipulation. The full section reads, '. . . it was in the Church of God an use, that Christian children should bee taught the principles of faith, which when they had well learned, & could give a good accompt of their faith [italics added], then in the open congregation, with praier and laying on of hands on their heads, they were declared to be received as partakers of the graces and sacraments of the Church . . .' (*Cap. 6*, n.p.).

¹⁸We have been unable to identify this reference.

whether they be godly, or secret Hypocrites, because the Examination by the Pastor is onely Concerning the Externall Profession of Doctrine & Manners, *Cans. Theol.*: p. 667.¹⁹ Altingus saith, the Subjects Recipient of the Supper are all the Faithfull, or Christians Adult. *Explic. Catech.*: p. 323. & again they are to be excluded from Communion of the Lords Supper, who are Professed Infidells, or manifest sinners. p. 337.²⁰ Bucer in his *Censure of the English Common Prayer Bookes* saith, If a true Confession of Faith, & Profession of Obedience, such as should be required of Adult persons unto Baptism, be ment, such a Confession of Faith must be required as may be judged not to be born in the mouth, or gotten onely by Humane teaching: but also it must have those Signs in the life, & manners that it ought to be received of the Churches, as flowing from an heart truely believing the Gospell, & the Doctrine of the Holy Scripture.²¹ But it will not Countervaile the loss of time to bring Testimonies for that which is known to be the practice of most Churches in all ages. I thinke I may say, that it will hardly be made appeare that one Divine, from the Apostles dayes till within these fifty years, did ever plead for Relations in order to Church-Communion: or any Church till within that time * * * [re]quired them. As for those Worthy men that were Leaders of this people into the Wilderness, its evident that many of them did not lay an necessity of Relations. Mr. Cotton in his *Holiness of Church-Mem.*: layes down these Positions as the Foundation of his Dispute.

1. Such, & such onely are lawfully received as members

¹⁹We have been unable to identify this reference.

²⁰We have been unable to identify the specific edition to which Stoddard's page numbers refer; in '*Analysis Exegetica Catecheseos Palatinae*' of the *Operum* (Amsterdam, 1687), Jacob Alting's comments appear in his discussion of the sacraments, especially Question LXV, '*Quoniam igitur sola fides nos Christi atque omnium ejus beneficiorum participes facit: Unde profici haec fides*' (p. 39), and Question LXXV, '*Qua ratione in Caena Domini admoneris & confirmaris te unici illius sacrificii Christi in cruce oblatis, atque omnium ejus bonorum participem esse?*' (p. 44).

²¹Stoddard is here paraphrasing Bucer's comments in '*De Catechismo Confirmatorum*' in '*Censura Buceri super eodem libro sacrorum Anglia*,' found in *Scripta Anglicana* (Basil, 1578), pp. 485-86.

into the fellowship of the visible Church, who do before the Lord & his People, profess their Repentance [& faith] in Christ & Subjection to him in his Ordinances: & do not scandalize * * * with an unchristian Conversation.

2. That Such as are born, & baptized Members of the Church, are not * * * & Confirmed members of the Church, unless when they grow up * * * the Lord & his people profess their Repentance, & Faith in Christ Jesus. & subjection to him in his Ordinances; & do not Scandalize their Profession with an unchristian Conversation. Whence he infers three Consecratories.

1. That Grossly Ignorant Persons of the first Principalls of religion * * * to be received, or born in the Church, be Confirmed.

2. That Atheists, Hereticks, etc. are not to be received.

3. Persons notoriously scandalous for any gross Crime are not to be received.²²

Mr. Allen, & Mr. Shephard in the *Defence of the nine Positions* having * * * some reasons to proove that bare profession was not sufficient grounds to receive men into the Church. They inquire how Charity may know * * * of this Profession, & answer, So long as the Rule be attended, We [admit] every one to the Wisdom of Christ to make application thereof * * * we do adde in Generall, for more full satisfaction.

1. Such a Faith professed with the Mouth, which is Confirmed by an innocent Conversation in the Life, we say this Conversation makes it appeare * * *

2. Such a Faith as is joyn'd with Evident Repentance, Sorrow, & Mourning for sin.

3. When there is a full & sufficient Testimony from others of their Faith & piety tho' their Humiliation, Faith & Conversation be not so well known, p. 191, 193.²³ The like is well known to be [13/14] the judgment of severall other of the

²²Stoddard here is paraphrasing from *Of the Holinesse of Church-Members*, pp. 19-20.

²³Stoddard is citing, as he notes, from *A Defence of the Answer*, pp. 191 and 193.

First Elders, tho' they have not left such a Testimony in Print.

Obj: 2. What hurt is there in mens relating of the manner of their Conversion? Some Relations are much for edification both of saints, & others.

Ans: 1. Tho' the practice was taken up at first, but as a usefull thing: yet many now make it an Ordinance; there is as much weight laid on it, as if it were a Divine Institution. On which account it is of Dangerous Consequence. This people came from their Native Country to enjoy the Pure Institutions of Christ. And we should be the more Carefull to keep ourselves exactly to them.

2. Hereby we keep some out of our Churches that are godly. Mr. Allin & Mr. Shephard say, Many Christians may be drawn to Christ, & have the Seed of Faith: yet may sometimes not know it, sometimes remember not the workings of it, sometimes thro' bashfulness, & Feare, want of parts or not train'd up under a knowing Ministry, not be able to profess it so full & clearly.²⁴

3. Hereby also many are kept out of the Church, that are visibly fitt for it. Wee should be Carefull of shutting the Doore upon any whom the Lord would have us receive. Whereby many inconveniencies follow. They are not in so hopefull a way for Spirituall good: They are not kept under Ecclesiastical Government whereby much Sin & Wickedness might be prevented. They grow [ill] affected to the Government & Churches; as being excluded from priviledges. * * * sad fruits whereof are feared by some, if time of temptation * * *

Because of this triall by Relations we proove too remiss of that triall which the * * * mixture * * * us to, by Conversation, to the Scandall of our Churches thereby. [There is a gre]at danger of hardening many mens hearts hereby, who

²⁴Cf. *A Defence of the Answer*, p. 189.

* * * this Doore into the Church, may be ready to Conclude themselves * * * Minister, & Church, have heard their Relations & judged them Converted.

[Obj. 3. This] is the Way to make the Church abound with Hypocrites. [He says that] Most of the persons spoken of are in the church already. So that we * * * that we have not too hard thoughts of them; their being so * * * from Scripture to looke upon them as believers; & such of [secret] hypocrites are in Church-State already onely now admitted to a * * * [pri]viledges.

* * * His Objection is of as much force against the way of Admission into the [Church] in the Old Testament, as that which is pleaded for.²⁵

The way of Admission prescribed by God is such that we can't deny admission to secret Hypocrites. If those which have these Qualifications, as are pleaded for, are hypocrites, they are Secret Hypocrites, & such can't be refused. For Secret Hypocrites are visible Saints.

4. The Apostles, & Evangelists did admit Hypocrites, as Ananias, & Sapphira, Simon Magus, Hymeneas, & Philetus, Domas & others. We can't refuse those that are not distinguished externally from reall Saints. Whatever their Hearts be, this way Doth distinguish Visible Saints from Visible Hypocrites; & other visible wicked men: & therefore is the onely way which the church must take in Admission. For Relations do neither distinguish Reall Saints from Reall Hypocrites, nor vi-[14/15]sible saints, from visible Hypocrites. For many may make Satisfactory Relations that are not Reall Saints; & some are not able to make them that are not onely Visible but Reall Saints.

Obj: 4. Its not the Being of Faith, but the lively growth, &

²⁵The bracketed material on manuscript p. 14 is taken from Taylor's later comments (in the 'Extracts' volume) on this point in his 'Animadversions,' a detailed point-by-point response to Stoddard's 'Arguments.'

exercise of it that fits for the Lords Supper, for which Dr. Ames is Quoted.

Ans. 1. We pleade not for persons Admission to the Lords Supper merely because of the Being of Faith: but because of the being of Faith made evident by fruites, & sufficient knowledge, for the right improvement of that Ordinance. That this is sufficient in the Judgment of these Churches, our Constant practice doth shew. We scruple none that have knowledge, & can relate that which satisfies us of the Being of Faith.

2. The Growth of Faith is no way necessary for the Regular participation in that Ordinance. They that have the least measure need it & they that have the least measure are capable of sanctifying Gods name in it & of profit thereby. The Primitive Church more scrupled admitting Believers, Acts 5.14.

3. As for Dr. Ames, his judgment that there must be an increase in Faith: the meaning is that there must not be onely the seed, or being of Faith: as in Infants, with out Fruite, & knowledge; but such an increase of it as to manifest itselfe that it may be discerned by the Fruits of it. For he gives it as the reason why Infants, tho' they have faith, may not come to the Supper. Which is the same we plead for. *Medul. lib. 1. Cap. 32. Thes. 13.* The same which is expresst by others, They must be Adult Visible Believers. Let Dr. Ames explain Dr. Ames, *Cap. 40, Thes. 18.* He saith the Supper is to be admitted to them alone * * * visibly Capable of Nourishment & growth in the Church: & therefore not to Infants, but onely to Adults.²⁶

²⁶The passages from William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity* (London: Edward Griffin, 1642), to which Stoddard refers in his answers to Objection 4 are:

Among believers there are to be accounted as members of the Church the children of these believers who are in the Church, I Cor. 7.14. Your children are holy. For they are partakers of the same covenant and the same profession with their parents.

Yet infants are not so perfect members of the Church, as that they can exercise acts of communion, or be admitted to partake of all the priviledges therof, unless there do first appeare an increase of Faith; but they are not to be excluded from those priviledges which pertain to the beginning of Faith and entrance into the Church. (*Cap. 32, Theses 12 and 13, pp. 158-59*)

Hence also the supper is onely to be administred to those, who are visibly

Obj: 5. John Baptists Hearers made confession of their [sins] before [they] were baptized, Matt. 3.6.

Ans: 1. Its very likely, that many of those that were baptized by John * * * scandalously. For many Publicans, & Harlots were wrought on by * * * were baptized by him. & such persons ought to make parti[cular] con[fession] of Sin before Admission, either to baptism, or the Lords Sup[per.]

2. Such as were not guilty of such Scandalls, might also * * * & Misery by nature. & profess the need they had of Baptism * * * of Sin. (The English Annotat take it that they professt the Detestation * * * either in words, or at least, by submitting to that Ordinance in * * * before they renew their Covenant, by the fift Proposition of the Synod * * *²⁷

Mr. Mitchell hath this passage respecting Johns hearers. He that should [con]sider the multitudes baptized by John in the short time of his ministry * * * in those glimmerings of Gospell Light that they then had; together with the greater rawness & weakness of some that he baptized will not thinke that the persons baptized by John did excell those whom the Synod describes in their fift Proposition. *Defense of the Synod.* p. 37.²⁸

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capable of nourishment and growth in the Church; and so not to Infants, but onely to those of age. (*Cap.* 40, Thesis 18, p. 208)

²⁷Stoddard here seems to be referring to Argument 5 of the Fifth proposition: '*The Denial of Baptism to the children in question hath a dangerous tendency to Irreligion and Apostacy . . .*' (cf. Walker, *Creeks and Platforms*, pp. 330 ff.).

²⁸The author of this citation is actually Richard Mather, *A Defence of the Answer*, p. 37. Mitchell is the author of the first part of the book, 'An Answer to the Apologetical Preface. . . .'

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