

TRUTH
AND
INNOCENCY
Vindicated

OR,

An Impartial Account of the late Proceedings between Mr. *Mence* and Mr. *Collins*,
concerning the Salvation of Infants by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness.

Intended for the Information and Satisfaction of the Godly about *Wapping*, or
elsewhere.

By *HERCULES COLLINS*.

LONDON,

Printed in the Year 1695.

TRUTH
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Vindicated, &c.

Ingenious Reader,

I Am to inform thee in the Year Ninety and One I published a Book, which contained my Conscientious Grounds for the Baptizing of Professed Believers only; in which Treatise there was an Indication, or an Account of one of the first Arguments for Infant-Baptism; namely, That in it the Grace and Mercy of God was given, and that it was to save an Infant in apparent Danger of imminent Death from perishing: And moreover, that it washt away Original Sin; see the *Malevetan Council*, and the Fifth Couucil of *Carthage*, in the Year four hundred and sixteen; which Error was about that time confirmed by the Pope and his Council. Now forasmuch as I have asserted in my Book of Baptism, *page 70, 113, 114.* that we know a better way to wash off Original Sin from dying Infants; namely, the Blood of Christ, and the Imputation of his Righteousness. This very passage just before mentioned, hath been the principal Cause of Difference between me, Mr. *Shute*, and Mr. *Mence*; and that because I did not add, that Infants have Faith in our Lord' s Righteousness, my Opponents have drawn this Conclusion, as if it naturally followed my Position, then Infants must be Damned: Whether this be not a *non sequitur*, I leave to a judicious Consideration. And doubtless to count this Doctrine Mountebank-Divinity¹; that is to say, Dying Infants being saved by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, calls for suitable Repentance: And is it not a thing unaccountable, that Mr. *Mence* hath made such a stir about Infant habitual-Faith, and yet hath not given his Reader one solid Argument to inform his Judgment about it in his whole Book.

Moreover, because I asserted that the Infants of Believers, as they are their fleshly Seed, are not in the Covenant of Grace, Mr. *Mence* has suggested to his Auditory, from his Pulpit, as if I held this Tenet, That the Seed of Believers are absolutely shut out of the Covenant of God; and draws this Conclusion before the People, as if it were the Emanation of my Principles, then Infants must be Damned. I suppose some *Turks* and *Pagans* would have abhorred thus to deal with Innocent and true Principles, and from true Premises draw such false and ridiculous Conclusions; and from asserting Infants being saved by Christ's Righteousness, he insinuates as if that Position denies them Sanctification, and so could not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. What can be a greater Reflection upon the purifying Merits of our Blessed Saviour? can they want Sanctification that are washt in hi- Blood? surely No.

1 Mountebank - A charlatan, a person who falsely claims knowledge of or skill in some matter, esp. for personal gain; a person who pretends to be something he or she is not, in order to gain prestige, fame, etc. Formerly used freq. of corrupt clergy and others assuming false piety or religiosity. *Oxford English Dictionary*, online.

I did always believe Justification and Sanctification in the same subject, in Conformity to the Apostles Doctrine, *But you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified, &c.* (1 Cor 6. 11.) The holy Prophet *Jeremy* predicts, that the Name wherewith Christ should be called shall be *The Lord our Righteousness*; would it not be disingenuous for any to infer from these words, that he denied Sanctification in the same Subject, because he doth not mention it; yet this my Antagonist has done by me. It hath been no Doubt with me many Years, that the Father's Election, Son's Redemption, and the Spirit's Sanctification, all savingly affect the same subject. Concerning the Truth of the Matter of Fact mentioned none can question, if they consider that I have by me the Hand-writing of the very Person who took it as it was delivered in the Pulpit; and to anticipate any undue thought, as if it were written by one prejudiced against Mr. *Mence*, I do assure you he hath a very great Veneration and Respect for him, and if I am not mistaken, is his constant Auditor. Thus I have given you a fair Oppertunity to consider whether my Opinion gave Mr. *Mence* any just ground to Preach and Print as he has done, (namely,) That my principle inevitably excludes dear Infants out of the Kingdom of God, and that I am audaciously cruel to them, sending them by swarms into Hell, calling my Principle *Infant-destroying-matter*; and that the Darts I would strike into their Hearts and the Hearts of their Children, discovers me more to be an Inveterate Enemy than a kind Brother, as he saith in his Epistle. My Reader is to judge whether such Invectives are the Emanation of my Principles, or rather of a distempered Mind.

Those things aforesaid thro' my Opponents Preaching spread all about the Town, and hath dolefully rung in my Ears as I have walkt the Streets; *There goeth Mr. Collins, who holds the Damnation of Infants*; tho' probably I am larger in my Charity than he, being inclined to believe all dying Infants in the Election and Covenant of Grace, tho' secret things belong to God; so that if the good Providence of God had not prevented, my Throat might not only have been cut with a Feather, which was his own saying, but might have been more effectually done another way. I could have given too great a probability of this Matter, which would have made your Ears tingle, but that I am tender of the Honour of the Gospel and my Opponent's Reputation, though he hath endeavoured to ruine mine. I having been thus greatly abused, it came to the Ears of my Brethren in the Ministry, who upon hearing of the same in a Christian Spirit, sent for Mr. *Mence*, and when he came, they received him as a Minister of the Gospel; at which time two things he mentioned to us as his trouble: *First*, That his words were misrepresented; to which Answer was made, that they suspended the total Crediting of what was declared to them 'till they spake with him himself. The *Second* thing offended him, was my joining Transubstantiation with Infants in Covenant, and Infants habitual Faith, in my Book *The Antidote proved a Counterfeit*, page the 4th. The reason of my uniting those so alike in shape, and of so near akin, you'll hear more of hereafter in Answer unto his Book. Much Discourse there was *pro* and *con* between the Ministers and him. And when the Ministers desired Mr. *Mence* to give his Reasons why he called my Doctrine before his Congregation Mountehank-Divinity? he gave no direct Answer, but evaded it; and at his parting I told him that I expected satisfaction for several Abuses which I then mentioned unto him, which you will find

contain'd in the Letter at the end of this Account.

Moreover, it was there shewed him how Unconclusive it was to infer Infants must be Damned if they have no habitual Faith: And further shewed him, that if Infants have habitual Faith, they must have Patience, Long-suffering and Repentance, which are all in the same Subject where Faith is. Again, he was also askt who was the Object of an Infant's Faith? unto which he made no solid Answer. 'Tis most certain that the Ministers Carriage to Mr. *Mence* deserved better from him, if he had considered that some there present came not behind him in Piety, Parts, or Learning; and some old enough to be his Father. Neither did that unchristian and unmannerly Speech become his Function, when upon two Brethrens happening to speak together, he replied, If ye intend to Bait me, deal fairly, and slip your Doggs one by one, and afterwards boasted of it among his Friends. And whereas Mr. *Mence* in his Book more than twice or thrice calls me *Challenger*, and *Bold Challenger*, let me give you a plain Account of that matter: When he was with our Ministers, I sate silent for a considerable time, and being about to offer something to him concerning the matter in Debate, he interrupted me with these words, "Mr. *Collings*, I will Dispute these Points with you at any time"; unto which I replied, Sir, as soon as you please. Now I having been thus greatly wronged, as you have heard, upon the ending of my three Sermons on *Acts* the 2d. in the hearing of his Son, who writ my Discourses in Short-hand very curious and speedy: I declared then that I was willing to accept of Mr. *Mence* his Proposition which he made before the Ministers, to discourse the Points in Controversie, which you have in the Letter at the latter End, whether this was any more then accepting of his own Challenge, let the Reader judge.

Moreover, let me inform you further, that a little time after my first mentioning in publick that I was willing to accept of his Proposal made before the Elders, he sent me this little Line of *Lattin*, i.e. *An Infantes fidelium sint temporibus Euaugelij inafœdere Gratia; affirmatur;* which in *English* is thus, Whether the Infants of Believers in the Times of the Gospel are in the Covenant of Grace? It is affirmed: Which Question doth not take in the Terms of the Controversie; for, who ever deny'd that the Infants of Believers, viz. such as are elected, are in the Covenant of Grace? of which hereafter. Note, that which adds Pleasantness to this Passage is, that quickly after he had sent me this Line of *Lattin*, it was reported by a Minister of his own Perswasion, that Mr. *Mence* had sent me a LATTIN LETTER.

And whereas Mr. *Mence* tells us in his Epistle, that he hath a Black Catalogue of Lyes committed to Writing: And further adds, that Lies are our Armour of Proof and Weapons of Defence: I would have him know, my Innocency is better Armour against such threatning Calumnies. I hope that I abhor that Practice as much, if not more than himself; he knows best who it was that reported amongst his Friends when they were together, and also apart, that when he charged me with the Conjunction of Transubstantiation with Infants in Covenant and Infant habitual-Faith in my Book aforesaid, before the Ministers, that I deny'd I had wrote any such thing; and it appearing I had so written, the Ministers hanged down their Heads, and were ashamed on't. That this Deserves not only the Name of an *Hyperbole*, but a great *Untruth*, as

will be evidenced if any Godly Persons require it, by seven or eight Elders and Ministers, as well his own Friend, who was with him at the same time, being asked if he knew of any such Carriage of the Ministers, and of my denying what I had writ, he replied, I know nothing of it, neither is it very probable this should be so, when the Manuscript was read among them before it felt the weight of the Press. And let my Reader know, I was so far from denying this thing, that when Mr. *Mence* took out a Script of Paper to read the matter aforesaid, that he might do it the more effectually, I took the Book out of my own Pocket, turned to the Page, and gave it him to make the most of it; for all which we have undoubted Testimony at Hand.

Now how his Conscience can digest such things as these are, I know not; but I praise God they will not go down with me, neither would I have the weight of them on my Conscience for more than I shall now mention. Oh how sad is it for a Person to endeavour to raise his own Reputation by ruining of his Neighbours Credit, in bearing false witness against him, which is so contrary to the Ninth Commandment.

And whereas Mr. *Mence* would have the World believe him to be a Man of a Peaceable Temper, whilst he calls me a Publick Annoyer, the head of an over grown Schism, and a Troubler of *Israel*; saying, that I have put this Spot into an Inflammation, well nigh a Conflagration, and that he had lain quiet six or seven years together, until he was forced to arise, as he saith, with his Bucket to quench the flame: But indeed he hath been so far from casting Water in to quench it, that he hath been pouring on Oyl to inflame it: And therefore some thinking men judge that it had been far better if he had lain asleep still, unless he had awaked in a better Temper, and to a better Purpose. Now I would have the Reader to take notice, that if Mr. *Mence* had not been of a Diotrepean Spirit, and had contributed as much towards the keeping of us in Peace as others have done, we had certainly enjoy'd our Quiet in this Spot till this day: For it is well known how chearfully I have served that Congregation, by preaching amongst them in the time of his Predecessor, the late Reverend Mr. *Knight*.

Finally, as I esteem Peace with God, Peace in Conscience, and Peace in the Church a Choice Jewel, which I would not exchange for many Worlds; and also knowing that the eternal Transaction between the Father and Son is called the Council of Peace, and the Covenant the Covenant of Peace, God the God of Peace, Christ the Prince of Peace; the Gospel the Gospel of Peace, and Angels the Messengers of Peace, and that Heaven is a Place of Peace: In a Word, because I know where Peace is God is, and that that Grace is essential to the Kingdom of God in the Saints, and also a glorious fruit of the Holy Spirit, as it shall be my earnest Endeavour to promote it in the Churches of Christ, so it shall be my fervent and constant Prayer, as one of *Zions* Watchmen, to cry, *Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces for ever and ever, Amen.*

A LETTER sent to Mr. *Mence* from Mr. *Collins*, wherein he requires Satisfaction for the great Abuse offered him; also signifying his Willingness to accept of his own Proposition to discourse these Points which you have mentioned in this Epistle following.

SIR,

YOU having both in Publick and Private asperst and greatly wronged me, as I have before, so now I do again call for Satisfaction.

1. For suggesting to your Auditors from Pulpit and elsewhere, as that I held Believers Seed absolutely shut out of the Covenant of God, and so then they must be damned.

2. Suggested as if I held an Imputaton of Christ's Righteousness might be to that Subject or Person where was no Sanctification nor Cleansing.

3. Suggested as if my Tenet was, that some Persons might be saved which are not in the Covenant of Grace.

4. That because I cannot put this in my Creed, that Infants have Faith, you have drawn the Conclusion, as if it were natural from the Premises, then Infants must be damned: And this hath been by you declared in your publick Meeting-Place.

5. Was it not very unfair, and contrary to the Golden Rule, when you repeated before the Ministers that Paragraph in my Book, Transubstantiation, Infants-Incovenanting, Infants Habitual-Faith, are Terms I think equally allowable, and probably equally understood among their various Professors? was it not disingenious to repeat but part of it, and leave out the Argument and Reason why I thus spoke? viz. Because you do not by this Covenant mean the Election of Grace, therefore not one of a thousand know what you mean by it.

6. To approve a Sentence which compares those that cannot own an Antiquated repealed Covenant in force to Antichrist, who opens his mouth to speak Blasphemy against God, his Tabernacle, his Name, and them which dwell in Heaven, calls for Repentance unto God, and as publick an Acknowledgement before men.

Again, for your drawing wrong Conclusions from true Premises, and then call it by the hard Name of Mountebank-Divinity.

Sir, I call for as publick Satisfaction as I have had an Aspersion, but if you shall deny it, as you have done, and rather hand upon a Vindication, I must take the best measures I can to clear my Innocency, because my Function doth oblige me to maintain a good Name in the World, and good Principles, in order to a success in my Work; and I hope I can truly say, it is more for the Honour of God and the Gospel than mine own I am thus concerned. And, Sir, if you please, I will accept of your Proposition before the Ministers, and discourse these following Points, you spending one hour and half, and I another, for the Investigation of the Truth, and leave the whole to the Blessing of God and the Judgment of the Auditory.

1. Whether the Seed of Believers as such, are in the everlasting Covenant of Grace? if you affirm it, I deny it.

2. If you will undertake to prove Infants have Faith, Habitual-Faith, I shall labour to prove it appears not from Scripture or Experience, nor any other way as I know of.

3. Whether the Baptism of Infants be of Divine Authority? if you affirm, I deny it, and shall prove that the Baptizing Persons upon a Profession of Faith, and them only, hath Divine Authority for that Practice.

4. If you will undertake to prove that it doth genuinely and naturally follow, if Infants have no Faith they must be damned, I shall endeavour to shew it to be a Nonsequitur, and no good Logick, and doth no way follow.

5. From such a Position as this, Elect dying Infants saved by the Blood of Christ, and the Imputation of his Righteousness, whether it genuinely and naturally follows from these Premises, an Exclusion of Sanctification and Cleansing in the same Subject? if you will stand upon the Vindication of this Conclusion as natural, I will undertake to prove it a forc'd, unfair, unjust Conclusion, who subscribe my self

Your Faithful Friend,

Hercules Collins.

FINIS.

Advertisement.

AN Answer to Mr. Mence's Book *Vindiciæ Fæderis* is in the Press.²

Mr. Keaches Childs Delight, containing a Scripture Catechism, wherein all the chief Principles of Christian Religion are clearly (though briefly opened, necessary to establish young Peosons in Gods Truth, in Opposition to Popery in perilous Times; together with many other things both pleasant and useful, for the Christian Education of Youth; with Letters to Parents. Adorned with several Copper Cuts, teaching to Spell, Read, and casting Accounts; fitted for the use of Schools, and very useful for all Families, Price bound 6d.

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Sold by *William Marshal* at the Bible in *Newgate-street*.

³*The Reader is desired to amend these few Mistakes which have been let slip.*

PAge 3. in the beginning, for *Ingenious* read *Ingenuous*; in the same page, l. 10. for *Malevetan* r. *Malivetan*; p. 7. l. 24. for *Lattin* r. *Latine*; in the next line put an Interrogation Point; and in the same page, l. 34, & 35. for. *Lattin* r. *Latine*; p. 11. l. 10. read *or* after the word *Anticipated*.

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2. The full title is, *The Sandy Foundation of Infant Baptism Shaken: or, An Answer to a Book, Entituled Vindiciæ Fæderis, Published by Mr. Mence*, by Hercules Collins (1695), and has been transcribed by the same editor as this work (*Ed.*)

3. This errata was inside the front cover of the original. It is placed here for convenience (*Ed.*)