

Lynd's Circular Letter with Comments

Lynd spelled out the issue in hand, what he wanted to present to the members of his association, and, I am sure, to the wider public:

In this annual letter we call your attention to the subject of the new covenant. It is the opinion of many that the covenant made with Abraham was the covenant of grace [that is, the new covenant], and that circumcision was the sign and seal of this covenant, confirming its blessings to Abraham and his posterity, and that baptism now supersedes the rite of circumcision, and is the sign and seal of spiritual blessings. How far this is true or false, will be seen when the Scriptures are allowed to speak for themselves.

Quite. Let Scripture speak for itself. If only men had never deviated from this axiom!

Having set out what he saw as the fundamental, scriptural nature of a covenant, Lynd came to this:

When God is said to make a covenant with man, it is the language of condescension. The term is accommodated to signify the plan by which God promises to deal with his creatures, and the laws which he lays down for their government, in order to secure the promises. The most important of the covenants made with men were those to Noah, to Abraham, and to the children of Israel at Sinai, all [of which were] ratified by sacrifice. These are never called 'covenants of grace' [in Scripture].

Alas, covenant theologians muddy the water dreadfully over this very issue. They do so by their constant use of the phrase 'the covenant of grace'. If only they would drop this, and keep to scriptural terms and concepts! Note my use of 'concepts': it is not just our phrases which count, but, even more important, our concepts must be scriptural. Our thinking must be governed by Scripture, not a theological

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construct. This must not just be a chanted slogan. We have to mean it and keep to it.

Lynd started at the beginning – in eternity:

God's eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ concerning the salvation of his people, is called by [Reformed or covenant] divines, the 'covenant of grace', but¹ by the Scriptures, 'the new covenant'.

This important point needs more precision than Lynd gave it. I take it that he was speaking of God's decree, within his eternal compact,² to send into the world his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to live and die under the law, the old or Mosaic covenant, to fulfil it, render it obsolete, and thus save his elect and establish the new covenant.³ To describe all this as 'the covenant of grace', and then bandy the phrase with seeming abandon, as covenant theologians do, is cavalier in the extreme. It is not an innocent mistake. It carries a huge price tag.

Lynd:

This subject has been so completely mystified by the definitions, and distinctions and reasonings of theologians, that nothing can extricate it but an abandonment of all these and an appeal to the simple history contained in the Bible and its divine illustrations.

'Abandonment'. The very word! Let me explain. Lynd was rightly putting his finger on the key spot. Covenant theologians impose on Scripture their theological template. As a result, they cannot allow Scripture to speak as Scripture, but must always be filtering it so that it fits in with their pre-determined system. So what is the answer to the confusion caused by this way of proceeding? As Lynd observed, it is useless to tinker with covenant theology; it should be abandoned. Indeed, some covenant theologians

¹ Lynd had 'and'. As can be seen at once, he would have made his point even stronger by the use of 'but'.

² See earlier note on this.

³ See my *Christ is All; Christ's Obedience Imputed*.

admit that their theology needs (at the very least) recasting.⁴ Recasting? It should be jettisoned!

Lynd continued:

It must be obvious to all careful readers of God's word that the eternal purpose of God's mercy which he purposed in Christ Jesus formed an important part of the covenants made with Abraham, and [is] a prominent point in all the [scriptural] references made to these covenants.

Excellent! But let me try to unpack this a little. By his reference to 'the covenants made with Abraham', Lynd was referring to the various stages in God's revelation to the patriarch, as found in Genesis 12, 15 and 17. As I have observed, Lynd liked to speak of various covenants with Abraham. I prefer to stick with the scriptural way of describing God's revelation in question, and speak in terms of the Abrahamic covenant in the singular, constantly bearing in mind its double aspect – the physical and the spiritual. Even so, Lynd and I are essentially one over this.

To let Lynd continue:

The first revelation of this purpose which was made to Abraham was made when he was in the land of Haran (Gen. 12:1-2). Nothing is said of a covenant in this place. The promise embraces two points: *first*, that God would make of Abraham a great nation; and, *secondly*, that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. This last was a promise of spiritual blessing, and was to be fulfilled

⁴ I quote from my *Christ Is All* (p390): John Murray: 'It would not be... in the interests of theological conservation or theological progress to think that the covenant theology is in all respects definitive and that there is no further need for correction, modification, and explanation... It appears to me that the covenant theology, notwithstanding the finesse of analysis with which it was worked out and the grandeur of its articulated systematisation, needs recasting'. Bearing in mind Murray's guarded way of speaking, the audience he was addressing, the climate in which he was writing, it doesn't take an Einstein to read between the lines! Murray was, in terms of covenant theology, making a mammoth concession here. This late in the day, will it be heeded?

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through Messiah, the promised Seed, as... Paul states in his letter to the Galatians (Gal. 3:16). As soon as he [that is, Abraham] entered the land of Canaan, it was made over to him for his posterity: 'Unto your seed will I give this land'. But how were these promises to be fulfilled? How could he become a great nation? And how could Messiah, according to the flesh, proceed from him, if he had no heir? Eight years after the second revelation, God appeared again to Abraham, and assured him of an heir and, in addition to this, of a numerous posterity (Gen. 15:3-5). Abraham believed the promise, and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness. He was personally justified before God. In that same day the grant of the land of Canaan was renewed, and confirmed by solemn covenant...

Sixteen years after this transaction, God made a covenant with Abraham embracing in it both the spiritual and the temporal promise, and instituted circumcision to be observed [by Abraham's posterity] throughout all their generations. He promised to multiply him exceedingly, and to give to his posterity the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. The spiritual promise was renewed in the words: 'You shall be the father of many nations' (Gen. 17:1-8.)

Lynd summarised his doctrine thus far:

This is the simple history of the facts as given in the Bible. Here are the elements of the new covenant and of the old covenant – combined in one federal transaction.

Let us take stock. We are thinking about the covenant God made with Abraham. And we ought to think about it, we must think of it, since the Bible could not speak more highly than it does of its importance. But when we think of the Abrahamic covenant, we constantly have to bear in mind its double aspect, always keeping the two aspects distinct. We are thinking about Abraham's two lines of descent. There is a physical line of descent from Abraham, and there is spiritual line of descent. It might help if I tabulate the possibilities involved in this double aspect of the Abrahamic covenant – the physical seed and the spiritual seed. There is one line of descent physically speaking, and there is another

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line of descent spiritually speaking, that line comprising all who are justified by faith in Christ:

Some men are in both lines of descent; that is to say they are at one and the same time Abraham's physical and spiritual descendants. We are talking about converted Jews.

Some men are not Abraham's physical descendants, but they are his spiritual descendants. They are converted Gentiles.

Some men are Abraham's physical descendants, but not his spiritual descendants. They are unconverted Jews.

Lynd:

By the combination of the spiritual and the temporal [in his revelation to Abraham], God exhibited himself as sustaining a twofold relation to Abraham's posterity: a spiritual relation – which included only spiritual persons, or persons having the faith of Abraham – and a political relation, which included⁵ the whole nation descending from him through Isaac and Jacob.

Lynd was rightly arguing that within the physical line of descent from Abraham, there is a remnant, a spiritual seed. If we imagine a Venn diagram, the outer circle represents the physical line of descent, while a smaller circle entirely inside the larger circle represents Abraham's spiritual line of descent. So much for the physical line of Abraham's descent.

Lynd:

Hence, while all Jews were the natural descendants of Abraham, only a part of them constituted the spiritual seed by faith. Here were two distinct seeds in one visible, political body, and the rite of circumcision has reference distinctly to each seed.

Here we reach a critical node in this debate: circumcision. God gave Abraham and his male descendants the rite of circumcision. Why? What purpose did it serve? Lynd:

⁵ Lynd had 'including'.

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It was given for two purposes, clearly recognising the two branches of Abraham's family.

First, it was given as a standing memorial of the temporal promise of God to all the seed included in this promise. It made an indelible mark upon every Jew, showing his descent from Abraham, and confirming to him the faithfulness of Jehovah in the fulfilment of his promises: 'It shall be a token of the covenant between me and you'.

But, *secondly*, there was a higher design [in God's gift of circumcision to Abraham], which is stated by... Paul in his letter to the Romans. It was a seal, or a memorial of the fact that Abraham was justified by faith, and that righteousness could be obtained in no other way. In this sense it was designed to be emblematic of a real Jew, a son of Abraham, and an heir of the promises, not by natural descent, but as his spiritual seed. And hence that circumcision which rendered a Jew one of the people of God by faith was the circumcision of the heart (see Romans 2:28-29). These are the only purposes for which circumcision was given, so far as the word of God throws light upon the transaction.

Now this where precision is necessary.⁶ The rite of circumcision sealed – guaranteed – Abraham's justification as a believer. It sealed it to Abraham. It afforded him an assurance and a physical reminder of his justification. But Scripture never says that circumcision sealed any other Israelite. Of course not. How could it? No boy in Abraham's line was born a believer, but even so he was circumcised as a baby. The rite did not seal his justification, however, it could not seal it, because as yet he could not possibly have been actually justified. His justification by faith – if he was ever to be justified by faith, and the majority of Jews never were – could only occur as and when he came to faith.⁷ No rite administered to him could possibly seal what was not true! This would seem to be a truism! In other words, Abraham is the only man whose justification was sealed by circumcision.

⁶ See my *Infant* pp137-155, in particular, but many other references.

⁷ See my *Eternal*.

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That should signal the end of the story over this rite. Full stop!

Alas, many impose their theological template or construct upon Scripture at this point, and this prevents them seeing the truth of Scripture. They take the scriptural doctrine that circumcision was a seal to Abraham, and then apply it, as a seal, to all the babies of believers! They do this by the conjuring trick – they have no scriptural warrant – of turning the circumcision of male babies born to Jews into the sprinkling of all babies born to believers. Amazing! The consequences are dire.

Lynd:

As to the views of men, they can only darken counsel by words without knowledge.

What did Lynd have in mind? To what ‘darkening counsel’ was he referring? There is no need to wonder. He was thinking of the diabolical nonsense that a child born to a believer is ‘in the covenant’, or can be got ‘under the covenant’ by infant baptism (baby sprinkling).⁸ (Incidentally, Reformed Baptists have to struggle to distance themselves from infant baptisers at this juncture. They have an uphill struggle on their hands. The truth is, their position is unstable and, in the end, untenable). How much eternal damage has been done to how many by this unwarranted leap of logic by infant baptisers will only be known at the last day. But that such damage has been done, and done to a countless number, is beyond dispute.

In saying this, as must be plain to all, what we are thinking about is not a nice, academic debate. Eternal consequences – eternal life and eternal death – hang upon it. How many adults, even now, pin all their hopes of their eternal salvation on the fact that their parents had them

⁸ When it was announced that my grandson was born, a leading Presbyterian, who was a fellow-speaker with me at a prestigious ministerial conference, nudged me and told me to ‘get him under the covenant’. If I had been quick enough I would have replied: ‘But I thought, on your system, he was already in the covenant!’

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sprinkled as a baby? How many such adults have this dreadful – I use the word deliberately – misplaced confidence constantly reinforced by what they see their ministers doing to babies at the so-called font of regeneration, hear the formula they repeatedly pronounce over such, listen to their preachers' sermons extolling the virtues of infant baptism, and read their works enforcing the same? Fearful must be the harvest of such an unscriptural practice! Fearful must be the responsibility of those who have promulgated it!

As Lynd put it:

None but those who believe in Jesus Christ can receive the blessing of faithful Abraham, and hence, if they [that is, any] expect righteousness and acceptance with God by deeds of law, or by any presumed spiritual relationship to Abraham, or [by any relationship] to believers, his spiritual children, in consequence of natural descent, they sadly deceive themselves. The promise was made to Abraham and his seed. 'He says not: "And to seeds as of many; but as of one, and to your Seed which is Christ"'. This must be fulfilled, for God has promised to his Son, the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

This must be underlined. God's promise to Abraham was to the Seed – Christ. Scripturally speaking, that is the end of it. As a consequence, no sinner is saved by works, or by Jewish descent, or being the child of a believer. No rite will ever overcome this. It is only by exercising saving faith in Christ that any sinner is saved. No amount of elevated claims for infant baptism made from the pulpit or by means of the printing press will make the practice right. It matters not a whit what prestigious Confession asserts it. Scripture refutes it.

The spiritual aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is eternal; its physical aspect was temporary, ending with Christ's

fulfilment of the old (that is, the Mosaic) covenant, all in accordance with its God-given purpose.⁹

Lynd continued by considering the will of God involved in all this:

Much light is thrown upon this subject by the reply of... Paul to the objection of the Jews, that if they were cut off, God would prove unfaithful to his promise. He says: 'Not as though the word of God had taken no effect; for they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall your seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed' (Rom. 9:6-8.)

Paul's statement – 'the children of the promise are counted for the seed' – speaks of those who truly are Abraham's descendants in the fullest sense of the word; that is, his spiritual descendants. And there is no question as to what the apostle means by it. Only true believers are the children of Abraham in a spiritual sense. No others! Not the children born to believers. No! Only believers themselves. Until men or women come to faith, they cannot be known as the seed of Abraham, they are not 'in the covenant'.

As for the Jews, the fact that some never come to faith does not in the least impair the Abrahamic covenant. Indeed, if no Jew was ever saved, it would not signal its end. As long as sinners are converted – whether Jew or Gentile is immaterial – the will of God expressed in the Abrahamic covenant is still being upheld and accomplished. All the elect must be saved. God's will can never fail. Here is a sample of passages which teach it:

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfil it? (Num. 23:19).

The Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret (1 Sam. 15:29).

⁹ The Mosaic covenant was always intended to be temporary, lasting only until its fulfilment by Christ. See my *Three*.

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The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29).

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Saviour (Tit. 1:1-3).¹⁰

And so on.

Lynd tackled the very objection being raised:

This is as though he had said: 'What if the whole nation should be cut off from the visible congregation?'

That is to say, what if no Jew had ever proved to be a believer? What would this have meant for the promise of God to Abraham? In other words, God might promise Abraham that his line would never die out, that all the nations would be blessed through him, and yet no Hebrew be saved! Surely that would spell the end, the ruination, of God's promise? Not at all! Lynd was categorical:

The promises of God are not forfeited [even if no Jew was ever saved].

How could he be so sure? Because Scripture is explicit:

They are not all Israel which are of Israel.

This is a statement of massive import. It must sink in. Its consequences are very far-reaching. Lynd explained. He dealt first with natural Israel, the physical descendants of Abraham. He did so by a highly-nuanced argument:

Abraham had children of the flesh – that is, Ishmael and his [that is, Abraham's] children by Keturah – and they were circumcised; but the promise did not include them. He had also children of promise – that is, Isaac and his posterity; but not [even] all of these were included [in the promise].

¹⁰ See also Ezek. 24:14; Ps. 89:35-36; Heb. 6:18; Jas. 1:17.

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The promise was limited to Isaac through Jacob, while Esau was rejected. Every intelligent mind will perceive [by this] that all the natural seed of Abraham were not necessarily the children to whom the temporal promise was made, for it was limited to Isaac. Those only were counted for the seed who should constitute the nation formed of the twelve tribes and should inherit the land of Canaan. Ishmael, and the children by Keturah, could not charge God with unfaithfulness to his promise, because they were not included¹¹ in it. [Indeed,] the seed to whom the promises were given did not consist of all the children of Isaac,¹² for Jacob was adopted to the exclusion of Esau. Esau could not charge unfaithfulness to the promise upon the part of God, for he [that is, Esau] was not embraced in it. These were the temporal promises.

In short, the promise to Abraham, in its physical aspect, applied only to national Israel.

Now to the vital point – the spiritual promise in the Abrahamic covenant:

But Abraham had a spiritual offspring, and the promise to these is found in the words: ‘A father of many nations I have made you’. The natural seed, the Jews, could not reasonably impeach the faithfulness of God in this promise, as they were not included in it. It was limited to those of all nations who should exercise the faith of Abraham.

Let me explain. The promise of salvation in the Abrahamic covenant was made only to the elect in Christ, those who, in due time, would come to saving faith in Christ. It was not made to every Jew. Indeed, it was not confined to Jews. It certainly was not made to Jews as Jews. The truth is, it was made to the elect, all the elect, and only the elect, whether Jew or Gentile. In short, as Lynd expressed it:

Here the scriptural development of the new covenant is plain and satisfactory [that is, it is made perfectly clear to us]. We perceive that the covenant with Abraham, as a

¹¹ Lynd had ‘not being included’.

¹² Lynd had ‘all the children of Isaac did not constitute the seed to whom the promises were given’.

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spiritual man, included all persons justified by faith in Christ, but the covenant made with him, as a natural man, or, as the father of a numerous offspring through Isaac and Jacob, included only that part of his posterity which constituted the Jewish nation, and the possessors of the land of Canaan.

In other words, the spiritual line of descent from Abraham consists of all believers. The nation of Israel, however, constituted the physical line of descent in the Abrahamic covenant. Once again, we need to stress the utter wrongness of confounding these two seeds or lines of descent, moving willy-nilly between the two. This, alas, is precisely what infant baptisers do. Lynd, rightly, would have no truck with it:

Confounding... the new covenant with the covenant of circumcision, because the revelation of this covenant was given in connection with the temporal promises of the latter, and so connected with it, in consequence of Christ, who was to spring from Abraham's posterity, and in whom the new covenant was confirmed that they were incapable of separation, many have gone into very erroneous conclusions.

Let me re-state this convoluted and over-long sentence. The mistake infant baptisers make is to confound, confuse, mix up, jumble, blur these two seeds, these two aspects of the covenant with Abraham. There is a spiritual line; there is a physical line. These must be kept distinct at all times – at all times. This, infant baptisers signally fail to do. For reasons of their own, they select – yes, they really do select – from the promise to Abraham concerning his physical line of descent,¹³ and, without the slightest scriptural warrant, proceed to clutch it to themselves and their children. They then leap from circumcision to infant sprinkling! Moreover

¹³ Select? Yes, indeed. They concentrate on circumcision. But what about the land promise, and the promise of prosperity in health, wealth and war? Will they apply all this to believers and their offspring? Can they not see the boost they give to the prosperity gospel by their mangling of the Abrahamic covenant in this way?

they then combine all this to take the promise regarding circumcision that was given to the physical line of Abraham's descent and apply it to baby sprinkling in a spiritual sense to the children of believers. What a mongrel system! Disastrous! As Lynd said, because of this system, 'many have gone into very erroneous conclusions'. He went on:

They have said that as there was but one covenant made with Abraham, it must be still in force, and secure to Christians a spiritual inheritance. This places the whole subject in a very awkward position.

He could say that again! Those who fail to keep the lines of descent distinct make a dreadful mistake. Lynd spelled out what he had in mind by this 'very awkward position':

It secures to Christians a temporal inheritance, the possession of the land of Canaan, which is not true. And if it secures to Christians a spiritual inheritance, then it secures to them more than it did to the children of the covenant for ages.

Think of that! Infant baptisers give their followers an even greater and stronger guarantee than Israel had in the Abrahamic covenant! How? They assure them that the progeny of believers are all 'in the covenant' – or can be got there by baby baptism. Not to mince words, this assures believers that all their children are converted.¹⁴ Worse, it assures the adults who were sprinkled as a baby that they are saved. What must be the consequences of that?¹⁵

¹⁴ For documentary evidence, see my *Infant*.

¹⁵ I have not moved much in infant-baptist circles, but when preaching in one of their strongholds, I had a new experience. I met an unbeliever (aged about 60) who thus far had been impervious to the gospel, precisely on this basis: 'My father was in the covenant!' was his reply to all offers of mercy and the direst of warnings. Indeed, so I was told, he liked nothing better than a strong sermon on judgment! His believing son, rightly, was seriously concerned about it. This experience, as I say, was new to me. I ask those who do move among infant-baptisers: 'Is it an isolated case?'

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But as we know, not every Jew – even though (naturally enough!) every Jew descends from Abraham – is converted!
Lynd:

Every Jew was in the covenant, and yet every Jew did not receive a spiritual inheritance. If it be said that the covenant of circumcision limited its promises to true believers, it denies the Bible statement. If the new covenant and the covenant of circumcision are identical, then all its blessings belong to everyone who is in that covenant, and it will not be denied that every Jew was in the covenant of circumcision.

In other words, on this basis every Jew will be saved – which is manifestly false.

Even more disastrous from the point of view of believers who buy into infant baptism through covenant theology is their misplaced trust in salvation by reason of birth and/or infant baptism! They are encouraged to think that their children are in this blessed state. What a grievous delusion, not only for them, as parents, but – far worse – for their growing infants!

Lynd summarised the scriptural position:

We have now shown from the Scriptures all that can be shown in reference to covenants [with regard to the Abrahamic covenant]. We have shown why the spiritual promise, based upon the new covenant, was united with the temporal promise. We have seen that the covenant of circumcision, in which both promises were repeated, embraced a twofold seed, and that the rite by which it was confirmed had distinct reference to each; and we have further seen that the new covenant and the covenant of circumcision are not identical.

He continued:

The new covenant, of which Christ is the sacrifice and the Mediator, has God for the one party, and Christ and the purchase of his blood – or Abraham's children by faith, who are regarded as one with Jesus Christ – for the other party. This covenant did not include the children of Abraham by natural descent.

Yet again, spot on! A man might be a natural descendant of Abraham, and yet not be a spiritual descendant. How utterly foolish – how utterly wrong, unscriptural – therefore, to try to claim that the children of believers are born believers. It will not do to try to mitigate this by using seemingly-spiritual jargon such as ‘the children of believers are in the covenant’.

Lynd proceeded by rightly contrasting the new and the old covenants; that is, contrasting, on the one hand, the new covenant, with, on the other hand, the Sinai or Mosaic covenant made with national Israel. In saying this, he was actually thinking in terms of the physical aspect of the Abrahamic covenant as the Mosaic covenant given to Israel on Sinai – which covenant is what the Bible means by ‘the old covenant; or ‘the first covenant’ (Heb. 8:7,13; 9:1). The new covenant, said Lynd:

...is opposed directly to the old covenant, so called because it was to pass away. This was the covenant of circumcision, and hence, all Jews were called ‘the circumcision’, in distinction to the Gentiles.

He went on:

One thing is perfectly obvious: the covenant of circumcision was not necessary to the confirmation of the new covenant, because it was confirmed sixteen years before, in the day that Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. And let it be kept in mind that this is the promise, the covenant, and the time to which all the arguments of... Paul have reference. And all the inspired men refer to the same when they speak of the new covenant.

In other words, the spiritual aspect of the Abrahamic covenant was in place sixteen years before its physical aspect.

Lynd drove home the material point once again. How right he was to do it, because how necessary it is that this has to be emphasised! Lynd:

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Children of believing parents are not united with their parents in the new covenant by virtue of natural descent. Believing parents cannot exhibit for their children connection with the church.

That is, no baby, though born to a believer, is born 'in the church' or born 'in the covenant'. Lynd:

This assumed covenant-relation is a broken reed. The child of a believer has no more covenant relation with God than the child of a heathen.¹⁶ All who come into the new covenant must come by faith. 'He that believes not the Son, shall not see life'. Those who do not believe¹⁷ are 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise'.

Lynd dealt once again with the very common mistake made by infant baptisers:

Let none deceive themselves with the idea that baptism has come in the place of circumcision. Even if it had, it could seal nothing to unbelievers.

Quite right. But we can go further than this. Much further. And it is essential that we do. We need to be clear. Baptism seals nothing – not even immersion to believers. Baptism is not a seal. There is no scripture which says it is. Baptists must not be tempted to adopt the language and ideas of covenant theology, and start talking of baptism as a seal. As we have seen, infant baptisers have caused immense damage by thinking that their infants are sealed by being sprinkled as babies. Look at its dreadful ramifications – not excluding baptismal regeneration (or, as some of them like to say, presumptive regeneration).¹⁸ Now if Baptists talk of baptism as a seal – a guarantee of salvation – they must not be surprised if they find themselves ending up among the

¹⁶ See my *Infant* p256 for the opposing views of two infant baptisers – Jonathan Edwards and David Engelsma – on this point.

¹⁷ Lynd had 'believe not'.

¹⁸ See my *Infant* pp137-155, in particular, but many other references.

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Baptist sacramentalists – those who think that immersion of adults does much the same as infant baptism, and actually conveys grace. I am not being alarmist. I am speaking of a very real danger, one which is gaining ground, as I have shown in my book on the subject.¹⁹

Lynd:

Circumcision never conferred spiritual blessings. [What is more,] the token is now abolished. Spiritual blessings, according to the new covenant, were secured by faith then, as now, and this covenant stands forever. No one can be in the new covenant but by faith. No one can be entitled to the privileges of the *ekklēsia*²⁰ under the new covenant dispensation but [by] believing in Jesus Christ, [being] buried with him by [spiritual] baptism into death.²¹

And so to the punch line:

Let us then with firmness maintain the doctrine and practice of the new covenant, and wonders will be wrought in the name of Jesus.

Let us hope so. I know that if we do not maintain the biblical distinctions in the Abrahamic covenant then many will continue to be deceived by a faulty theology leading to the dreadful error of infant baptism. And the consequence, for those who adopt the rite, even if they steer clear of baptismal regeneration (which many infant baptisers do not, despite their howls of protest!),²² might well be eternally dire. Above all, unless we take a proper view of the Abrahamic covenant, and act consistently with it, the glory of Christ in the new covenant will be diminished. These are weighty considerations indeed!

¹⁹ See my *Baptist*.

²⁰ Lynd had 'public institutions of religion'.

²¹ I do not know if Lynd was speaking of water baptism. If he was he should have been more guarded.

²² See my *Infant; Hinge; Conversion*.