



A
REPLY
TO

The religious Scruples against inoculating the Small-pox.



By the Rev. Dr. Cooper

REP. V.

TO

THE

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A
REPLY

TO

The *Objections* made against taking
the *Small Pox* in the Way of
Inoculation from *Principles* of
Conscience.

IN A

LETTER

To a Friend in the *Country*.

By a Minister in *Boston*.

Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one Thing;
IS IT LAWFUL TO SAVE LIFE OR TO
DESTROY IT? Luke 6. 9.

The Third Impression.

B O S T O N :

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REPLY

The Objections made against taking
the Small Pox in the Way of
Inoculation from Principles of
Conscience.

LETTER

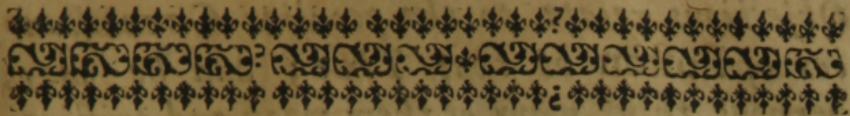
To a Friend in the Country.

By a Minister in Boston.

DESTROY IT
IF IT LAWFUL TO DESTROY OR TO
This said Judgment that I will not see them

The End of the Matter

Printed at the Office of the Boston Post-Office
in the Year 1774



To the READER.

THE following Letter was wrote and publish'd more than eight Tears agoe, when the Town was in great Distress by the Spreading of the Small Pox, which had not visited it for nineteen Tears before; and when the new Method of receiving the Distemper by Inoculation first began to be put in Practice among us. It soon appear'd that the Hazard of Inoculation was much less than of common Infection, yet it met with much Opposition. Not a few of those who expected to undergo the Distemper, had religious Scruples in their Minds against receiving it in this Way; and such would frequently ask my Thots about the Lawfulness of it, with all the Signs of conscientious Doubters. It was certainly my Duty to answer them according to the best Light I had, leaving them then to judge for themselves. And having often done this in a private Way, to save Time and Trouble to my self and others, I published the following Reply to all or most of the Objections I then met with. I endeavoured to make the Answers short and plain, and so to fit them for common Use. The
Reader

Reader will easily perceive that some of the Objections relate to the peculiar Circumstances of Boston at that Time; and he may, perhaps, think many of them weak and trifling; yet they were such as were commonly offer'd, and in such Cases the weakest must be condescended to.

And now that the Distemper has again visited the Town, and Inoculation is still in some measure the Subject of Dispute, I have been applied to for my Consent to another Impression. I know of no Reason to be against it, my Thots continuing still the same, and my Opinion in favour of the Practice being more confirmed: And I think I have said nothing that can offend any, but such as will assume to themselves the Government of others Consciences, or will be displeas'd with any thing that does not agree with their espoused Sentiments.

By the best Information I can get, the learned and pious, both Divines and Physicians, do more and more give into the Practice, here and in England. Soon after the following Letter was printed here in Boston, it was reprinted in London, together with the Reverend Mr. Colman's Account of the Method and Success of this Practice; to which was prefix'd an historical Introduction by the Reverend Mr. Neal. I have the Satisfaction

to see that Gentleman say of the *Answers*, that *He* thinks they are clear and solid; but whether they are sufficient to encourage conscientious and tender Parents, to provide for the safety of their Children in this Way, must be left (*He* says) to the Judgment of every Reader. *This indeed is a Case I have not directly answered; nor did I think there was much Occasion for it. It has always been allow'd that Parents have a Power to act for their Children, in Things wherein their Lives, as well as other Interests, are concern'd, till they are capable to judge and act for themselves. And I believe few Parents who are clear in it for themselves, will neglect it for their Children.*

I would take this Opportunity, now that the Practice is less formidable than it was, and considerable Numbers are like to go into it, to caution Persons against acting rashly and precipitantly in so tender and important an Affair. I would advise none to go into it without a due regard to their Constitution, and such a Preparation of their Bodies as the Physician whom they consult may advise to. Much less should any dare to venture upon it till they have seriously endeavour'd by the Help of divine Grace, to get the great Concerns of their Souls well secur'd; and till they have such a Satisfaction in their own Minds, as that they can in this way as well as the
other,

other, resign themselves and theirs, to the sovereign Disposal of Heaven. Notwithstanding the great and unquestionable Advantage on the side of Inoculation, You may miscarry under it; and I can't but expect some will, if any Number take the Distemper in this way: For I don't suppose it agreeable to the Wisdom of God in the Government of Man, to grant any Means that shall be an infallible Security from Death, by such a mortal Distemper. Therefore look upon your selves as passing a Trial for your Lives, and act accordingly. While you hope to live, be sure prepare to die. And then, If it please the King of Heaven, let your life be given you at your Petition, and your Children at your Request!

W. Cooper.

Boston, March 4.

1729-30.



A
R E P L Y

TO THE

Religious Scruples against Inoculating the SMALL POX.

In a Letter to a Friend.

S I R,

THE new Method of receiving the Small Pox by *Incision* (or *Inoculation* as 'tis commonly call'd) has been, you know, the Subject not only of plentiful Discourse, but of angry Debate, and fierce Contention among us in this Town. And it is a very unhappy Circumstance attending us here, that almost every thing that is now done or doing among us, if it be at all of a publick Nature, creates Heats and Animofities. I am in hopes our good People will by and by be sensible of the Folly and

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Mischief

Mischief of this, and come to such a Temper as will suffer them to *differ* from one another, without being *angry* with one another. In the mean Time, I hope that the People in other Towns where the Distemper has made its Entrance, will preserve a better Temper, if any among them should put this Method into Practice.

However some among us may appear against it out of Party and Prejudice, yet there are many who are *conscientiously* averse to it, I believe; and, if these preserve the *Meekness of Wisdom*, they are (as a *very Reverend Person* has lately said of them) greatly to be commended and honoured, in that they will not act against a doubting Conscience.

I perceive that the Scruples and Objections commonly offer'd by People here, have such a Force upon your Mind, as keeps you from going into this Method, which may, by the Blessing of Heaven, be your Safety and Preservation. Now *Friendship*, (the Offices of which should be sacredly regarded by us) obliges me to attempt to relieve and help you, in a Matter wherein your *Life*, so precious in it self, and deservedly dear to me, is so much concerned.

For Satisfaction about the Method and Success of this Practice, I refer you to the *Observations* on it made and publish'd by the Reverend Mr. Colman; having been my self a Witness to most of the Instances he mentions.

But that which you want Satisfaction about is, the *Scruples* and *Objections* of a *conscientious* or religious Nature, which are commonly offer'd by People against this Method. These I shall endeavour to answer and resolve, as I am able, in a few Words; and if they afford you any Light or Satisfaction respecting the same, you may communicate them to whom you please; and if it should be thought worth while to make them publick, I think none can censure me for starting out of my Line, or meddling with what is none of my Business, since the Thing I am now upon relates to *Religion and Conscience*.

Obj. 1. One great Thing urg'd against this Practice is, *That it is not lawful for me to make my self sick when I am well. Or voluntarily to bring a Distemper upon my self.*

Ans. To bring Sicknes upon one's self for its own sake, is what no Man in his right Wits would do. But to make my self sick in *such a Way*, as may probably serve my Health, and save my Life, and with

such a *Design*, is certainly fitting and reasonable, and therefore lawful. This is every Day practis'd among People without any Scruple, in Purges and Vomits, and other Things in medical Use. Now, if I may lawfully make my self sick by taking something in at my Mouth, why not by putting something in at my *Arm*? Or, if I may lawfully make my self sick for *one Day*, why not for *two Days*, or more, as the Case may require? Aye, but this is to bring a *Distemper* upon my self. I think it can *hardly be call'd* bringing it upon my self, when the Case is so with me, (not having had the Distemper, and living in an infected Air) that I can't but expect to undergo it in a very little time. I know indeed God can preserve me from the Infection; but when my Neighbours all round me are visited, I know of no *Warrant* that any particular Person has to expect an *extraordinary Preservation*. He that has no Reason to think, but that he is as liable to the *Small Pox* as other People are, and yet keeps in the Way of it, *expecting that God will preserve him untouch'd*, however some may give it the Name of Trust, and Faith, and the like, I cannot but look upon it and call it *Presumption*. In short, I can't but think, when I am in such Circumstances, that I can neither *rationaly* nor *warrantably* expect to escape
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the Distemper, that it is *then* lawful for me to bring upon my self a *lesser* Degree of it, to prevent a *greater*. I'll put the Case thus, If I have not had the *Small Pox*, it is to be supposed there is in my Body, what I'll call the *Fuel* of that Distemper, and there only wants the lighting of a *Spark* to set this Fuel on burning. The *Air* I breath in is full of these Sparks; and I may expect *every Breath I fetch* to draw some of them in: If now it appears upon daily Experience, that by making an Incision in my *Arm*, and letting the Spark in that Way, the Fuel will burn with less Fierceness, and consequently Danger, why may'nt I take it in that Way? Why must I needs stay till it comes in at my *Mouth* or *Nostrils*, or thro' some of the *porous Parts* of my Body? For my Part, I think the Law of *Self-Preservation*, which is God's *Law*, requires me to take this Method of Safety, whereby (to use the apt Words of another) the *Disease* is, thro' God's common Blessing, happily converted into a *Remedy*.

Obj. 2. *But ought we not to wait God's Time for it?*

Ans. I think *then is the Time* Providence calls me to this Method of Safety, when I am in imminent and *immediate* Danger of the Distemper the other Way. Should any one go into the Practice of Inoculation,
out

out of a *Bravado*, without his being in known hazard of the Distemper by the common Way of Infection, I should not think it warrantable. But *then is God's time* for us to use Means of Safety, when we are in *apparent Danger* of any deadly or destructive Evil.

Obj. 3. But 'tis objected again, *Can we not trust God?*

Ans. I suppose every Body will allow that the Use of Means is not inconsistent with Trust in God; and why there can't be Trust in God in the Use of *this* Means, as well as other, I cannot imagine.

Obj. 4. But, *it is a going from God to Man.*

Ans. How! Can't we make Use of Men and Means in a Time of Danger without going from God? If any, like *Asa*, look to the *Physician*, and *not to the Lord*, they are very irreligious and profane therein. But if any do *principally* and in the first Place seek to God, may they not then innocently and lawfully make use of the *best human Help* the Providence of God affords them? I must profess and declare on the Part of many of the inoculated, that they, and their Friends concern'd for them, have gone into the Practice, with *many Prayers* to God, and other suitable Expressions of *Trust and Devotion*.

Obj.

Obj. 5. But still some say, this Practice looks to them, like *taking God's Work out of his Hand.*

Ans. Indeed this Distemper can arrest none without a Commission from God. But yet it is not inflicted by God's *immediate Hand*; we receive it in a *Natural Way*, and by Means of *second Causes*; and *this we do in the Way of Inoculation*, as well as of common Infection. If we have the Small Pox in either of these Ways, it is still the Work of God: For all the second Causes depend on and act under Him the first Cause. And, *the Application of Means natural for this or that End, is it not an Application to the God of Nature?* If God does not cooperate by his *actual Providence*, can the Effect be produc'd? For, *Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?* What is there of the Hand or Power of Man in this Work, after the Incision is made, and the Matter apply'd? The *Work is still left with God*, and we must wait upon him for his actual Influence and Blessing, even as the Husbandman does for the Rain and Sun-shine of Heaven, after the Seed is thrown into the Earth.

Obj. 6. But the Small Pox is a Judgment of God, sent to punish and humble us for our Sins;

Sins ; and what shall we so evade it, and think to turn it away from us ?

Ans. I fully agree to it, that it is a sore Judgment of God upon us for our Sins, which we have much deserv'd : And it is greatly to be lamented that it has no better Effect upon the Hearts of Men.— But is it unlawful to use Means for our Preservation from a desolating Judgment ? *Especially*, if at the very Time that God sends the Judgment, he shews us a Way to escape the *Extremity* and Destruction at least, if not the Touch of it. If a gracious God shews us so much *Mercy* as this under the Judgment, does it become us to *put it away from our selves*, or rather should we not accept it with *Adoring Thankfulness* ?

Obj. 7. But some have said to me, *This Method tends to take off the Fears of this Distemper from the Minds of People ; and who knows of what spiritual Advantage these Fears might be to them ?*

In Answer to this I would ask, whether God cannot make the *Mercy* of their Preservation and Recovery in this Way, of spiritual Advantage to them also, and by that *lead them to Repentance* ? And, I truly hope, the Salvation of God bestow'd upon some in *this Way*, as well as the other, will have a gracious sanctifying Effect upon

upon them, under the powerful working of the Spirit of Grace. I was glad to see the serious Frames *some of them* were in at the very Time; how much affected they seem'd to be with the Favour of God to them; what a good Profession of holy Resolutions, *some of them* made. And I would take this Opportunity to call upon them from God to remember the same, and to be *daily performing their Vows*.

Obj 8. Some object against the *Practice* because of the *unhappy Consequents* of it among us; *the Feuds and Contention, Sin and Mischief that it has occasioned.*—

Ans. Of this, I hope, I am a mournful Spectator; And it has made me sundry times ready to take up that Wish, *Oh that I had Wings like a Dove!* And I must freely declare, that I look upon that Spirit of Party and Division that is reigning among us, to be a sorer Judgment of God upon us, than the Distemper which has so distress'd us. But yet, I am far from thinking that the *Badness* of the *thing* in its self is to be argu'd or infer'd from this *Effect* of it. For does not the same *Effect* attend many other things unquestionably *good* in themselves; such as the building of Houses for the Worship of God, the Choice of Ministers, and of Persons to serve in the State, &c: Nay, the very preaching of the Gos-

pel in the World, tho' it be the Gospel of *Peace*, and the Gospel of *Salvation* too, has been, and is, *accidentally*, thro' the Corruption of Men's Hearts, and under the Influence of the envious Enemy of Mankind, the Occasion of all this; according as our Saviour has foretold that it would be, saying (Mat. 10. 34, 35.) *Think not that I am come to send Peace on Earth: I came not to send Peace but a Sword. For I am come to set a Man at variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother, and the Daughter-in-law against her Mother-in-law. And a Man's Foes shall be they of his own House.*

Obj. 9. Some frame an Objection against this Practice from the *Decrees of God*. They say that *God has predetermin'd and fixed the Period of every one's Life, beyond which nothing shall protract it; so that if his time be come, Inoculation will not save the Person's Life.*

Ans. But this *Argument* may as well be urg'd against the Use of *all Physick*, nay, even of *Food*, as against this Practice. I truly believe, as my Bible teaches me, that God has fix'd the Period of every one's Life; but I also believe, that he has done it with a *Regard to Second Causes*, or that Course of Nature which he has establish'd; *the End and Means are determin'd together.* He that has fix'd in his
own

own Counsel how long we shall live, has also determin'd, that by such and such Means, our Lives shall be continued to that Period of Time. And how does any one know, but this is to be the *appointed Means*, of their preservation in Life?

Obj. 10. Some have ask'd, *Whether we could assure them their Lives in this Way?*

Ans. It is strange that any should put the Question! when there is none can give the Assurance of this, *not in the most innocent and common Means*, that are every Day made use of: Why then should they demand it in *this*? I know of one who died under a Vomit. Another, whom I also knew, died by pulling out a Tooth; the bleeding at the Gums, after the Extraction of the Tooth could not be stopt, and in a little Time he died. And for my own part, as much as I am now for Inoculation, I am not at all shy to say, that a Person may miscarry under it: For *God is Sovereign*, and will keep us in a Dependence upon him, in the Use of all Means. But if it appear from Matter of Fact, and Experience truly represented, that the Hazard in this Way is far less than that of accidental Contagion, this I conceive is sufficient to legitimate the Practice, and justify any one's going into it, when there is Occasion.

Obj. 11. *But suppose I should die in the Way of Inoculation, would it not make a dying Hour very dark to me, to think that I us'd Means to bring it upon my self?*

Ans. This is a Question, I must confess, has been the most affecting to me, of any that have related to this Matter. But after the most serious Consideration I have bestow'd upon it, I thus think; If a Person should die under Inoculation, he dies in the Use of the most likely Means he knew of, to save his Life in a Time of common Peril; he dies *then* in the *Way of Duty*, and *so* in *God's Way*: If the Blessing is denied, he must humbly resign this his frail *Life*, unto the *God of it*, *Looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto Eternal Life*.

Obj. 12. There is one thing more said against this Practice, which I am loth to take any Notice of, because of the *Prophe-ness* of it; but it being so frequently in the Mouths of People, I cannot but name it. 'Tis this, *That it is originally from the Devil*.

Ans. Sure this is the Effect of *Transport*! I will return a better Answer to it than it deserves: If it be a *Method of Safety*, and a *Benefit to Mankind*, as hitherto it appears to be, how came the Devil to be the Author of it? Was he ever a *Benefactor* to
Man-

Mankind? No: But he is a *Murderer from the Beginning*. Every Age of the World produces some *new* and useful Discoveries, in one Profession, Art and Science or another; And if this Discovery be reserv'd for our Day, why should it not be accepted *in all Places with all Thankfulness*? In a Word, I cannot but think its Original derived elsewhere, because my *Bible* teaches me, that *every good and perfect Gift comes down from the Father of Lights*.

As to that Objection, of *the Danger of others catching the Distemper from the Inoculated*, there needs only this to be said; That as tis to be suppos'd, the Practice will not be gone into till the Danger of Infection becomes common in a Place, so there may be Methods easily taken, to prevent its hazarding of others that can't yet come into it. And I think there ought to be a prudent Care in this respect.

Thus, Sir, I have freely given you my Thoughts about this Practice, so *much spoken against*. I must now leave you to judge for your self, praying God to *shew you his Way*. If you come into the Practice, I know you will not do it in *carnal Security*; for that may provoke God to deny the Blessing. And, if God please to give it the desir'd Success, you'll religiously

ly give Glory to him, not only for delivering you from *Death*, but for saving you from such a *Bed of Corruption*, as others have many *wearisome Days and Nights appointed* them in ; you'll think your self the *more oblig'd* to thank and praise your *kind Physician*, (I mean the *Great One*) who has wrought your *Cure* by so *gentle* a Method.

I have no more to add, but my Prayers, that you and I may be made meet for, and, in God's Time, brought safe to, that World, where there shall be *no more Sickness, nor any more Death*, ; where Sin, and all the penal Consequences of it, shall be done away for ever. I am,

Boston,
Nov. 20. 1721.

Your hearty Friend,
and Servant.

POSTSCRIPT.

HAVING Room left for it, I would take the Liberty to offer to your View, a *Scheme of Principles*, (which I take from that truly great Man, and bright Ornament of the Establish'd Church, *Bishop Wilkins*) in the same Way and Method as is us'd in the *Mathematicks*, consisting of *Postulata, Definitions and Axioms*; which
are

Postscript.

are indeed no other than the common Dictates of Nature, and agreeable to the Reason of all Mankind; and which being applied to *Inoculation*, seem unanswerably to justify the Practice, supposing the Probability of Success to be much greater on that side.

A Scheme of Natural Principles.

Postulatum. *Every Thing is endow'd with such a natural Principle, whereby it is necessarily inclin'd to promote its own Preservation and Well-being.*

Defin. 1. *That which hath in it a Fitness to promote this End, is called Good. And on the contrary, that which is apt to hinder it, is called Evil. Amongst which there are several Degrees, according as Things have more or less Fitness, to promote or hinder this End.*

Defin. 2. *The lessening or escaping of Evil is to be reckoned under the Notion of Good. The lessening or loss of Good is to be reckoned under the Notion of Evil.*

Axiom 1. *That which is Good is to be chosen and prosecuted, that which is Evil is to be avoided.*

2. The greater Good is to be preferred before

Postscript.

before the less, and the less Evil be endured rather than the greater.

Such kinds of Things or Events, as will certainly come to pass, may fall under Computation, and be estimated as to their several Degrees, as well as Things present. Because when such a Space of Time is elaps'd, that which is now future, will become present.

4. And thus likewise is it for such Things as may probably come to pass.

5. A present Good may reasonable be parted with, upon a probable Expectation of a future Good which is more excellent.

6. A present Evil is to be endur'd, for the avoiding a probable future Evil, which is far greater.

7. The greater the Evil is, the more Reason is there to venture the loss of a less Good, or the suffering of a less Evil, for the escaping of it.

F I N I S