

The Waitecut 6. 12. 1794



Enochson Tilton A. M.

A.

DEFENCE

of the *Dialogue,*

Intitl'd,

A Display of GOD's special Grace.

Against

The Reverend Mr. CROSSWELL's *Exceptions.*



A. *The Teststone*

D E F E N C E

OF THE

D I A L O G U E

INTITLED,

A DISPLAY of GOD'S *special*
GRACE.

Against the *Exceptions* made to it by the Rev.

Mr. *A. Crosswell.*

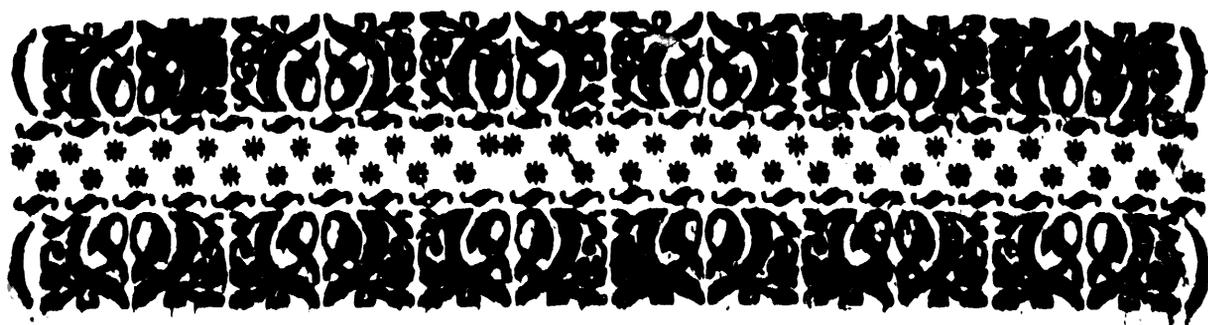
*In a LETTER to Him from the Author of that
Book.*

Gal. ii. 11. *But when Peter was come to Antioch,
I withstood him to the Face, because he was to be
blamed.*

B O S T O N :

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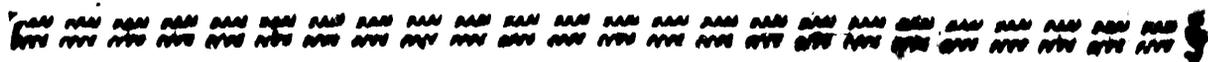
A D E F E N C E of the DIALOGUE,

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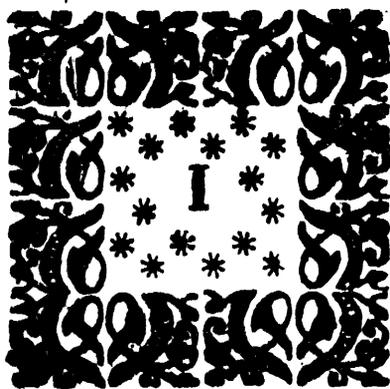
*A Display of GOD's Special
G R A C E.*

Against the Exceptions of Mr. A. CROSSWELL.

In a LETTER to him.



Rev. and dear Brother,



Acknowledge, that it concerns me more than any Man, seriously to consider the Exceptions you make against the Dialogue intituled, *A DISPLAY of God's special Grace.* My Conscience bears me witness that it was my Aim and Endeavour in writing that little Book, to promote the Glory of GOD, the Interest of my Redeemer's Kingdom, and the Welfare of immortal Souls. It is sad indeed, if I have so mistaken my Way, that the Discourse, *is more adapted to destroy the Power of Godliness, than the worst Arminian Performance that ever was written, as you say it is, (Page 23.) and, that it is impossible for the Pen of a Man*

Man, or the Tongue of an Angel, to go too far, in setting forth the Danger of the Doctrine therein contain'd; and that the Book has a plain and strong Tendency, to chase pure and undefiled Religion from the Earth, leaving nothing in the room of it, but the Religion of Nature and Arminius; as you insinuate (Page 15.) If these Accusations are just, it is high Time I should be convinced of my dangerous Errors, that I might make my Retraction as publick as the Doctrines you complain of; and join with you, in lifting up my Voice as a Trumpet against that Book, witnessing both to small and great, in season and out of season, the everlasting Misery and Destruction that are in the Ways of it, as you express yourself (P. 17.) — But if on the other hand, it should appear upon a Review of the Case, that the Mistake is on your side of the Question, and that there is no other Reason for that harsh Treatment you have given to so many of your Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry (who were pleas'd to honour my Book with their Recommendation) and for your bitter Reflections upon them, to the Injury of their Characters, and the Prejudice of their ministerial Labours, but your own wrong Apprehension of Things; it is then Time for you to reflect upon what you have done, and to remember, that you can't finally find your Account in beating your Fellow-Servants, and reproaching their faithful Endeavours to bring perishing Souls to CHRIST. — Let us then impartially consider this Case, in the Fear of GOD. For it will stand neither of us in stead a little while hence, to have handled the Word of GOD deceitfully; or to have appeared with Applause, either for a Sect or Party, or in Defence of our own Schemes.

Your first Accusation respects the Character of *Libertinus* (my Adversary in the Dialogue) concerning which you exclaim in the following Words. *And who is this Antinomian design'd to personate? A great part of those who are zealous for the Work of GOD, without Controversy. And is it applicable to them? No, (blessed be God) I believe the Author could not, to save his Life, find one single Person in each of our Colonies, to whom the Character is adjusted. (P. 5)*

To this I answer, that I hen't certain what you mean by those Words, (*each of our Colonies.*) You may perhaps intend the *Massachusetts-Bay*, and *Connecticut*. If so, and if there be not any Person in both those Colonies, who has embraced the *Antinomian* Errors, you have indeed Cause to bless GOD, that he

he has hitherto kept out the fatal Contagion. May the dark Appearances in the neighbouring Colonies, alarm you to be upon your Guard, not only against the more gross & perillous Principles of that Sect; but also against their more plausible Delusions, which directly (tho' not so apparently) lead Men into the same destructive Snare.

That you may not any longer be led by Jealousies and uncertain Surmises, about the Reasons of my endeavouring to lay open the dangerous Tendency of those licentious Principles of the *Antinomians*, I will give you this plain Account of the Matter. I wrote it as an Antidote against the spreading of that dangerous Disease, which I thought I had great Reason to be apprehensive of. For, It has already appeared in its worst Form; and made considerable Progress in *Pensylvania*, particularly in *Philadelphia*. And tho' the painful Endeavours of a number of Ministers, may have given some Check to it, I am persuaded the Danger is not yet over.— The *Moravians* are coming among us in great Numbers, and endeavouring to make Profelytes; and if we may judge of their Principles, by Count *Zinzendorff's* printed Sermons, they embrace the worst of those Doctrines, *Libertinus* is represented to patronize, in the *Dialogue*. I add to this, *Antinomianism* for some Time past has been, and now is appearing with open Face, in all its Colours, and gaining Ground too fast, in the several Parishes of *Southold* on *Long-Island*, notwithstanding all the Endeavours of the Ministers there, to suppress it; as I have good Reason to be assured. And the same Thing may be observed, with respect to considerable Numbers in *New Jersey*, who seem to act from the same Principles, in following a scandalous, deposed and excommunicated Minister, against all Admonitions to the contrary. I might have mentioned some Informations, from both your Colonies in *New-England*, of the Danger of these Principles spreading there; had you not assured me, that I could not, to save my Life, find one single Person in each of them, that embrace them.

You must allow me, *Sir*, to know my own Views, in that Undertaking; and I do assure you, it is your Mistake, to suppose, that I design'd *Libertinus* should personate any one of those that are zealous for the Work of *G O D*. I design'd he should personate those only, who are in direct Opposition to it. I design'd he should personate the *Antinomians*, whom you al-

✠ A Defence of the Dialogue, &c.

low to be in a *Soul-damning Error*. (P. 5.) That no Man is farther concern'd in the Character of *Libertinus*, than he embraces his Principles. And I take this Opportunity solemnly to declare, that I w^{as} so far from entertaining the least Thought, of bringing a Slur or Reproach upon the *Work of GOD*, which has been so conspicuous of late in our Land, or upon any that are *zealous* for it, in any Part of that *Dialogue*, that I was acted by directly contrary Views, in the whole Undertaking. Tho' I must also declare, that I then did, and still do think, that *some* zealous and godly Brethren, who are earnestly and sincerely engaged in that Cause, have run into very great Irregularities; and have thereby been accidentally very injurious to it, in their Endeavours to promote it; and that others (the *Antinomians* in particular) may pretend the Cause of GOD, when they are in the most direct and immediate Manner, subverting and undermining it. Upon these Accounts, I could not but hope, it would be of some Service to the Interest of CHRIST's Kingdom, to set *that Cause* in a proper Light; to shew the *Opposers* of that miraculous Work of divine Grace, the dreadful Danger of their Case; to convince some of our *godly Brethren*, of the ill Effects of their *mistaken Conduct*; and to detect, and if possible prevent the progress of those mischievous *Errors*, which so openly appear among us, and would take Sanctuary under a pretence of the Cause of GOD and Religion. This, *Sir*, is a plain and faithful Account of my Motives to that Work; and I can't but flatter my self, from the Acceptance that little Book has met with, that GOD has graciously been pleased to bless my poor Endeavours, with some Success. — I now proceed to consider *your Exceptions*, against the *Doctrines* you are so much displeas'd with.

The *Dialogue* represents *Libertinus* complaining of our Ministry, in the following Terms. “ You shew your *legal Spirit*, by teaching Sinners the Necessity of *Preparations* for their coming to CHRIST; and not directing them to come *immediately*, without Delay. ” Upon which you observe, that *very great Honour* was certainly done him, by making him dispute, for Ministers calling Sinners to come to CHRIST *immediately*; and for Assurance being at some Times the common Privilege of all Believers. — These two Things, which they make *Libertinus* contend earnestly for, are by a nick-Name called *Antinomian*

nomian Conceits, tho' Anti-Arminian Tenets, is the proper Name for them.

And now, SIR, How unhappy will it prove, if you your self are teaching the very same Doctrine, which you so warmly oppose; and if your Investives against it do fully and necessarily establish it? There were six Things proposed in the *Dialogue*, as necessary Preparatives to a saving Faith in Christ. A Knowledge of the Way of Salvation by Christ, a Sense of Sin and Misery, a Discovery of our natural Impotency and Necessity of Christ, such a Desire of an Interest in Christ, as will make us willing to accept him, a Renunciation of other Hopes and Confidences; and a Discovery of Safety in believing in him, and venturing our eternal Interests in his Hands. And tho' I there declare, that we who hold the Necessity of these previous Preparations, are as earnest with Sinners to believe in Christ *immediately*; as the *Antinomians* can be; yet it is evident from the very *Nature of Things*, that they will not comply with these Exhortations, until they have these Preparations; or such Impressions upon their Minds, as will dispose them to an Acceptance of the Gospel-Offer. This is the Doctrine you oppose.

I shall now consider, whether you do not your self teach every one of these Things, as necessary Preparatives to coming to Christ; the first, *viz.* A Knowledge of the Way of Salvation, only excepted.

The *Dialogue* teaches, that a Sense of Sin and Misery, is previously necessary to our coming to Christ. Mr. Croswell teaches, that *instead of giving Sinners long and particular Directions, how to close with Christ in the Way of Duty, it would certainly be much better, to be almost continually setting before them, the Vengeance of the eternal GOD, who is their Enemy; and to teach and command them in his Name, to come to Christ for Refuge.* (P. 9.) And again, *This Imagination will lessen their Convictions, and lighten their Burden; and for Ministers to lessen the Burden of Sinners, is in Truth, only to stop them from coming to Christ,* (P. 7.) And again, *The plain and strong Tendency of which is, to settle all strict Pharisees, upon the damnable Foundation of their own Works, to keep those who are but little, from being much concern'd about their Souls, to make those who are much concern'd, to lose their Convictions; and to stop short of Christ and the New-Creature.* (P. 15.) And is

not this the very same Doctrine, which you so zealously oppose? Is it not by your own Account of the Matter, necessary, that Sinners should be sensible of their Sin and Misery; or in your Words, that they should have *the Vengeance of the eternal GOD set before them*, in order to their *flying to Christ for Refuge*; that they should have *Convictions* that must not be lessened, a *Burden* that must not be lightened, since to lighten their Burden stops them from coming to Christ? Don't you your self make it necessary, that we should not keep those who are *little* from being *much* concern'd about their Souls; or make those who are much concern'd, to *lose their Convictions*? And have I said any thing more than this comes to, in the Book you oppose? If Sinners must have the Vengeance of the eternal GOD set before them, in order to their flying to Christ for Refuge: If they must have Convictions, that must not be lessened; and a Burden that must not be lightened, lest they are stop't from coming to Christ: If they must be much concern'd about their Souls; and not lose their Convictions, lest they stop short of Christ and the New-Creature; then a Sinner must be sensible of his sinful and miserable State, as was asserted in the *Dialogue*. Thus far then we teach the same Thing.

The *Dialogue* teaches, that a Sinner must have a Sense of his natural *Impotency*; and of his *Necessity of Christ*, in order to his coming to him. Mr. *Crosswell* teaches, that *this is what Sinners need to be convinced of, that tho' they must come to Christ, they are absolutely unable to come to him.*—*The awaken'd Sinner must have his Way hedg'd up. He must be lost in a Wilderness, before he is found of Christ.* (P. 7.) Now, SIR, Where is the Difference between your Doctrine and mine? I suppose, that Sinners should see their *Necessity of Christ*; and you tell us, that they *need to be convinced*, that they *MUST* come to Christ. I suppose, that they should have a sense of their natural *Impotency*; and you tell us that they *must be convinced*, that they are *utterly unable* to come to him, that their *Way must be hedg'd up*; and they *must be lost in a Wilderness, before they are found of Christ*. I know no Difference in this Matter, between what is said in the *Dialogue*, and what you say in Opposition to it; but only, that you are pleas'd to express the same Thing in other Words.

The *Dialogue* teaches that Sinners, in order to a true Faith, must have such *Desires* of an Interest in Christ, as makes 'em willing to accept him, upon *his own Terms*. And Mr. Croswell teaches, that Sinners being told, that they deserve *Damnation for every Refusal*, puts them upon doing their utmost; and convinces them, that really they can do nothing; and so is a *Means of humbling them to the Dust*; and of causing them to come to Christ, to take the *Burden off from their sinking Souls*. (P. 7.) Here then is such a *Desire*, previous to the Sinners coming to Christ, as puts him upon *utmost Endeavours* to help himself, that lades his sinking Soul with a *dreadful Burden*, when his *Disappointment* from his false *Refuges* is discovered; and that finally *CAUSES him to come to Christ*, as his last *Refuge*, that his *Burden* may be taken off. And why is not this *Doctrine* as innocent in the *Dialogue*, as in your *Reply*?

The *Dialogue* teaches, that a Sinner must *renounce all other Hopes and Confidences*, before he will come to CHRIST. And Mr. Croswell teaches, that *since there is such a violent propensity in Sinners when awakened, to rest in their Duties, such Directions as these Ministers plead for; and are commonly practiced, will be exceeding likely to keep them from CHRIST; and to marry them to the Law their natural Spouse*. (P. 8.) Well then, if resting in Duties keeps Men from CHRIST, it is certainly necessary, that they *renounce these false Confidences*, before they will come to Christ.

The *Dialogue* teaches, that the Sinner must, previous to his coming to Christ, see such *Safety* in believing in him, as will *encourage* him to venture his eternal Interests in his Hands. And Mr. Croswell teaches, that *Ministers should beseech and command Sinners in his Name to come to Christ for Refuge; and to venture Souls their upon him*. (P. 9.) Very well then, they must be taught, and must be sensible, that Christ is a *Refuge* for 'em to fly to, that there is *safety* in believing in him; and that they may safely venture their Soule upon him.

And now, my dear Brother, can you think, that you have done justly and charitably, in making such tragical Exclamations against those Things, which you yourself at the same Time in Effect declare to be true and right.

Have I not now the Advantage to retort upon you, and make a like stinging Reflection upon your Performance, with that in the 10th Page of your *Reply*? “ I can’t help remarking, that ’tis strange, that tho’ Mr. *Groswell* did not see, that he was contradicting the *Scriptures*, he did not at least see, that he contradicted *himself*. For he repeatedly insists upon it, that Sinners must be invited to come *immediately* to Christ; nor will he allow, that *Men must get the Hindrances out of the Way, in order to come to Christ*, nor that *their Eyes and Heart should be somewhat open’d, before they behold him, and receive him into their Hearts.* (P. 14.) They must get *into the strong Hold immediately*; BUT he would first set before ’em the *Vengeance* of the eternal GOD, who is their *Enemy*. He exhorts to look to Christ *immediately*; BUT they must needs be *first* convinced, that tho’ they must come to Christ, they are absolutely *unable* to come to him. They must be put upon going to Christ *immediately*; BUT they must be *first* put upon *doing their utmost*, and this must convince them, that really they can do nothing; which is a means of *bumbling* them to the Dust, yea, and of CAUSING them to come to Christ. He would have them give Christ *mediate* Entertainment; BUT they must *first* be brought off from *resting* upon their *Duties*, which else will keep them from coming to Christ. — Now all these BUT’s shew that ’tis not *immediately*. ’Tis just as if a Man should bid his *Servant* come to him *immediately*; *but* withal bid him stay a little while, and do something else first. The plain English of what he says, is no better than this, *viz.* I do invite Sinners to come Christ *immediately*; but yet I do *not* invite them to come *immediately*. ” — I must insist upon it, that there is full as much Propriety, in fixing these Consequences upon your *Reply*, as there is in fixing them upon the *Dialogue*. And t’is very same Reasoning (be it what it will) that shall clear *you* from these Contradictions, will clear *me* also. — And now let us proceed to the Merits of the Cause.

I readily acknowledge the Truth of what you say, (P. 6.) That *the great GOD* calls, invites and commands poor perishing Sinners to come to Christ (or believe on him) for Life and Happiness; and that he requires them to come *immediately*. And it is therefore the Duty of Gospel-Ministers, to teach Sinners

Sinners by the most forceable Motives to a present Compliance with the Gospel Offer. But then, It is our Duty *also* to let them know, that while they remain in a State of *Stupidity* and *Security*, while insensible of their Danger and of their Need of a Saviour, or while depending upon their Self-righteous Attainments, they neither *can* nor *will* come to him; and that it is therefore necessary, to use all proper Endeavours to *awaken* them out of their Security; and to shew them, that the Avenger of Blood is pursuing them, that so they may fly to the City of Refuge. And herein I have the Satisfaction to find, that *you* (notwithstanding all your seeming Opposition to me) are really of my Sentiments; and that a greater than either you or I, took the same Method, in exhorting Sinners, *to awake out of their Sleep, and to arise from the dead, that Christ might give them Light.* Eph. 5. 14.

But then, Some of our modern *Antinomians*, the *Moravians* in particular, do insist upon the direct *contrary* to all this; as appears from a variety of Passages in Count *Zinzendorff's* Sermons; tho', not having the Book now in my Hands, I can't here point out to you the particular Expressions. They insist upon it, that without any previous preparatory and legal Work, firmly to believe that Jesus Christ is our Saviour in particular, puts us into a State of Salvation; and that it is no uncommon Thing for Men to obtain Salvation meerly by this Belief, even in the last Moments of their Life. They therefore, avoid all Methods of awakening Sinners out of their Security; and of giving them any disquieting Apprehensions of their Misery and Danger, both in their publick and private Addresses.— I would now appeal to your own Experience, whether *this* Way and Manner of exhorting Sinners to believe in Christ immediately, be a likely Mean to bring 'em to a saving Faith in him. Have you not constantly observ'd, that in the late wonderful Effusion of GOD's holy Spirit among us, Sinners have be'n first awaken'd, to see their Danger, Misery and Impotence; and by that Discovery, driven and even constrained to fly to Christ for Refuge? Has it not constantly appear'd to be at least GOD's ordinary Method, in bringing adult Sinners home to himself, to convince them first of *Sin* and then of *Righteousness* and *Judgment*?

— I am, Sir, your Obedient Servant, and your humble Servant, *J. W.*

this is the most successful Method of preaching, the Method that you your self are in ? What then, my dear Brother, has soured your Spirit to such a Degree against the *Dialogue*, as to provoke you to such *A. s. p. e. r. i. t. y.*, towards so many excellent Ministers of Christ, who saw fit to recommend it ? Can you find any Thing *there*, inconsistent with this Representation of the Matter ? — Nay, Are not all the Arguments with *Libertinus* on this Subject, directly aim'd at this View of the Case ?—— The best Apology I can make for your Conduct is, that you were alarm'd with a Jealousy of something designed, which never came into the *Author's* Thoughts, or the *Rev. Prefacers* ; and which has no Foundation at all in the *Book*, you are pleas'd to make the Object of your Resentments.

I am the more confirm'd in this Apprehension, by your repeated Invectives, against *Ministers giving their Hearers a long Train of Directions*, (P. 7.) *keeping the Way to Christ (as they call it) always open and clear before them ; and therefore, instead of guiding them to Christ, they only lead them from Christ to Ordinances, which they in Effect make a Christ of,* (P. 8.) and by your insinuating, that *such Directions are what these Ministers plead for.* (Ibid.) — But what is there in the *Dialogue*, to give any Umbrage for all these Insinuations ? Nothing at all, that has the least Appearance of this kind.

When you are finding Fault with a *long Train of Directions*, (P. 7.) and telling us, that you *are not absolutely against all sorts of Directions*, (P. 8.) it must be presumed, that the Directions you complain of, must be such as are specified by you;—Such Directions as *naturally cause Sinners to imagine, that if they observe them carefully, God will be thereby inclined to save them, such as will lighten their Burden, and thereby stop them from coming to Christ*, (P. 7.) and such as will *lead them from Christ to Ordinances, which they (in effect) make a Christ of.* (P. 8.) And therefore such Directions, as have a quite *contrary* Tendency, to these dangerous Effects, are what you yourself must approve of. From whence it follows, that if the whole of that *Conference* now before us, were formed into *Directions* ; and every one of those Directions should prove exactly contrary to those evil Effects which you speak of, they must be such as you approve ; and consequently you have done unworthily by those
Ministers,

Ministers, by insinuating that they are pleading for such Directions as you complain of.

If that whole *Conference* were turn'd into the Form of *Directions*, they must be these that follow. Sinners must (first) be directed to get a *knowledge* of the Gospel, and an Acquaintance with the Way and Terms of Salvation therein proposed, lest they hope for Salvation, they know not how or why. For, *how can they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?* Rom. x. 14. — Secondly, Sinners must be directed to consider and lay it to Heart, that they are in a *sinful, guilty and miserable State*, and that because they believe not, *they are condemned already, and the Wrath of God abideth on them*, as expressed *Jobn iii. 18, ult.* — Thirdly, Sinners must be directed to consider themselves not only sinful and miserable, but *impotent* and utterly unable to help themselves; and therefore in the last Necessity of an Interest in Christ, *without whom they can do nothing*, as *Jobn xv. 5.* — Fourthly, Sinners must be directed never to rest till they feel such *Desires* after Christ, as bring them to a hearty Compliance with the Gospel-Offer; and a Willingness to receive him upon his own Terms. They must be directed, not to rest until they find that they are indeed *made willing in the Day of Christs Power*, as *Psalms cx. 3.* — Fifthly, they must be directed, to bring none of *their own Righteousness* to Christ, nor to expect Salvation from him for their own sake, for their Duties, good Purposes, or Performances; but to renounce all other Hopes and Confidences, but Christ only, that they *may be found in him, not having their own Righteousness which is of the Law; but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith*, *Phil. iii. 9.* — Sixthly, they must be directed, never to satisfy themselves till they have such a discovery of *Safety* in believing in Christ, as that they can readily venture their eternal Interests in his Hands, and till they are bro't to that Language of Heart, *To whom shall we go? For thou hast the Words of eternal Life*, *Joh. vi. 68.* — Seventhly, They must be directed, to do all this *immediately*; for it is a Case of infinite Importance, that admits of no Delay; and yet we must assure them, that they neither *will* nor *can* comply with these Directions, as long as their Darkness, Stupidity, carnal Security, Self-Sufficiency, and Self-Righteousness bolt and bar the *Doors of their Hearts* against

gainst Christ. Therefore, — Eighthly, They must be directed, to go to GOD in the use of appointed *Means*, to remove these *Hindrances* out of the Way, that is, to *enlighten* them, and to *persuade* and *enable* them to believe, that they might be saved; and to *awaken* them out of their Sleep, that they may arise from the Dead, and that Christ may give them Light. — These are all the Particulars that can be found in that Conference, if the whole of it were turn'd into formal Directions. And I appeal to the World, whether every Word of this is not directly contrary to *Sinner's Imaginations*, that GOD will be inclined to save them for attending Directions; directly contrary to *lightning their Burdens* in a Christless State; and directly contrary to *leading them to Ordinances*, that they may (*in Effect*) make a Christ of them.

That this a true and just Representation of the Case, every Man may see, who will take the Pains to compare it with the *Dialogue*. And from this Representation of the Case, it plainly appears, how little Reason you had to exclaim as you do, (P. 11.) *I must observe, that I never read any Thing more legal and dangerous, than their supposing that Men must get the Hindrances out of the Way, in order to their coming to Christ; and their Eyes and Hearts somewhat open'd, before they behold him, or receive him into their Hearts.* — I acknowledge with you, that *this and only this is pure Gospel, that Jesus Christ is both Righteousness and Strength; and that poor Sinners must come to him for all that they want.* (ibid.)

But you must remember, that *coming to Christ*, was intended in the *Dialogue* to signify, receiving him by *Faith*; and was accordingly so explain'd. Now the Question is, Whether the *Hindrances*, such as Men's natural Blindness, Stupidity, carnal Security, Self-Sufficiency, and Self-Righteousness, must not be first remov'd out of the Way, by a Work of the Spirit in *Conviction* and *Humiliation*, before Sinners either *will* or *can* receive Christ by Faith? Answer this directly; and I am mistaken, if you don't teach Doctrines as *legal and dangerous*, as this which you so warmly exclaim against. — There are but two Ways, in which you can possibly give a direct Answer to this. You must *either* assert, that Men's natural Blindness, Stupidity, carnal Security, Self-Sufficiency, and

and Self-Righteousness, are *no Hindrances* to Sinners receiving Christ by Faith, which *need to be removed out of the Way*, in order to it; but that Sinners may receive Christ by Faith, while they remain in such a State: *or else* you must allow, that these Hindrances *must* be removed out of the Way, before Sinners will or can come to Christ. — I think, upon cool and calm Reflection, you will hardly choose the former of these Answers; and therefore you must acknowledge, that 'tis a proper Method, to imitate our blessed Lord, in calling upon Sinners to *pray to GOD*, that He would remove all Hindrances, and persuade and enable them to believe in Christ, — and to *open to him, that he may come in, and sup with them, and they with him.* — Thus it is expressed in the *Dialogue*; and not as you are pleased, in a ludicrous manner, to represent it.

Certain it is, that Sinners must come to Christ *as they are*, if they come at all; they must come as *Sinners*, as guilty, helpless Sinners, without any Qualifications to *recommend* them to his Acceptance. And therefore it is absolutely necessary, that they be *sensible* of this. For while they are proudly, and with an unhumbl'd Spirit, endeavouring to *recommend* themselves to Christ, by their good Qualifications and Performances, this proves a *Barr* in the Way to their Acceptance with him. This *Hindrance* must therefore be *removed* out of the Way; they must come as lost, unworthy Sinners; and receive Christ as a free Gift, without bringing any Thing with them to purchase his Favour, or make them meet for his Acceptance, if they would ever obtain an Interest in him, and his saving Benefits. *The whole need not the Physician; but they that are Sick.* Christ came not to call the *Righteous*, but *Sinners to Repentance.* — But so much for Answer to your Talk on the Head of *Ministers Duty to call Sinners to come to Christ immediately, without first getting the customary Preparations*, as you express it.

I now commend this Point to your serious and deliberate Reflection; and leave it to your own Conscience, whether there be no Justice due from you to those excellent Men, whose *Names you have cast out as evil*; and whom you have so unjustly traduced, on Account of this Article of your Complaint. And shall proceed to take some Notice of what you have further to say.

Tho' I have deferred the Consideration of the PROTESTATION prefixed to your Reply, till now, because of it's Affinity with what follows ; yet I shall not quite overlook it.

You and the other Gentlemen that join with you, express your utter *Dislike of what is asserted toward the latter End* (of the Dialogue) *as contrary to the Experience of the Generation of GOD's Children, who never find that GOD withdraws sensible Joy and Comfort from them, while they live in a Course of vital and true Holiness, as is there supposed ; but only when there are great Breaches in that vital and true Holiness, which once they maintain'd.*

I have one Argument against this, which it certainly concerns you to get rid of as well as you can. The Argument I take from Mr. *Allen*, Mr. *Crosswell*, Mr. *Symmes* and Mr. *Curtis*. These Gentlemen in their Protestation prefixed to your Reply, testify against those Ministers putting Persons upon finding out their Justification by their Sanctification, in such a Manner as they have done. Now the Manner, in which this is done in the Dialogue, and in that very Page you refer to, is to clear up their Interest in Christ, by an habitual Course of VITAL and TRUE HOLINESS ; and no otherwise. This is directly expressed in Terms ; and there is not the least Appearance, from any one Expression in that whole Discourse, of any other Manner of putting Persons upon finding out their Justification by their Sanctification.

Whence I argue,

If an habitual Course of *vital and true Holiness* does always so engage GOD's special Presence with those who maintain it, that he *never withdraws sensible Joy and Comfort* from them while they maintain it ; 'Tis then, while maintain'd, a good Evidence of an Interest in Christ, and of our Justification.— There is but one of these two Ways, that you can possibly give a direct and consistent Answer to this Argument.

You must either answer—

1. That some Persons may maintain an habitual Course of *vital and true Holiness*, and never find GOD withdraw sensible Joy and Comfort from them ; and yet be in a *Christless and unjustified* State ; Tho' a *holy Life and sensible Communion are the only sure Foundation of Hope*, as you tell us, (P. 19.) —

— Or else,

2. You

2. You must answer, That tho' it be always true, that all Persons who maintain an habitual Course of *vital and true Holiness*, do *while* they maintain that Course, find *Joy and Comfort* from GOD, and are interest'd in Christ and justified; yet it don't follow, that the maintaining an habitual Course of *vital and true Holiness*, is an *Evidence* of our Justification. — It is impossible to give any other direct and consistent Answer to this Argument, than one of these Two; and the Alternative is at your Choice.

I think you must necessarily allow, that one or the other of these Complaints in the Protestation are causeless, and without Foundation.

On the one Hand,

You represent it as a false and dangerous Doctrine, to teach that a Person can maintain a Course of *vital and true Holiness*, without *sensible Communion*; because such as these *always* have Joy and Comfort from God, *while* they maintain such a Life. Well, suppose it to be so, and suppose the Mistake to be as great and dangerous as you please: Yet if so, the maintaining a Course of *vital and true Holiness*, is then certainly a good *Evidence* of our Justification; for *while* maintain'd, it is *always* accompany'd with *sensible Communion*, which two make up *the only Foundation of Hope*. This by your own Account of the Matter, is *sound Speech that cannot be condemned*. (P. 19.)

You on the other Hand, testify against it as a dangerous Doctrine, to put Persons upon finding out their *Justification* by their *Sanctification*, that is, by *maintaining an habitual Course of vital and true Holiness*, as it is expressed in the *Dialogue*. Well! suppose this to be so, then it follows, that ALL who maintain an habitual Course of *vital and true Holiness*, have *not* always while they do maintain it, *sensible Communion*, or *sensible Joy and Comfort*; for if they had, it would be a good *Evidence* of their Justification. For you tell us, *both these together may give a Person strong Consolation, and evidence that he hath fled for Refuge to the Hope set before him*. (P. 18.) These therefore, upon this supposal, having both a good Life, and *sensible Communion*, would by your own Verdict, build upon *the only Foundation of Hope*. (P. 19.) — Here the Matter must rest, till you determine which of these two you will choose.

I now proceed to represent to you some further Objections against this Paragraph, in your Protestation, That **GOD** never withdraws sensible Joy and Comfort from his Children while they live in a Course of vital and true Holiness.

Can you (*Sir*) deliberately assert, that the Children of **GOD** while maintaining a Life of vital Piety and true Holiness, are never exercised with such *Temptations of Satan*, as deprive them of Joy and Comfort? Have not the Children of **GOD** in all Ages, and even in the most watchful Periods of their Lives, found by Experience, that they must wrestle? not against *Flesh and Blood*, but against *Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places*. Eph. vi. 12. Don't they experience the *fiery Darts of the wicked one*? which often fill them with dreadful Confusion and Distress; and make them roar, by reason of the *disquietment of their Hearts*. If you say, that this arises only from great Breaches of vital and true Holiness, you have nothing at all to warrant your Conclusion. Our blessed **LORD** himself was tempted of the Devil. The Apostle *Paul* immediately after his Rapture into the third Heavens, had a *Messenger of Satan* to buffet him, lest he should be lifted up above measure: and these *Temptations* are common to Men, to the best of Men, 1 Cor. x. 13. And I appeal to the Experience of all Ministers, who have had most occasion to converse with exercised, tempted Souls, whether they have not often found this to be the Case of some of the most serious, heavenly, and devout Christians of their Acquaintance.

I would again enquire, whether none of the Children of **GOD**, while maintaining a Course of true vital Holiness, may fall into a State of *bodily Melancholy*, and so have every Thing look dark to 'em. Is there any Thing more common, than to see the most serious, devout and spiritual Persons, when under such Melancholy, to be under Doubts and Fears about their State? And I am sure, you can bring no Evidence to prove, that all those who maintain a Life of vital Holiness, are exempted from this Disease.

And I must once more enquire, Whether we han't Instances in *Scripture*, of those who (while in the Exercise of *vital Holiness*) were thus in the dark. I will mention two, among other

other Instances, that might be assigned. The first Instance is *David*, if he was (as it's probable he was) the Penman of the *xlii. Psalm*: when *his Soul was panting after GOD, as the Hart panteth after the Water Brooks*; and he was *thirsting for GOD, for the living GOD, his Tears were his Meat Day and Night, his Soul was cast down and disquieted within him, and all GOD's Billows bad gone over him.* — The second Instance is *Heman* in *Psalm lxxxviii.* He *cryed Day and Night before GOD*, and yet he *suffered GOD's Terrors, till he was distracted.* *GOD's fierce Wrath went over him, and his Terrors cut him off*: And this was not a sudden and transient Distress, but he *was thus afflicted and ready to die from his Youth up.* And yet, as *Dr. Owen* well observes upon it, there can be no greater Expressions of Faith and Love, than are mixed with his Complaints. — We are accordingly shewn in *Isa. l. 10.* that *he that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the Voice of his Servant, may walk in Darknes, and see no Light.* In a Word, *GOD* is as *Sovereign* in giving Joy and Comfort to Believers, as he is in giving Grace; and knows how, when, and why, either to hide his Face, or to shine into their Souls, with the Joys of his Salvation. It is true, that he never leaves them without Matter of Support. For *he is the GOD of Israel their Saviour, even when he is a GOD that hideth himself, Isai. xlv. 15.*

But you tell us, that this is *contrary to the Experience of the Generation of GOD's Children.* If you mean by this, that some of *GOD's Children* have for some considerable Time together, constant Experience of Joy and Comfort, I acknowledge it to be true; and if it be indeed your own Case, give *GOD* the Glory. But this being supposed, there seems a two-fold Caution necessary. The one is, that *you be not high minded, but fear*; for you have not yet put off your Harnefs. — The other is, that you don't judge the State of others, from your own Experiences. It is no Argument, because one Christian has constant sensible Communion, that therefore every Christian has. *GOD's Dispensations* in this respect are very different, and there are very different Attainments among true Christians. There are *Babes, Men, and strong Men in Christ; Children, Young Men, & Fathers.* The Experience of particular Persons does not therefore determine, what is the Experience of the Generation of *GOD's Children.* —

If we would know what is the Experience of the *Generation* of GOD's Children, by the Declaration of all the most eminent Divines, particularly from the *Reformation* to the present Time, they all (as far as I have yet observed) with one Mouth declare *against You* in this Matter; some few *Antinomians* only excepted. — We can't take a directer Method to know the Minds of the whole Reformation upon this Point, than to look into the Acts of the *Synod* of DORT; a Synod conven'd from the several Protestant Churches, on Purpose to suppress *Arminianism*, in its first Rise. There you will find, all the Delegates from the several Churches, by a joint Suffrage, declare their Sentiments of this Matter, in the following Words; “ In the mean
 “ Time, the Scripture testifies, that the Faithful in this Life
 “ conflict with various carnal Doubtings; and being exercised
 “ with grievous Temptations, can't always perceive the full and
 “ clear Exercise of Faith and Certainty of their Perseve-
 “ rance. But GOD the Father of Consolation doth not suffer
 “ them to be tempted above what they are able: But with
 “ the Temptation makes a Way to escape. 1 Cor. x. 13. * — If
 we would know the Minds of the Body of all those of our Profession, in *England, Scotland and Ireland*, let us hear the Declaration of the *Assembly of Divines*, in their *Confession of Faith*. “ True Believers may have the Assurance of their
 “ Salvation divers Ways shaken, diminished, and intermitted;
 “ as, by Negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some
 “ special Sin, which woundeth the Conscience and grieveth
 “ the Spirit, by some sudden and vehement Temptation, by
 “ GOD's withdrawing the Light of his Countenance; and
 “ suffering such as fear him, to walk in Darkness and see no
 “ Light.” † — I had Thoughts of setting before you a Collection of Authorities, against your new Doctrine, from Numbers of our most eminent Divines, from the Time of the Reformation; but as that would swell this Letter to too great a Bulk, I will content my self with Quotations from some of the most eminent Fathers of this Country, who have been deservedly famous, beyond most others in the World, for their Acquaintance with practical & experimental Godliness; and add to them but one other Authority, from a Divine equally famous.

* *Acta. Synod. Dordrecht.* Sec. 136. P. 313. † Chap. 18. Sec. 4.

I begin with that excellent Divine and Father of *New-England*, Mr. JOHN COTTON. * “ The Fear of the Godly, (says he) drives them to use the right Means, to run to GOD, to keep closer to him :-- So that tho’ GOD seem very angry, they will throw themselves into his Arms, they run to the Horns of the Altar ; and there, if they must perish, they will die ; and indeed the Heart is never more sound in Love, than when it runs to GOD most ; and it argues the more Love, to cleave to him, when we see least Cause.” If you would see this Matter fully cleared, read his Discourse upon 1 *Job*. V. 10. The Text you quote in your Favour.

Mr. NORTON sets this in a clear and proper Light, † “ All Believers (says he) have the same State of Peace, tho’ many Believers have not the full Persuasion and comfortable Sense of it. We must distinguish between justifying Faith (properly so called) namely the *direct* Act of Faith, receiving Christ and his Righteousness, and relying upon him for Pardon according to the Promise, whereby we are justified and have Peace ; and the *reflex* Act of Faith, whereby we are fully persuaded, and do believe that we do believe. — This Distinction is of great Use to many Believers, who not sufficiently attending to the Nature of justifying Faith, think they have no Faith, because they want Assurance. ”

Mr. SHEPARD in that excellent Book of his, *The Sound Believer* (a Book which has always been most deservedly famous for giving a clear and lively view of the Methods of divine Grace in a Sinner’s Conversion) does repeatedly contradict this Doctrine of yours. ‡ “ The Soul of a poor Sinner (saith he) wounded and humbled, sometimes knows not Christ ; and then cries out as those *Acts* ii. 37. *What shall I do ? Whither shall I go ?* Sometimes dares not, sometimes cannot, it hath no Heart to stir or come. It therefore looks up, and longs and goes unto the Lord to draw it, like poor *Ephraim* *Jer.* xxxi 18. *Oh turn thou me, Lord, and then I shall be turned.* *Lam.* v. 21. And this is the lowest and least Degree of Faith. But at some other Time, the Soul mourning

* Comment. on 1 *Epist.* of *John* P. 328. † *Orthodox*. *Kyang.* P. 326. ‡ *Edit.* *Boston* 1736. P. 147.

" for want of the Lord, the Lord comes to it with great
 " Clearness, Glory, and Sweetness of Grace & Peace. " —
 Again, * " The Saints have many Fears, whereby they dare
 " not come. They fear they may presume, they see them-
 " selves vile and unworthy of the least Smile. The Benefits
 " are so exceeding great, to which they are called, that
 " they think it is too good for them. " — And again, " *This*
 " *Testimony* (of the Spirit) *all* the Sons of GOD have, by
 " Means of their Adoption. They may not indeed some-
 " times *Hear* it ; if they do, they may *object* against it, thro'
 " the Unbelief in Part remaining in them. Or if it be some-
 " times *suspended*, what you want in the Witness and *Comfort*
 " of it, you have it in the *Holiness* of it ; and therefore the
 " Spirit *sealing*, is call'd the *holy* Spirit, Eph. iv. 30. —
 " Christ having stood for us, justified us before God, sends
 " the immutable constant Assistance of the Spirit in Adoption,
 " which tho' it don't always quicken us. nor comfort us, nor
 " assure us ; yet it is every Moment guiding and leading of
 " us, to our utmost End." Much more to the same Purpose
 might be set before you out of that excellent Book.

I will add another Testimony, from a Book, which has
 had and will have a high and deserved Repute, among those
 who know what experimental Godliness means. The Book
 I refer to, is Mr. STODDARD'S *Safety of Appearing in the*
Righteousness of Christ. || We have there represented the
 many Discouragements and dark Apprehensions, which the
 Saints are liable to, with their Causes and Cures. He begins
 his Discourse upon this Subject, by observing, " That there
 " are two Sorts of Discouragements, that Christians have,
 " with respect unto their Acceptance. One Sort is, when
 " they are discouraged as if they were not accepted, as if they
 " were not Saints and in a state of Salvation ; their present
 " State is dark unto them. And this arises, either from God's
 " Dispensations towards them ; or from their Carriages to-
 " wards God. God lays Afflictions upon 'em, exercises them
 " with inward Temptations, don't give Assurance of his Love,
 " don't answer their Prayers, don't quicken their Hearts in
 " his Ordinances, &c. "

*Page 102. † Page 233. || *First Edit.* from P. 313. to
 P. 351.

I will conclude with a Quotation from one of the greatest Divines our Nation has ever had, Dr. OWEN I mean, who in his Exposition of *Psal. cxxx.* has frequent Occasion to treat on this Subject, and as frequently contradicts your Assertion. "When (says he *) the Soul cannot find *this Grace* in himself, when he hath not a spiritual Sense and Experience of its in-being and Power, when it *cannot* evidently distinguish it from that which is not right or genuine, it is filled with Fears and Perplexities, and thinks it is yet *in its Sin*. He is so indeed, that *hath* no Grace in him; but *not* he always, who can *find* none in him. But these are different Things. A Man may have *Grace*, and yet not have it at some Times much *acting*: He may have *Grace* for *Life*, and not have it for *Fruitfulness* and *Comfort*, tho' it be his Duty to have it. *Rev. iii. 2.*—*2 Tim. i. 6.* And a Man have *Grace acting* in him, and yet not *know*, not be sensible, that he hath *acting Grace*. We see Persons frequently, under great Temptations, of Apprehension that they have *no Grace* at all; and yet at the *same Time*, to the clearest Conviction of all who are able to discern spiritual Things, sweetly and genuinely *act* Faith, Love, Submission unto God; and that in an eminent Manner."

Thus I have done something more than strongly to assert, that your Doctrine is contrary to the Experience of the *Generation of GOD's Children*. I have set some opposite Testimonies before you; and I might have produced as many more, as I could come at Authors of Note, who treat upon this Subject; by which you may judge what Foundation this Exclamation of yours, and of your three Friends, is built upon.

Tho' I believe, it is ordinarily the Case of the Children of GOD, that they have at *some Times* such Manifestations of the Love of GOD to their Souls, and such Evidences of his Favour, as carry them above any disquieting Doubts and Fears; and tho' I believe also, that a full Assurance of Faith is a more common Attainment, than is ordinarily supposed: Yet I can't but conclude with Dr. OWEN, that *if we look to have such an Evidence, Light into, and absolute Conviction of this Matter, as shall admit of no Doubts, Fears, Questionings, just Occasions and Causes of new Trials, Teachings, and Self-Examinations, we shall be greatly deceived.*

But still I don't see how careless Sinners, carnal and secure Professors, or *strict Pharisees* (as you express it) can reasonably take any Advantage from this Doctrine. For it certainly is the Character of every Child of GOD, that he either *hath Assurance* ; or is earnestly *reaching after it*. No one that realizes eternal Things to himself, can rest and be easy in a dreadful Uncertainty, whether he is to be *saved*, or *dann'd* to all Eternity. They therefore who can be easy in such an Uncertainty, have a black Mark of Unregeneracy upon their Souls. However, if such as these will improve this Doctrine to their own Ruin, We must nevertheless imitate our blessed Master, in *not breaking the bruised Reed*, and in *not quenching the smoking Flax*.

I proceed to consider the *Distinction*, by which you endeavour to clear up the Doctrine under Consideration. You say, that *Manifestation, or a Persuasion of our justified State, is essential to the Exercise of saving Faith* ; tho' *Manifestation is not necessary to the Being of it*. (P. 11.) —But I suspect, that this won't bear the Trial. Let us consider the Case a little.

If this be so, then *Manifestation* or Persuasion of our justified State, must be essential to the *first* Exercise of saving Faith (which indeed was the very View in which the *Dialogue* was considering this Matter-) and by Consequence must necessarily, in order of Nature, *precede* our Justification : We must have *Manifestation* or Persuasion of our justified State, even *before* we are actually justified : And so consequently it is essential to the Exercise of a saving Faith, that we have a Persuasion of that which is *not true* in Fact.

Certain it is, that we are justified and have Power to become the Children of GOD, by *receiving the Lord Jesus Christ*, and are not justified till we have received him. *Job. i. 12. Rom i. 17. Chap. iii. 30. and iv. 24.* If therefore a *Persuasion* that we are justified, is *essential* to our receiving Christ; then it is essential to our receiving Christ, that we are persuaded of that which was not previously *true* in Fact. For it is not true in Fact, that any Man is justified *before* he receives Christ by Faith.—There is no Way to get rid of this Argument against your Doctrine ; but by asserting, either,—

1. That *receiving Christ*, is not the *Exercise* of Faith.

Or —

2. That

2. That *receiving* Christ by Faith, even in its *first* Act, does not (in order of Nature) go *before* our *Justification*.

Or else —

3. That *our mere Persuasion* makes that become a real *Truth*, which was previously *false in Fact*. — All which are palpable Absurdities.

It is true indeed, that our receiving Christ by Faith, and our obtaining an Interest in him, are Things *contemporary*: That is, at the same Instant in which we have actually received him, he is ours. But then, we have no special saving Interest in him, *before* we have received him, nor until the Act of receiving him (in first Exercise of Faith) is *finish'd* and *perfected*. And therefore, to be persuaded that he is ours, *before* the Act of receiving him is accomplish'd, is to be persuaded of what is *false in Fact*. Let the Case be illustrated by this Similitude. Supposing a Present be made me on Condition of my accepting it with my Hand, that Instant I receive it in my Hand, it becomes my Property: But it is not so while I am stretching out my Hand to take it, nor till the Act of receiving be finished. And therefore, if I am persuaded, that it is in my Hand, and is my Property, before this, I am persuaded of a Falsehood; and if I rest in that Persuasion, I lose the Present, and must go without it. The Application is plain and familiar.

Another Objection against this Doctrine of yours is, that it opens a wide Door to *Licentiousness*. For if it be true, that the Persuasion of our justified State be *essential* to the Exercise of saving Faith; then all that have that *Persuasion*, will readily conclude themselves to be in the Exercise of saving Faith; whatever other Characters of a true Believer may be wanting. A Man will hardly be persuaded, that he has the *Essence* of a Thing; and yet has *not* the Thing itself.

Another Objection is, that this Doctrine is directly contrary to *Scripture*. Thus, Eph. i. 13. *AFTER that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of Promise.* — That to believe is to exercise Faith, is what I think no Man can deny. For tho' a Man may be a Believer, yet he never does believe while the *Exercise* of Faith is suspended; and the Text assures us, that the *sealings* of the Spirit are *consequent* to *believing*; and

therefore not *essential* to it. — I might produce the like Evidence from many other Places of Scripture ; but I shall be too voluminous. And if you would see this Point more fully cleared, be pleased to read Mr. SHEPARD'S *Sound Believer*. (Boston Edition, from P. 185, forward.) And be pleased also to read the *Dialogue* over again ; for all the Arguments there stand good against you, notwithstanding this *Distinction* of yours.

This appears, because it is by the *Exercise* of Faith (and not by the *Habit* of it, while the *Exercise* is suspended) that we are justified. We are justified (as was before observed) by receiving Christ by Faith, or by *actual* Believing in him ; and not by any *Habit* of Soul, that we either have or can have, which leaves us to rest short of an *actual* Compliance with the Gospel-Call. Whence it follows, that the boasted Demonstration (as you are pleased to call it) and the other Arguments there used, stand good against you, For it is certain, that we must have the *Exercise* of Faith, before we can *know* that we believe in Christ, and so are justified by him ; since there is no *Habit* of Faith, that does or can justify us, without the *Exercise* of it ; and we cannot *know*, that we have that, which in *Fact* we have *not*. And consequently the Evidence or Persuasion of our Justification, is no more *essential* to the *Exercise* of Faith, than to the *Habit* of it : Your *Distinction* therefore don't at all help the Case. This Argument and the other Arguments in the *Dialogue*, stand yet in their full Force against this Opinion of yours ; and you must pardon me, if I still suppose, that they are really Unanswerable.

What you say in Confirmation of your Opinion, is true, but not to the Purpose ; as was particularly shewn you in the *Dialogue*. It is certain, that *when Men do exercise true Faith, they are always sensible of it*, as you observe (P. 12.) That is, they are always sensible of that *Exercise of their Minds*, which is true Faith. But it is *not* Fact, that they are always sensible that *this Exercise of the Mind* must necessarily be *true Faith*. These are two very different Things. To know what is the *Exercise of the Mind*, when we believe in Christ (as well as in any other Case) is but one *simple Act* of the Understanding. Such an Exercise of the Mind does (upon our Reflection) offer itself to the Understanding, in an immediate and direct View, without any Argumentation or comparing Things together

together to obtain the Knowledge of it : "And therefore must be known and observed by every one that attends to it. Every Man that strictly attends to his own Thoughts, must know what they be, in an *intuitive* way, without any Argumentation at all.—

But then to discover the *Quality* of this Exercise of the Mind, and to discover whether it be *saving Faith*, or not, is a *complex* Act of the Understanding ; requires the *comparing* a Variety of Things together, and drawing a safe *Consequence* from those Things when compared : And this is not such an easy Matter, whatever may be pretended. How well so ever we are acquainted with the Exercise of our own Minds in this Case, yet before we can have any Certainty that this is *saving Faith*, we must know, upon what *Terms* Christ is offered to us in the Gospel ; and whether this Exercise of our Minds be a full *Compliance* with all those Terms, without any Reserve : We must know, that this Faith of ours, is *specifically distinct* from the *false* Faith of Multitudes, who will finally perish, notwithstanding a strong *Perjuasion* of their safe State : We must know, that we heartily *receive Christ*, in his whole Person and Character, in all his Offices, with all the Inconveniences which may attend our cleaving to him ; and that we are heartily willing to be, to do, to bear any Thing, which he calls and enables us to : We must know, that we are willing to *forsake Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters ; yea, to hate even our own Lives also, for his Sake ; and to take up our Cross daily and follow him.* And is this such a plain and easy Discovery, that every one who exercises Faith, *must know it* ?

I acknowledge indeed, that the Spirit of GOD *can*, when he pleases, and very often *does*, shine into the Soul of a Believer, with so full and clear a Light, as to dispel all Darkness and Difficulty ; and give a full View of the Exercise of Faith, in all these Particulars ; and thereby *witnesses with our Spirits, that we are the Children of GOD* : But he has no where *promised* such a Discovery, to every Act of Faith ; and it is certain in Fact, that he *does not* always grant it.

You next cite a Text of Scripture, to prove your Opinion. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Witness in himself.* 1 Joh. V. 10. But (to pass all other Remarks) the
Question

Question is, What is *that Truth*, to which the Believer hath the Witness in himself; or what his Faith is a Witness of? It must either be the Truth of *Christianity*, whereof Faith is a Witness in our selves; as the Text is generally understood, and as is most agreeable to the Context: Or else, the Truth of *our personal Profession*, and so the Safety of our own State.—If we understand the *former* of these Senses to be intended, it will prove Nothing to your Purpose. For we may have such a Faith in the Son of GOD, as will make the Truth of Christianity evident and unquestionable to us; and yet have no Evidence of our own Justification. — If we understand the Text in the *latter* Sense, it will, if duely considered, prove as little to your Purpose. For a Man may *have* the Witness in himself; and yet not always *hear* that Witness speak, nor certainly *know* the Truth of what it does speak. To exemplify this, we read in the 7th and 8th Verses of this same Chapter; *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost; and there are Three that bear Witness on Earth, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood.* These always bear Witness unto all Men under Gospel-Light, of the Truth of Christianity. For *this is the Witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.* (Verse 9th.) But do all Men *receive* this Witness; and *feel* the Force and Truth of what is witnessed? Alas, it is quite otherwise. So in the present Case: It is one Thing, to have a Witness of this Truth *in* our selves; and another Thing, to have it witnessed and made evident *to* our selves, to our full Conviction and Satisfaction.

I now proceed to the Consideration of your last Complaint; which is, that *our Author and his seven Witnesses are pleased to tell us, that Men may be good Christians, tho' they never had any clear Manifestations of the Love of GOD; and that Persons must find out their Justification, by their Sanctification* (P. 12.)

As to your first Article, the Words in the Dialogue are, (pag. 108.) “ How many true Believers are there, who may
 “ have never experienced *such clear, RAVISHING, and UN-*
 “ **QUESTIONABLE** Manifestations of the Love of GOD to
 “ their Souls?” — But you have be'n pleased to express it very differently, so as quite to hide the genuine Purport of the Passage: Whether this was upon Design, that you might
 make

make the more plausible Appearance in your Opposition to it, or not, you can best tell. — I have already spoken to this Subject; and shall therefore pass it over now; and proceed to the last Part of your Complaint, That *Persons are put upon finding out their Justification, by their Sanctification.* It must be observed, that the *Sanctification* by which Believers are put upon evidencing their Justification, in the *Book* you oppose is thus described; “*The Fruits of the SPIRIT in Heart and Life — “ An habitual Course of VITAL and true Holiness — “ A Principle of Holiness in the Heart, and a Carefulness to be practically holy in Life and Conversation. — “ Sorrow for and Hatred of all Sin, Love to Holiness; and unfeigned Endeavours of Conformity to GOD in all Things — “ Finding the purifying Effects of FAITH — “ Having old Things past away, and all Things become new. —* This, all this, and nothing but this, is proposed in the *Dialogue*, as an Evidence of our Justification. — And now, let us consider what is your Representation of this Matter. You thus represent the Doctrines, which you charge us with: — *That a good Life, i. e. good Works, are a sufficient Evidence of a Man's Justification. (P. 13.) That we do so much Honour to Morality, in such a Day as this, as to make it a good Evidence of a Man's Title to the heavenly Inheritance, when he can find nothing else. (Ibid.) That we say a Confederacy (with the Arminians) in this one Article of a good Life's being a sufficient Evidence of a justified State. (P. 14.) That these Ministers give it under their Hands, that Men may conclude, that they are good Christians, from the Goodness of their Lives. (P. 17.)*

And now, my dear Brother, I appeal to the World, and even to your self, whether this be a just and fair Representation of the Case. Look back, I pray, and consider what *Motive* you could have to insinuate, that we hold such Doctrines as you there represent; unless it were to blacken our Characters, prejudice your Readers against us, and find a groundless Occasion of Triumph! You tell us, that you would gladly have let them (the Boston-Ministers, who sign'd the Preface to my Book) alone, if your Conscience would have let you alone. (P. 18.) But would not your Conscience let you alone, without treating them with so much Injustice and Injury! Or indeed how could it let you alone, while you were doing this!

These

These however are the *Doctrines* you oppose, which you calculate your Arguments against, and which you cry out of, in such a warm and vehement Manner. But how do all your Exclamations at all affect the *Dialogue*, where there are *no* such Doctrines to be found?—Will it satisfy you, if I now publicly declare, that I do not think, that merely an external *good Life*, i. e. *good Works*, is a sufficient Evidence to any Man, of his Justification; and that I do not do so much Honour to *Morality*, as to make it a good Evidence of a Man's Title to the heavenly Inheritance, when he can find *Nothing else*. If this will satisfy, I will make that Declaration as publicly, and as repeatedly as you can reasonably desire; and I doubt not, those *Boston-Ministers*, to a Man, will join with me. But yet I must have better Light, before I can renounce one Article of what is said in the *Dialogue* upon this Subject; for the following Reasons.

1. Because *no Man* ever had or will have the *Fruits of the Spirit* in his *Heart* and *Life*, a *Principle* of Holiness in his Heart, and a constant Care to be *practically* holy in his Conversation; No Man ever did or ever will maintain an habitual Course of *vital* and *true Holiness*, &c. without a saving Interest in and Union to Christ by *Faith*. And on the contrary, *every Man* who hath an Interest in Christ, and Union to Him by *Faith*, is, and will be *holy*, in the Manner described: And therefore they who are thus holy, they who find in themselves the *purifying Effects of Faith*, and none but they, have good sufficient *Evidence* of a justified State.

That no Man ever was, or can be thus *holy*, without an Interest in Christ by *Faith*, is asserted by our Lord himself, *Job. xv. 4, 5. As the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. — For without me, or (as it might be rendered) separate from me, ye can do Nothing. —* That every one is thus holy, who is interested in Christ by *Faith*, is prov'd by the Scriptures following. *Acts xv. 9. Purifying their Hearts by Faith. 2 Cor. v. 17. If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature: old Things are passed away; behold, all Things are become new. —* Now can it possibly be true, that all those and none but those who have the Holiness described, are interested in Christ; and yet, that such Holiness is not a good Evidence of our Interest in him?

2. Another

2. Another Reason, why the *Holiness* described ought to be consider'd as a good *Evidence* of our Justification, is, because the *Scripture* does so consider it. — 'In the first Epistle of *John* (Chap iii) does particularly propose to us the *Holiness* which has be'n described, as an Evidence of our being the Children of GOD; and assures us, that *by this the Children of GOD are manifest, and the Children of the Devil*: — This Argument was fully stated and prosecuted in the *Dialogue*. You are there shewn at large the Unreasonableness of your Pretence, that we must not evidence our Justification by that, which GOD himself has told us, is a sure Mark and Evidence of it; and without which he has assured us, that we are not in a justified State: you are shewn the Absurdity of pretending, that we must not make it *manifest* to our selves, *whose Children* we are, by that which GOD himself has told us, is a proper *Manifestation* of it. — To all which you have not seen Cause to make any *Answer*; and you must allow me to suppose, that you never will, nor never can, make any pertinent or consistent Answer to it. For it will certainly be found true, at the great Trial, that *not every one that saith unto Christ, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of his Father, which is in Heaven, Matth. vii. 21.*

3. Another Reason, why we ought to consider the *Holiness* above described, as an *Evidence* of our Justification, is, because many of the *Children of GOD* must *otherwise* be forc'd to walk in the *Dark*, without any Evidence in their Favour. They may be able to rejoice in this Testimony of their Conscience, that in *Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshy Wisdom but by the Grace of GOD, they have had their Conversation in the World*; and they ought with the *Apostle* (2 Cor. i. 12.) to rejoice in it accordingly: when yet they may doubt, whether their *Faith* (abstractly considered) be sincere and genuine. — Suppose, for Example, that a doubting Christian should propose his Case to your self in the following View: informing you, That *after sharp Exercise* by distressing Conviction of his Sin and Guilt, a humbling Sense of his own Impotence, and a deep Impression, that he could not help himself, but absolutely lay at Mercy, *he had such a Discovery* of the sufficiency of Christ, as caused him at that Time (as he then supposed) heartily and joyfully to comply with the Gospel Offer.

He likewise informs you, That *from that Time* forward he has found a *great Change* in his Thoughts and Affections, that he has kept a *strict Watch* over his Heart and Life; and can truly say, that he *hates all Sin* without Reserve, and groans after Deliverance from all the Remainders of his Corruptions and Imperfections; that he *delights* in all the Ways and Ordinances of God, and in the Children of God; that he is habitually dispos'd to be *spiritually minded*; and conscientiously careful, to discharge the respective Duties of every Relation he sustains. This he tells you, is the Sum of all the Evidence that he can now find in his Favour. He has never had *such CLEAR RAVISHING and UNQUESTIONABLE Manifestations of the Love of God*, as some others speak of: Or what *Joys and transporting Comforts* he has at any Time experienced, are now fled from him, and he can't recover 'em. — Faith is described, as *the substance of Things hoped for; and the Evidence of Things not seen*. But he is afraid, whether he has such a sensible and realizing View of unseen and eternal Things, as this Description amounts to; and therefore afraid he has no true Faith. He that truly believes in Christ, must *hate Father and Mother, &c. and even his own Life for his sake*: but he is afraid, whether he has attain'd to this; and therefore doubts of the Sincerity of his Faith. — Now, what Answer would you give him? Would you tell him, that if he be a deserted Believer, *A Christ is what he wants, a Christ is what he must have, a Christ is what he will have. None but Christ, None but Christ, is the Language of his Soul!* as you express it (P. 19) — Why, He tells you, that *Christ* is the continual Subject of his *Thoughts and Desires*; and if he had a thousand Worlds to dispose of, he would freely give them all, for good Evidence of an *Interest in Christ*. — Would you now advise him to go on in his Doubtings, Darknets and Discouragements (neglecting Self-Examination, and Endeavours to clear up his Interest in Christ, by all proper Means) until God *reveals his Son to him again*? Or otherwise, would you endeavour to remove his Doubts, and encourage him cheerfully to depend upon Christ as his Saviour; without giving Way to his Discouragements about his Interest in him; and to strive to act Faith now, and resolve to venture his eternal Interests, with Comfort and Courage, in the Hands of that Saviour, who has already done so much for his Soul, and indeed *given him the earnest of the blessed Hope.*

Hope.— I have not here represented to you a mere Creature of my *Imagination*, but a *Case in Fact*, which as to the Substance of it often occurs.

4. Another Reason, why I must insist upon the Truth and Importance of *this Doctrine*, is, because the *contrary* to this opens a wide Door to a *false Hope and Peace*; and if once generally received, might be a Means to deceive Multitudes of poor Souls, to their eternal Perdition. — If poor Sinners can once persuade themselves, under the Influence of a *warm Imagination*, that they are the *Favourites of Heaven*, and that they are not to evidence their Justification by their *Sanctification*, they may go on peaceably and securely, even with Transports of Joy, in Expectation and imaginary Assurance of Happiness, tho' they have never experienced that great and important Change of *Regeneration*; and tho' they fall vastly short of that *spiritual Mind and heavenly Conversation*, which is the distinguishing Characteristick of a *Christian indeed*. That this has be'n, and still is, the Case of Multitudes of poor deluded Souls, is evident to the World. Great and numerous Sects and Parties have taken their Rise and Progress from this dangerous Mistake.— From this delusive Dream sprang up the *Familists, Muggletonians, Ranters, Seekers, Quakers, Fifth-Monarchy-Men, &c.* in the last Century. From hence likewise did the *French Prophets* take their Rise, some Years ago. And the present *Moravianism*, which so greatly threatens our Land, is the Offspring of the same haughty and deluded Imagination. I must in faithfulness add, that I have never known the Time, when the Ministers of Christ had a louder Call to stand up for the Cause of *Holiness*, or vital and practical Christianity, than they now have.

You will Answer to this (as in *P. 18.*) that tho' *the Scripture makes Holiness the Mark of a justified State*; yet not separately from the *Witness of the Spirit, and the divine Sealings, which the Scripture makes the common Privilege of all Believers.* — Not to take Notice of the *Impertinency* of this Answer, *Holiness* (undisguised, *true & vital Holiness*, I mean, which is the necessary Evidence of *saving Faith*, and a good Estate, such Holiness as was consider'd in the *Dialogue*,) being in itself a *Witness of the Spirit, and a divine Sealing to Believers*; I must observe, that those under such warm Imaginations, will readily answer in

your Words, *that when Men do exercise true Faith, they are, always sensible of it* (P. 12.) They themselves are accordingly *sensible* of it ; and therefore *know* that they have true Faith. They may answer to every Thing of this Kind, that can be said to them, as you do, that *the Way to know that a Man is really justified, is to find that in himself, that doth justify ; and not to find that which don't justify.* (P. 19) (Your Language here does not seem to *Anti-arminian* ; but I spare Reflections of this Nature.) Now, they suppose they find *this* ; and are therefore safe. — They may add, that *a Man may as easily make a World, as maintain a Course of vital and true Holiness, without Manifestation* (P. 20.) They therefore as they imagine, do maintain a Course of vital and true *Holiness* (notwithstanding their Sin and Imperfection) for they have *Manifestation*, which (according to you and them) is *essential* to such a Life, and therefore speaks the Being of it.

5. Another Reason, why I must yet hold fast *this Doctrine*, is ; that it has been constantly taught by *all our eminent Divines*, in all Ages of the Church, And I have not such an Apprehension of my own Sufficiency, as to venture to forsake *the Footsteps of the Flock*, without better Reason for it. — There have indeed numerous *Seſtaries* risen in the Church, in the several Ages of it, who have taught such *Doctrine* as that I am now opposing : But there have never been wanting such eminent Servants of Christ, as have opposed and refuted the dangerous Mistake. And it has ever remained (as far as I have been able to observe) the *received Doctrine* of the true Church of Christ, from the *Apostles* Times until now, that *Sanctification* (such Sanctification as I have described) is a good *Evidence* of a *justified* State. Where there have been great Differences about other Matters, this has still be'n agreed upon, as a sacred Truth. And I believe, it will be hard for you to find *one single Divine* of Eminency in the Church (the *Antinomians* and such *Seſtaries* as are above mention'd, only excepted) who will contradict this Truth. — If any would see this Matter set in a strong, full and clear Light, let 'em read that excellent Book before mention'd, Mr. SHEPARD'S *Sound Believer*. (Boston-Edition, from p. 236, to p. 247.) I can't forbear upon this Occasion, to transcribe one solemn and pathetick Passage from thence, which loudly demands our Attention.

" Suppose (says he) thou wert now lying upon thy *Death-*
 " *Bed*, comforting thy self in thy *elect*ed and *justified* State :
 " Suppose the *Spirit* of God should now grapple with thy
 " Conscience, and tell thee, that if thou art *justified*, then
 " thou art *called* and *sanctified*. (2 *The*s. ii 3, 14) Is it thus
 " with thee ? What wilt thou answer ? if thou sayest, thou
 " art *not sanctified*, the *Word* and *Spirit* will bear Witness a-
 " gainst thee, and say, Then thou art *not elect*ed and *justified*.
 " If thou sayest thou knowest not, thou lookest *not* to *Sancti-*
 " *fication*, or *Fruits of the Spirit* ; They will then reply,
 " *How* then can't thou say, 'Thou art *elect*ed and *justified* ?
 " For it is a *Truth* as clear as the Sun, and as immovable as
 " Heaven and Earth, None are elect^d and justified, but they
 " are also *sanctified* ; and they that are *not sanctified*, are not
 " justified. *Rom.* viii. 1, 13. And now tell me, *how* you
 " can have *Peace*, unless you make your *Faces like Flint*, before
 " the *Face of God's eternal Truth* ; or heal your Conscience
 " with such a *Plaster*, as will not stick !

But it's now Time to consider what you have to say against
 this Doctrine. You desire (you say) to produce your Cause ;
 and to bring forth your strong Reasons against it. (p. 15.)

1. Your first Reason is, *It's adapted to settle all strict Phari-*
sees, upon the damnable Foundation of their own Works. Among
the many Thousands of strict Pharisees, into whose Hands that
little Book may come, is there one but may think himself a good
Christian, according to it ? No, not one. (p. 15.) - This requires
 but a short Answer. If a strict Pharisee may have the Fruit
 of the Spirit in his Heart and Life ; if he may maintain an
 habitual Course of vital and true Holiness ; if he may have a
 Principle of Holiness in his Heart, & be careful to be practically
 holy in his Life and Conversation ; if he may have a Sorrow
 for, and Hatred of all Sin, a Love to Holiness, and an un-
 feigned Endeavour of Conformity to God in all Things ; if he
 may find in himself the purifying Effects of Faith ; if he may
 have old Things past away, and all Things become new in
 him ; and yet remain but a *strict Pharisee* still. your Argument
 is just. But if not, it is altogether impertinent ; and an un-
 justifiable Reproach to those Reverend Ministers, who attest-
 ed to the *Dialogue*, as well as to the Author of that Book.

For

For it is such Holiness, described in the very Words above cited, that is proposed in the *Dialogue*, as an Evidence of our Justification.

2. Your second Reason is, that it tends to keep those who are but little concerned, from being much concerned, about the Things that belong to their Peace. (p. 16) To which it's sufficient Answer, that they who have the Sanctification described in the *Dialogue*, have no Cause of distressing Concern about their State: But have Reason to adore and magnify the Riches of that Grace, by which they have been translated out of the Kingdom of Darkness, into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.— And on the contrary, they who have not the Sanctification there described, have Reason to be awakened by what is there taught, since it is evident concerning them, that they are in a State of Death and Perdition.

3. Your third Reason is, that it tends to make those who are in the Bitterness of their Souls enquiring what they shall do to be saved, lose their Convictions, and so stop short of Christ and the new Creature. The same Answer will serve to this, as was given to the last Argument. For it is certain, that such who have the Holiness described in the *Dialogue*, are in Christ; and are new Creatures already; (as I have fully proved) and therefore, cannot be in danger of stopping short of Christ and the new Creature. And as for those, who have not that Holiness there described, the *Dialogue* tends to awaken them, and not to beat off their Convictions, since it expressly represents and proves them to be the Children of the Devil.

4. Your fourth and last Reason is, that Fire doth not more naturally ascend upwards, than this Doctrine tends to fill the World with Opposers to the glorious Work, which God is now carrying on in the Multitude of his tender Mercies. (p. 16) — To which I answer, I have prov'd the Doctrine which is taught in the *Dialogue*, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and therefore it cannot, unless by accident, any Way tend to fill the World with Opposers to the glorious Work, which God has be'n carrying on in the Land. There can be no real Repugnancy, between the Word and the Works of God. And I must needs say, (Sir) that you do not give due Honour to that glorious Display of Divine Grace, which has been so
manifest

manifest among us, when you rank those who are pleading for the Necessity of true *Holiness*, among the *Opposers* of it.

That there *has been a most glorious Manifestation of the divine Power and Grace*, in the Conviction and hopeful Conversion of *great Numbers* in these Provinces, is what *ought to be acknowledged to the Praise of GOD*, by all *sincere Christians*.— But, that there is a strong and violent *Opposition* to this astonishing Progress of *G O D's* glorious Grace, is a sad and lamentable Truth. O that such *Opposers* could duely consider, against whom they are *magnifying themselves*; and what their *Opposition* is like to come to, in the *Conclusion*!

I think, I have had pretty good Advantages, to observe the Springs and Occasions of that violent *Opposition* to the Work of *G O D*; which appears to me to be a *Land-defiling Sin* at this Day, and threatens us with the just Resentments of a jealous *G O D*: And as far as I can discern, it principally takes it Rise from the following *Causes*.

I look upon it to be firstly owing to Men's *proud unhumbl'd Hearts*, that can't bear to stoop to the *Sovereignty of God*. — This whole Work has been a Display of *sovereign Grace*. *One has been taken, and another left*: Some gross *scandalous Sinners* have been called, when others of more *innocent* and inoffensive Lives have been left to go on in their former Security: Many *young Persons* have been pluckt out of the Arms of their youthful *Vanity and Madness*, into the Embraces of *redeeming Love*; while many *aged Professors of Religion* have had *no Part or Lot in this Matter*. Now, This awakens their latent *Pride, Self-Righteousness, and Enmity of Heart* to the *divine Sovereignty*. They can't bear the Supposal, that *G O D* has not a good Esteem of those whom they think well of; that he does not proportion his special Favours to Men's external Conduct; or that he has no Motive to the Dispensation of his converting Grace, but his mere good Pleasure. Alas, They who could bear these *Doctrines* well enough in *Speculation*, are now embitter'd against them, when they appear in a *practical View*, and they see so many *Exemplifications* of 'em, in this Work of special Grace among us.

A subordinate Cause of this Opposition is the *Self-Esteem* and *Self-Flattery*, which poor proud Sinners are willing to entertain. The visible Effects of this gracious Visitation are what they have had no *Experience* of. If they allow this to be the *Work of GOD*, they must conclude themselves to be in a dangerous and miserable State; which they are not willing to suppose. And they have therefore no Way to escape awakening and distressing Apprehensions; but by *rejecting* this whole Work. Hence They set themselves in Opposition to that and their eternal Interests together.

I may add to this, That one principal *Occasion* of this violent Opposition is, the great *Irrregularities* of some, that have appeared eminently zealous in this Cause. Those *Disorders* and *Confusions*, that have be'n brought into our solemn Assemblies; Those publick *Lay-Exhortations*, that have be'n countenanced and encouraged by some of our Ministry; Those Pretences which have been made to extraordinary *Inspirations*, or at least to such special *Impulses*, as are to be esteem'd a *Rule* of our Conduct; Those censorious *Invectives* against Ministers and others, of good Report for their Piety, which have b'en too commonly practiced, from a pretended Capacity to judge their interior State; together with the publick *Exclamations* against some *doctrinal Truths*, that are plainly legible in the Word of GOD, and have be'n the constant and received Principles of the Reformation; whereof I have now a famous Instance before me: *These Things* have done vastly more, than all the united Endeavours of the *Enemies* of that Cause could possibly have done, to bring Obloquy and Reproach upon this Work of the Lord among us. *These Things* have given Advantage, to such secret Enemies of this Work, to appear *openly* against it, who were before silent, and could not have opposed it, without bringing a Scandal and Infamy upon themselves. *These Things* have admitted Matter of Triumph, to the open Adversaries of special Grace; and caused them to say, *Ah, so would we have it!* — *These Things* have prov'd Matter of stumbling, to Multitudes of others, who would otherwise have been at least outwardly *Friends* to this Work; but they unreasonably judging the whole Work by these manifest *Irrregularities*, are brought to desert their former Principles; and to run over in great Numbers to the Enemies Camp. Such sad Confusions, Divisions,

Divisions, Desertions of our Profession and Principles, are the Consequents of these Things, as greatly threaten the Interests of Religion among us. — What I have now observ'd to you, is not merely Matter of Speculation ; but notorious *Fact*, observed and known and own'd by every Body, but those who have been acted by this *mistaken Zeal*. — This, my dear Brother, is what demands *your* serious Attention. Has God honour'd you, to be an Instrument of special Service in his Cause ! What a Pity is it, that you, or any of your zealous godly Brethren, that join in Sentiment with you, should prove so much as a *remote Occasion* of undermining that Work, which you have been Instruments of building up !

If now you are offended with me, for this plain dealing and undisguised Representation of the Case ; if you are pleased to rank me among the *Pharisees*, and to censure me for an *Opposer* of the Work of GOD ; I shall have this Advantage of you, I can cheerfully and patiently bear the Reproach, heartily love you, and pray for you ; and I hope, I shall find the Comfort of a forgiving Spirit.

Let us in the next Place consider what is according to *your* Account of the Matter, a good *Evidence* of our Justification. *As joyful Discoveries of Christ* (you tell us) *are a vain Hope, without Holiness ; so is Holiness without these. Neither will do alone ; but both together may give a Person strong Consolation ; and Evidence that he hath fled for Refuge to the Hope set before him.* (P. 18.) — If this be distinctly consider'd, it will appear to be utterly *inconsistent*, with the Rest of your Discourse, as well as inconsistent with the Truth.

1. It will appear utterly *inconsistent with the rest of your Discourse*. — With respect to *Holiness* being in itself an Evidence of our Justification, you say, *There is Death in that Doctrine, it leads right down to the Regions of Darkness and Habitations of Despair.* (p. 14) And among the many Thousands of strict *Pharisees*, into whose Hands that little Book may come, is there one but may think himself a good Christian according to it ! No, not one. (p. 15.) Whence I argue, that if *Holiness*, in it self, be no Evidence at all of our Justification, but what has *Death* in it, and what may be obtain'd by every strict *Pharisee* ; and (as you also express it) by every *close Hypocrite* under Heaven ;

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then

then it will be no Evidence at all of our Justification, when it is accompanied with joyful Discoveries of Christ. Whatever Evidence our joyful Discoveries may be, *Holiness* (according to you) can be none at all. This is necessarily true : or else it must be true, that every strict *Pharisee* and every close *Hypocrite* under Heaven, tho' they have before no Qualification, but what leads right down to the Regions of Darknes, and Habitations of Despair ; yet when they have (or imagine they have) such *Discoveries*, they have good Evidence in their Favour. That is, in plain Terms, *Holiness* is no Part of our Evidence that we are in a justified State. For can that be any Part of our Evidence of a justified State, which leads right down to Hell, and may be obtain'd by every strict *Pharisee* and close *Hypocrite* under the Heavens. All the *Discoveries* in the World won't alter the Nature of *Holiness* ; it will please GOD no better, and consequently be no other Evidence for us, when accompany'd with joyful Discoveries, than before. The Evidence therefore, must (according to you) rest wholly upon joyful Discoveries of Christ. And will you stand to this ? No. For you observe —

These filthy Dreamers (who imagine this) are as far from the Truth, as Hell is from Heaven. (p. 18.) — Where are we now ! The Evidence from *Holiness* alone leads right down to Hell ; and may be obtain'd by every strict *Pharisee*, and close *Hypocrite* under Heaven. It can therefore certainly have Nothing in it, but what is bad : For there can Nothing else lead right down to Hell ; there can be Nothing else in the Character of a strict *Pharisee* and close *Hypocrite*. We have no Evidence then remaining, but joyful Discoveries ; & yet he that receives these alone for Evidences in his Favour, you tell us, is as far from the Truth, as Hell is from Heaven. That is, Both these Evidences separately consider'd, have Nothing at all in 'em. But tho' they be, Each by it self, Cyphers ; yet Both being put together, they make up a substantial Sum. — It is your Part to clear yourself of this Inconsistency in your Discourse, as well as you can.

2. I also charged this Doctrine of yours, with being contrary to Truth. Which thus appears : If Joy and Comfort are never right and well grounded, but when they flow from good Evidence of our justified State, then they ought not to be considered

considered as the *Evidence* it self, or any *Part* of the *Evidence* of our Justification. But the former is true; as is fully made appear in the *Dialogue* (p. 47.) to which I refer you; and therefore the latter is true also. Our *Joy* must arise from and bear *Proportion* to the *Evidence* we have of our justified State, or else we rejoice without Rule or Reason. And if our *Evidence* of our Justification be *previous* to our Rejoicing, and must in Order of Nature go before it; then our *Rejoicing* can be no *Part* of that *Evidence*.—The *Spirit of GOD* first witnesseth with our *Spirits*, by shewing us the *Evidence* of our Justification; and thence arises the *Joy* and *Comfort* of Believers. When their Interest in Christ becomes sensible & fully evident to 'em, *Joy* is then no longer at their Command; they can't help *rejoicing with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*. But when any Man rejoices in his good State, without *previous Evidences* of it, his *Joy* is unreasonable and delusive. True it is, there may be a very *quick Transition* from Darkness, to spiritual *Joy* and *Comfort*; because the *Spirit of GOD* can very quickly give good and clear *Evidences* of Justification, as was shewn you in the *Dialogue*.—In a Word, tho' *Joy*s and *Comfort*s are proposed in the Scripture, as the blessed *Privilege* of Believers; yet they are no where considered as an *Evidence* of our Justification; nor do I know of one *Promise* of Salvation, in the whole Bible, made to *rejoicing* in a comfortable *Persuasion* of our Interest in the Favour of *GOD*.—Don't forget here to distinguish between *this*, which is a *Privilege* or *Benefit*, and that *delighting our selves in GOD*, which is a *Duty*, of everlasting *Obligation*, and of possible *Performance* (in some Degree) when those transporting *Comfort*s are not enjoy'd.

The *last Thing* before me is, to consider that strange Assertion of yours, that a *Believer thus deserted* (i. e. so as to want sensible *Joy*, and ravishing clear Manifestation; for that's the true State of the Case, as in the *Dialogue*) can as soon create a *World*, as maintain a *Course* of vital and true *Holiness*. Your Reasons are, that *such a Believer's Obedience* will be very slavish and selfish; that it will be very unthankful, and full of *spiritual Pride*; and that *such a Believer* can't repent of one of his *Sins*. (P. 20, 21.) These Things you strongly assert, without any *Proof* (or at least without any Thing that appears to me, to carry the least *Countenance* of *Proof* in it)

either from Scripture, or the Nature of Things. You must pardon me, Sir, if I am constrain'd to tell you upon this Occasion that it was for want of an *Acquaintance with*, or at least of a due *Attendance* to, the *Subject* you write of, that you have ventur'd so confidently to deliver such unaccountable Doctrine.

That I may effectually convince you (and others who embrace the like Sentiments) of your Mistake in this Matter, I will answer you in the Words of two very eminent Divines, both of much greater Learning, and of much greater Experience in these Things, than either You or I.

DR. COTTON MATHER, in his *Case of a troubled Mind*, (P. 13, — 15.) thus shews his Opinion. — “ It was well
“ remark'd by the great *Voetius* in his excellent *Asceticks* [a
“ Book highly worthy to be studied by all Candidates of the
“ Ministry] that such bright *Luminaries* as the *Saints* of
“ GOD, are they who suffer these *Eclipses*. *Hypocrites* are
“ the *wandering Stars*, which will not complain of this Calamity. There may be Reasons for such a Dispensation.

“ — The Sovereign GOD will be sometimes Glorified ; by having his People to *follow Him in the Dark*. Our glorious GOD is never more Glorified, than in our *waiting upon a Lord that bides his Face* ; never so Glorified, as when we can say, Job XIII. 15. *Tho' he slay me, yet will I trust in Him*. The Love of GOD never *shines* more brightly than when we can *follow Him in the Dark*. When we are afraid, that GOD will *cast us off*, and yet *our Hearts are fixed*, O GOD *our Hearts are fixed ; that we will never cast thee off !* When we have our Jealousy, whether GOD will own us for *His Children* ; but still we are determined, that we will forever own Him as *our GOD* : When GOD seems to *frown* on our Devotions ; but still our unalterable Determination is, devoutly to *cleave* unto Him : When GOD permits a *Devil* to molest us with *blasphemous Injections* from Day to Day ; and these Molestations do but produce more frequent and fervid *Acknowledgements* of GOD, in our Souls, contradicting the vexatious *Blasphemies* : Yea, if GOD seems to treat us as *Dogs*, but still we will keep at his Feet, waiting for the *Crumbs* of his Mercy : This *Glorifies* Him wonderfully ! To say, O my G O D, *Tho' thou dost not let me know, that thou wilt save me, yet I will seek thee, I will*
“ *serve*

“ *serve thee, I will never leave off to follow thee!* This Glo-
 “ rifies GOD exceedingly. To follow GOD *in the Dark,*
 “ ’tis a thing that requires more *Obedience,* and more *Dili-*
 “ *gence,* than to do it, when we have the *Light of GOD shin-*
 “ *ing on our Paths.* And so to do, O Soul *striving to enter*
 “ *the strait Gate,* so to do, will mightily help to prepare thee
 “ for that World, where thou shalt *behold the Face of GOD*
 “ *in Righteousness;* that World, where thou shalt have the
 “ *Face of GOD forever shining full upon thee.*” —

Dr. OWEN has’ largely handled this Case; and obviated all your pretended Reasons, in that excellent Book of his, upon the CXXX Psalm. * Tho’ the Quotation will prove something long, it may be of special Service to such doubting Christians as are in danger of being driven into Confusion by this Discourse of yours; and therefore well worthy to be transcribed for their Service.

“ Learn (says that excellent Divine) to distinguish between
 “ *Unbelief* and *Jealousy.* There is a twofold *Unbelief.* (1.)
 “ That which is *universal* and *privative,* such as is in all un-
 “ regenerate Persons. They have no Faith at all, that is,
 “ they are dead Men; and have no Principles of spiritual Life.
 “ This I speak not of, it is easily distinguished from any Grace
 “ being the utter Enemy and Privation as it were of them all.
 “ (2.) There is an *Unbelief partial* and *negative,* consisting in
 “ a staggering at, and questioning of the *Promises.* This is
 “ displeasing to GOD, a Sin which is attended with unknown
 “ Aggravations, tho’ Men usually indulge themselves in it.
 “ — We are ready to suppose, that we have all the Rea-
 “ sons in the World, every one supposeth that he hath those
 “ that are more cogent than any other, to question the Pro-
 “ mises of Grace, Pardon, and Forgiveness; and therefore that
 “ the Questioning of them is not their Sin, but their Duty.
 “ But pretend what he will, this is speaking against GOD;
 “ limiting of him; and that which is our keeping off from
 “ Stedfastness and Comfort.

“ But now, there may be a *Jealousy* in a gracious Heart,
 “ concerning the *Love of Christ,* which is acceptable to him,

" at least, which he is tender towards, that may be *mistaken*
 " for this Questioning of the Promises ; and so help to keep
 " the Soul in Darkness and Disconsolation. This the Spouse
 " expresseth in herself, *Cant. viii. 6. Love is strong as Death,*
 " *Jealousy is hard as the Grave, the Coals thereof are Coals of*
 " *Fire, which hath a most vehement Flame.* Love is the Founda-
 " tion. The Root (but yet it bears that Fruit which is bit-
 " ter, tho' it be wholesome) that which fills the Soul with
 " great Perplexities ; and makes it cry out for a nearer, and
 " more secure Admissioun into the Presence of Christ. *Set me*
 " *(saith the Spouse) as a Seal upon thy Heart, as a Seal upon*
 " *thyne Arm ; for Jealousy is cruel as the Grave.* I cannot
 " bear this Distance from thee, these Fears of being disregard-
 " ed by thee. *Set me as a Seal on thy Heart.*

" Now this spiritual *Jealousy* is the Solicitousness of the
 " Mind of a Believer, who hath a sincere Love for Christ, a-
 " bout the Heart, Affection, and good Will of Christ towards
 " it, arising from a Consciousness of its own *Unworthiness* to
 " be beloved by him ; or accepted with him. All causeless
 " Jealousy ariseth from a secret Sense and Conviction of Un-
 " worthiness, in the Person in whom it is ; and a *high Esteem*
 " of the Person, who is the Object of it ; or concerning
 " whose Love and Affection any one is Jealous. So it is with
 " this spiritual *Jealousy*, the Root of it is *Love*, sincere Love
 " that *cannot be quenched with Waters, nor drowned by Floods.*
 " (Verse 7.) which Nothing can utterly prevail against, nor
 " overcome. This gives the Soul *high Thoughts* of the glo-
 " rious Excellencies of *Christ*, fills it with Admiration of him.
 " These are *mixed* with a due Sense of *its own Baseness, Vile-*
 " *ness, and Unworthiness* to be owned by him, or accepted
 " with him. Now if these *Thoughts* on the one Hand, or
 " the other, be not *directed*, guided, and managed aright by
 " *Faith*, which alone can shew the Soul, how the *Glory of*
 " *Christ* consisteth principally in this, that he being so excel-
 " lent and glorious, is pleased to *love us*, with Love inex-
 " pressible, who are *vile and sinful* ; *Questionings* about the
 " Love of Christ, and those attended with much *Anxiety* and
 " *Trouble* of Mind, *will arise*. Now *this Frame*, may be
 " sometimes taken for a Questioning of the *Promises* of GOD ;
 " and that to be a *Defect of Faith*, which is an *Excess of Love* ;
 " or at most, such an irregular acting of it, as the Lord
 " Christ

Christ will be very tender towards ; and which is consistent with Peace, and a due Sense of the Forgiveness of Sins. Mistake not then these, one for another, lest much causeless Unquietness ensue, in the Judgment which you are to make of yourselves. But you will say, how shall we distinguish between these two, so as not causelessly to be disquieted and perplexed ? I answer briefly.

1. Unbelief, working in and by the questioning of the Promises of GOD, is a weakening, disheartning, dispiriting Thing. It takes off the Edge of the Soul from spiritual Duties ; and weakens it both as to Delight and Strength.

But Jealousy, that is exercised about the Person and Love of Christ, is of another Nature, and produceth other Effects : It cheers, enlivens and enlargeth the Soul, stirs up to Activity, Earnestness and Industry, in it's Enquiries after Christ. Jealousy (saith the Spouse) is hard as the Grave ; therefore, Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, as a Seal upon thine Arm. It makes the Soul restlessly Pant after more sensible and more assured Communion with Christ. It stirs up vigorous and active Spirits in all Duties. Every Doubt and Fear, that it ingenerates, concerning the Love of Christ, stirs up the Soul unto more Earnestness after him, Delight in him ; and sedulous Watching against every Thing, that may keep it at a Distance from him ; or occasion him to hide, withdraw, or absent himself from it.

2. Unbelief, that questions the Promises, is universally Selfish. It begins and ends in Self-Love. Desires after Freedom from Guilt, Danger and Punishment, are the Life and Soul of it. May this End be attain'd, it hath no Delight in GOD ; Nor doth it care what Way it be attain'd, so it may be attain'd. — — —

But The Jealousy we speak of, hath the Person of Christ and his Excellency, for its constant Object. These it fills the Mind with, in many and various Thoughts, still representing him more and more amiable ; and more desirable unto the Soul. So doth the Spouse upon the like Occasion, as you may see at large. Cant. V. 9, 10, 11, 12,

“ 13, 14, 15, 16. Being at some Loss for his Presence, *as*
 “ *he had withdrawn himself*, not finding her wanted, Com-
 “ munion and Intercourse with him, fearing that upon her
 “ Provocation she might forfeit her Interest in his Love; she
 “ falls upon the Consideration of all his Excellencies; and
 “ thereby the more inflames her self unto *Desires* after his
 “ Company and Enjoyment. And these *diverse Things* may
 “ be *thus* distinguished and discerned.”

Thus, (*Sir*) you have a full, clear and particular Reply to all your Reasonings upon this Head; from one of the greatest and best of Divines.

I might easily have refuted your several *Reasons* particularly; and I might confront them with Testimonies from the most able and experienc'd Divines under each Head distinctly: but it would be a superfluous Labour. — However, I shall give you a short Passage out of Mr. SHEPARD'S *Sound Believer*, in Opposition to the *third Reason* you give, for this singular Opinion of yours.

Says that excellent Author, “ You will find this certain,
 “ that as the Lord therefore *humbles* that he may *exalt*, so
 “ the Lord never *refuseth* to *exalt* (*in hiding his Face*) but
 “ it is *to humble*.”

And I must beg your Patience, while I just observe how even Mr. CROSSWELL'S *Reply* has furnish'd me with a notable Testimony in the Case before us. You your self (*Sir*) have said enough, in a few Lines of your 19th Page, to supersede the whole of your following *strange Doctrine*. Pray, turn to *that Page*, where speaking of *the poor deserted Believer*, that has lost *all his Joy*, and is in *dreadful Darkness*, you make these Concessions: — “ None but CHRIST, None but CHRIST,
 “ is the Language of his Soul. And when GOD hath *hum-*
 “ *bled* him to the Dust, and made CHRIST *precious* to him
 “ *by the Want* of Him, he *reveals* his Son to him again, &c.
 — Here, by your own Acknowledgement, is the Believer deserted of his *Joy* and in *dreadful Darkness*, yet HUMBLED *to the Dust*, even before GOD *reveal* his Son to him again. Surely then, such an one has an *evident Token of Salvation*, which if he can but discern upon himself, he may fetch present
 Support

Support and Comfort from that Word, *God giveth Grace to the Humble*; tho' it should not please God to favour him with *unquestionable, clear and ravishing Manifestations of his Love*. — Again, by your own Concession, here's a *deserted Believer to whom CHRIST is PRECIOUS*; the Language of his very Soul is, *NONE but CHRIST, None but Christ for me*. Sure, this is a good Evidence, which he may and ought to take the Comfort of, so long as that Text stands in the Bible, *To you which believe, Christ is precious*. — In fine, by your own Concession, Here is a deserted Believer, to whom God makes Christ precious BY the WANT of Him; — which I understand of God's sanctifying to the Believer his *Want* of the sensible Comforts of Christ's Presence, and hereby exciting his Faith and Love to the Lord Jesus, drawing out his Heart in holy Longings and Seekings after Him &c. In which Case certainly the Believer has a good Evidence, and may encourage himself from that Scripture, *Blessed are ye that hunger now*; tho' at present he has no such clear unquestionable transporting Tastes and Sights of the Love of God unto him, as some others enjoy: — Dear Sir, are these Things so, or not? Will you stand to the Concessions you have made! If so, your Discourse that follows, must stand for Nothing; and serves only to shew your *Self-Inconsistency* — Oh, Sir, after you had made the Concessions above-recited, how could you speak with such Contempt of “*your humble doubting Christians, as meer Chimæra's in Religion and expose 'em as imaginary Monsters!* How could you so peremptorily pronounce, that “*They who don't feel any Joy in the Holy Ghost, don't exercise Humility*”? How could you paint out such, as “*always proud, tullen, and obstinate in the sight of God; as harden'd and unrelenting, and incapable of any Repentance, but only Arminian or Legal; as those who can't be thankful for Jesus Christ; as very slavish and selfish in their Obedience, like Doeg detained before the Lord; and tho' their Obedience be so bad, yet depending upon that, for Want of a CHRIST to depend upon!*” — It's surprizing to me, that you should not see, you were in all this Representation of their Case, at least *contradicting yourself*, if not also the Scriptures! — And how was it, that a godly Fear didn't restrain your Pen in this Case, lest you should incur the very Charge you've so liberally thrown out upon others, of *offending against the Generation of God's Children!* — Will you now accept a Reproof from Mr. ERSKINE, one whom you have cited as a good Authority! In his last Sermon on Gal. ii. 20.

he has these Words under the 4th Use. — “ Hence see the
 “ *Darkness* that obscures many Gospel-Sermons, even among
 “ these who are otherwise *evangelical*, yet in this they are *be-*
 “ *mised*, that they cannot take up an *Assurance* or *Persuasion*
 “ in the Matter of FAITH, *distinct* from that *Assurance* of
 “ *SENSE*, which follows after Faith; nor take up the *Assu-*
 “ *rance*, Application, and Appropriation of *Faith*, ground-
 “ upon the WORD of GOD, which is the *Duty* of all that
 “ hear the Gospel *distinct* from the *Assurance* of *Sense*, foun-
 “ ded upon the WORK of GOD, which is the *Privilege* of
 “ Believers at Times. How miserably do many confound
 “ the Grounds of Faith with the Marks of Faith? &c.
 “ The whole is worth transcribing; but I must forbear.

Thus, SIR, I have given you my Reasons, why I am not
 convinced by your Reply. I can truly say, it is grievous to
 me to be called to a publick Dispute with one, who has the
 Character of a zealous Friend to vital Piety. — But I must
 have more Honour for the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and for his
 Truths, than for his frail and imperfect Children, tho’ I
 ought to love them also sincerely for his Sake. — Oh!
 how much better would it be for you and I, to join
 Heart and Hand, in united Endeavours to carry on the Cause
 of CHRIST, than to stumble poor Souls, that are enqui-
 ring the Way to Zion, and to give the Adversary an
 Occasion of Triumph, by these our Debates!

I resolve, by the help of Grace, that no Provocation you
 can give me, shall prevent Brotherly Love from continuing,
 or make me cease to pray for the Success of your Labours. —
 I hope to meet you in that blessed State, where you and I
 shall never differ, in the Methods of glorifying GOD; but
 shall eternally join in that Anthem of Praise, — *Unto him that*
hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood,
and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father;
to him be Glory and Dominion, forever and ever. Amen.

I am, SIR,

Jan. 29. 1742, 3.

Your Brother, and Servant,

Theophilus.