

A DEFENCE

Of The Further Enquiry

AFTER

TRUTH.

AGAINST

The Exceptions and Misrepresentations of  
Dr. TAYLOR in his Address to young  
Students, &c.

Wherein is shewn

The Nature of the Faith of God's Elect:  
Also, in what sense we assert the Law is  
not to be preached.

To which is added, CONSIDERATIONS  
on the Modern Question, affirmed, &c.

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**THE PREFACE.**

SINCE this work was in the press The modern Question affirmed *came to hand, on which I have bestowed some considerations, sufficient till we see further occasion.*

*The Author would not admit of any other state of the question than what he has given, and about fifty persons have subscribed, viz. That God commands unconverted sinners to believe in Christ [for] salvation. This introduces a new law, by making faith the condition of salvation. Only think what you mean, when you say, a man is to do you service [for] so much money, be it more or less; do you not mean that his service is the condition, and meriting cause of his wages; and his wages a due debt when the service is done? By this the gospel is made a mere covenant of works.*

And further, if the faith he means be a *special part of God's salvation*, then is it a blessing of the Covenant of grace: and so, contrary to all sound divinity, he makes that which is a blessing of the covenant, *to be a condition of the covenant*; and contrary to all reason, the effect

to be the cause, the fruit to bear the tree, and not the tree to bear the fruit. But if he means any other faith, we say nothing to it; the absurdity will be evident. It used to be said, that the gospel or covenant of grace, gives life in order to obedience, not that it requires obedience in order to life; and to say that the law of God requires obedience of fallen man, in order to or as a condition of salvation, by the covenant of grace, is absurd enough. He that runs may read it. ([Rom 11:6](#))

That his arguments drive to this point, and conclude in the words in which he has put the qualification, may be seen. Whether those who zealously forwarded the work read it, I know not: but if they did, it betrays their judgment; if they did not, their prudence in it will appear. As to the unwary subscribers (several of whom I personally know) my heart's desire is, that God would restore them, ([Isa 1:26](#)) as at the beginning. I beg leave to conclude in the words of the apostle; and now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it. ([Acts 3:17](#))

**ERRATA.**

Page 13.l. ult. r. hasty p. 22. marg. dele  
Jam. 1:3.

p. 28. l. 14. dele then. p. 30. l. 12. from the  
bottom,

A Defense of the Further Enquiry After Truth  
r. notion.

*A*  
*DEFENCE*  
*OF THE*  
*FURTHER ENQUIRY*  
*AFTER*  
*TRUTH*

MR. Taylor having in the first page of his address given a false scent of what he cautions his followers to avoid, viz. "some strange paradoxes which have been lately laid down, the evident tendency of some of

which is, that Christ is not to be preached to unconverted sinners;" proceeds in haughty anger through the thirteen following pages; bending his main strength against a faithful asserter and defender of the truth; one whom God has placed quite out of his reach, who has returned him an answer. In his fifteenth page he falls upon *the Further Enquiry after Truth, &c.* And forasmuch as it concerns me to defend the truth asserted and proved therein; and that I may free his readers from abuse, I shall give attendance to him.

The question between us and our opponents stands as follows:

*Whether the Law of God commands unconverted sinners who hear the Gospel preached, to have, and believe with, that faith which is a special part of God's salvation? (Vid. Further Enq. p. 10.)*

This faith is styled in Scripture the *faith of God's elect*: **(Titus 1:1)** And that it is a special fruit of election grace, may be concluded from the words of the apostle, viz.— *but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.* **(Rom 11:7)** That is, *they had obtained the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, while the rest remained in darkness, being concluded in unbelief.* **(Rom 11:32)** In regard to its efficient cause, it is called *the faith of the operation of*

God; (Col 2:12) and said to be wrought by the exceeding greatness of his power, (Eph 1:19) which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. The apostle says expressly it is the gift of God. (Eph 2:8)

Wollebius saith, speaking of saving faith, "That it is an immediate effect of special vocation, and is the gift of it; and that the *impulsive cause of faith is the same grace by which we are elected and called.*"\* Calvin, after Augustin, makes it the daughter of election; and concludes therefore, that it cannot be general because election is special. --- He saith, "faith is fitly joined to election, so that it keeps the second place."---And further affirms, "That faith is a singular pledge of God's fatherly love, laid up for his adopted children." \*\*

\* *Christ. Theol. lib. I. cap. 29. can. 2. Impulfiva vero, est eadem gratia, qua electi & vocati famus.*

\*\* *Inft. lib. III. cap. 22. \_ 10.*

That it is the duty of all who hear the gospel and have the word, *to believe the things declared thereby and contained therein, we assert and maintain:* and I do further declare, that if it can be proved that *Adam* had this Further faith before he fell, (Further Enq. ch. IV.) the contrary of which I have demonstrated, or

that it is in the power of his fallen posterity to have it, and they will not, the controversy with me is at an end, and I will freely confess my mistake. But that it should be a sin not to *have that faith which is a special fruit of election grace, any more, than not to have the grace from whence it springs; how man should be obnoxious to the vengeance of God,* for not having that peculiar gift God never was pleased to bestow upon him; and how he can be culpable, for not having that work upon his soul God never thought good to work, are things *I must confess myself ignorant of.* But let us consider what he has said to confute what we have written, and convince us of our supposed mistake.

*Page 15.* "As to the pretense (*saith he*) that Christ should be preached only to the elect, there's nothing in it, for how can we know who is elected and who not, as long as sinners remain unregenerate?"

This he suggests to be a sentiment of ours, but does not cite any of our words for it, or so much as refer his reader to the place whence he gathers it; which would have been but fair and reasonable; for then his reader might have seen and judged for himself, and would have detected the abuse: *For we have not only nowhere said, that Christ should be*

*preached to none but the elect, but otherwise; as may be seen, Further Enquiry, p. 128. "God will have the outward report of the gospel received, and the Bible received and kept by those, who have no special interest in the promise and grace contained therein." Could he read this passage, and not know that we hold the gospel should be preached to others besides the elect? neither is it a consequence of our sentiment, that Christ should be preached to none but the elect. That Christ will save none but those whom the Father gave him. (John 10:26-29; John 6:37,40; Prov. 20:15 Art. 17.) I suppose he will allow; and also, that the rest cannot save themselves; which was the doctrine of the Scripture and of our protestant reformers; but that Christ should be preached to none but the elect, follows no more from our hypothesis, than from his Confession. What, because we say the law does not bind unregenerate sinners to have that faith which is a special part of God's salvation; or in effect, that the law does nor oblige sinners to save themselves by the covenant of grace, do we therefore hold that Christ should he preached to the elect only? Does it not as well follow from the doctrine of personal election, that the elect only should have Christ preached to them? The doctrinal report is made alike to all, though the gracious application is made to one and not to another. But we preach*

*Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to The Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. If we preach the gospel at all, we preach it to all that come within the sound of our words.*

*But it is probable he may mean, our pretense is, Christ should be offered to none but the elect, seeing he imagines it is our notion about the offer of Christ that has misled us. "Mens going into the notion that an offer of Christ is not to be made in general , or that there must be no general tender of Christ made to sinners, has run them into a further absurdity."— :I never could see the great hurt of the phrase, offering Christ to sinners, because an offer cannot in all cases suppose a power and willingness to receive it." (Pag. 14.)*

Here also he misses it; for we do not only deny a general offer of Christ to all, but an offer of Christ to any; we deny the thing, unscriptural and irrational. And, admit, an offer does not in all cases suppose a power and willingness to receive it, (though he has given no instance wherein it does not) yet if it does in this case, then, it should seem to him an hurtful phrase; for that is all the reason he has given for its justification. But

does an offer suppose a power and willingness in the offerer to bestow the Thing which he offers? Have men power and will to bestow God's Christ upon others? If you were to offer and proffer and tender earthly things that you have no right to dispose of, and if you had a right, would not give them; this would be accounted mockery.

But, as he says, he would not have his followers "stand up stiffly for it," (*Pag 15*) I take it, that he is inclined to give it up, and therefore I say little to it. Only, I observe, that to deny the general offer must be accounted an absurdity. But if to offer Christ to all, or to offer him at all be a form of sound words, ([2Tim 1:13](#)) and the doctrine be a truth, why does he say, "I should never advise you to stand up stiffly for it;" and not rather as the apostle *did exhort them to hold fast the form of sound words, and contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints?* ([Jude 1:3](#)) but if these words are not wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, ([1Tim 6:3](#)) why should he reckon it an absurdity to reject them? Judge now where the absurdity lies.

The further absurdity we are said to have run into, is, "That unconverted sinners are not to

be exhorted to believe in Christ, or seek after that repentance which is to salvation." That unconverted sinners ought to believe all that is reported by the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, and God's design by him, and do all that is required by the law, we have constantly maintained; but that it is their duty to have the faith of God's elect, and consequently, that those who are not of Christ's sheep, ([John 10:26](#)) perish for not believing with the faith of the operation of God, ([Col 2:12](#)) is, what I cannot at present assent to, for reasons already offered, and as yet, I conceive, not answered, nor so much as the shadow of an answer produced.

*Page 16.* He pretends to give his readers the reason why we hold sinners are not to be exhorted to believe in Christ, &c. "The pretense is (*says he*) that a sinner has no power of his own to believe and repent."

Besides the ill expression of calling that a pretense, which he in his following words avows to be an evangelical truth, I must observe, that he has abused his readers; and, I dare say, if he has read what I have written upon the argument, he may know he hath not spoken truth with his neighbor; ([Eph 4:25](#)) one passage out of many I will here produce to evince it, "*God has not lost his*

*authority by man's fall, nor is man's obligation lessened by his loss of original righteousness; but whatever Adam by the law of nature owed to God, that his fallen posterity to a man oweth, and for his non-payment must suffer wrath to the uttermost, unless saved by the grace of God through a glorious redeemer:—But what is this to the purpose, seeing Adam had not this grace before he fell? The law commanded man to walk upright on earth, and so it does still; but it did not require Adam to make himself wings and fly to heaven; nor does it command any of his fallen posterity so to do.*"(Further Enquiry, pag. 233.) We don't say it is not required of man because of his present weakness, but because this power was not in Adam before the fall. See *Further Enquiry*, p. 51, 52, 53.

"My great master (says he) addressed himself to a mixed multitude, saying, Repent and believe the gospel, [\(Mark 1:15\)](#)."

The faith and repentance Christ called his own professing people to the exercise of in this place, are such as were their duty at a particular time, as his words clearly intimate; the time is fulfilled, and *the kingdom of God is at hand*, &c. Now Christ was the object of faith as well when he was held forth in the promise, as when he was manifested in the flesh: *his appearing in the end of the world to put*

*away sin by the sacrifice of himself, was the fulfilling of the promise, and accomplishment of prophecies, but did not bring in another way of salvation than the church had received before. This I conceive to be plain, from the apostle's referring to the scriptures of the Old Testament, the doctrine of his death for the sins, and of his resurrection for the deliverance of his people; (1Cor.15:3,4) therefore, it cannot be well supposed, that the Lord would make use of the consideration of the fulfillment of time &c. to excite to that repentance and faith, which had no immediate regard to it. But if we take repentance, &c. for a receiving and acknowledging the Messiah to be come; and a forsaking typical ordinances, to worship according to the institutions he would give, the fulfillment of time and approach of the kingdom appear to be a suitable argument.*

But if it were granted, that Christ means here the exercise of that repentance and faith which by his spirit is wrought in the hearts of his own children, it would not prove his conclusion; *because then it might well be supposed, he intended those among the assembly which had a principle of grace in them. Dr. Ridgley saith, "When God commands persons in the gospel, to do those things which cannot be performed without his special grace, he sometimes*

*supposes them, when he gives forth the command, to have a principle of spiritual life and grace; which is, in effect, to bid one that is made alive, to put forth living actions; which respect, more especially the progress of grace after the work is begun; in which sense I understand the words of the apostle, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh, that is, hath wrought, in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure."(Vol II. pag. 11.)*

He proceeds: "The whole course of Christ's preaching was exhorting mixed auditories to believe, repent, and practice those duties which were pleasing to God, and were of a spiritual kind; and as he made no distinction among his hearers, certainly, what he pressed all to, was the duty of all."(Pag. 17.)

1. Here he confounds preaching and exhorting, which God has distinguished. *Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.* (2Tim 4:2) These were all parts of Timothy's ministry in the church, but not all the same thing. He is commanded to preach the word, but it is not proper to say exhort the word. This also deprives Christ of his honor as a preacher, &c. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I

*have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving kindness and thy truth from the great congregation. (Psalm 40:9,10)* God anointed him to preach the gospel, (Isa 61:1) as our Lord tells us, Luke 4 and accordingly he did, (Luke 4:16-32). *Mr. Taylor's and Christ's own account of his ministry do not agree.*

2. He presumes Christ "made no distinction among his hearers." ---If he did not, I cannot see what service this would do him: *But the contrary is evident.* As, Ye believe in God, believe also in me:(John 14:1) What were they to believe? *I go to prepare a place for [you] and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:3)* Where did Christ command the ungodly multitude so to believe? See his answer to the ruler, (Matt. 19:16,17). and in (John 8) he distinguishes one part of his audience from the other at the same time, (John 8:31,32). *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed—and to others of his hearers, (John 8:44). Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do. Nor does he command these to believe and perform spiritual duties, as Mr. T. says, the whole course of Christ's*

*preaching was to do.* But,

Suppose our Lord had delivered himself in general terms to a mixed multitude, it would not follow that he intended them alike to all. As, when a minister gives the Lord's supper, and utters these words, *This is Christ's body which was broken for you*, he does not mean all that under the roof, but the communicants. Such words must be taken according to the design of the speaker. **(Rev 2:7)** Besides, if he would be consistent with himself, by mixed multitude we must understand only unbelievers: for in the case of the jailer, the command to believe is made the argument of his unregeneracy: *"If in that moment of time he had been renewed and converted, faith must have been wrought in him, and then (says he) the Apostle's answer must, upon the scheme of those we have in view, have been, Thou hast believed, &c."* (Pag. 18,19) Thus he makes the exhortation to believe, the argument of his state; and consequently the mixed auditories made up of unbelievers only.

Now let me desire the judicious reader to consider his argument in its full weight; which in form runs thus: That which Christ pressed all to, was certainly the duty of all: but Christ pressed mixed auditories to believe, &c. therefore it was the duty of all to

believe, &c.

I have a regard for truth; and would do nothing to evade the force of an argument, being disposed to receive conviction; but to yield my reason up to the assurance of a creature is beneath a man. I freely grant that what Christ pressed all to, was certainly the duty of all; and that it is the duty of all who hear the gospel to believe it, and that to entertain? a thought contrary to it is sin; *but the question is, whether it be the duty of all to have that faith which is a special fruit of election grace; to prove which, he produces no fit medium: his premises don't contain the conclusion.* There is no conclusion that can be conceived in the imagination of a man, but what is capable of proof by this method. But take it for granted, and the point is gained.

**(Acts 13:38-41).** He supposes holds forth both the command to believe, and that it was laid upon unconverted sinners, (Pag. 237) To which by and by. "Now (*says he*) what was the duty, for their final non-compliance with which, they were to perish for ever? *It was trusting in Christ for forgiveness of sins, and justification in the sight of God.*"

*It's true, he who dies in unbelief perishes so he who is not elected and redeemed shall perish; but,*

*properly speaking, not because he is not elected and redeemed, but, because he hath transgressed the law of God. (Rom 2:12)* If I may be allowed to speak of a pravity as existing, I would, with submission to the godly wise, say, *not having the faith of God's elect, and not being interested in the grace of election, are both antecedent to the everlasting perdition of ungodly men; but, I hope, no one, who fears God, will say, non-election is the cause of damnation: and, I conceive, no man is able to prove, that not to have that faith which is a special fruit of election grace, is the cause of damnation neither.* To be born must be antecedent to dying, but not the cause, sin is that.

Let us see whether this text requires the mockers and blasphemers spoken of in the following verses to have the faith of God's elect; and whether the motive the apostle makes use of be avoiding everlasting perdition: **(Acts 13:38)**.—*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets, behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish.* These words express no command at all, neither do they propose any supernatural blessing to be

bestowed upon the condition of believing and repenting; but are a declaration concerning the doctrine of pardon and justification through Christ, and the state of those who through grace do believe in him. *He saith, through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, not through this man is offered unto you pardon and justification.* Grace was not suspendible upon the *will of the creature*, but was settled upon the elect in Christ Jesus, before the world began. **(Rom 9:16; 2Tim 1:9)**

Indeed rejecting of the doctrine of the apostles is sin; mocking and despising the ministers of the Gospel and their ministry is provoking to God, and will aggravate the dreadful account of those that perish; and the wages of sin is death, **(Rom 6:23)** eternal death: but that the motive the apostle makes use of here is avoiding eternal damnation, does not appear: *for the scriptures teach that eternal death is unavoidable by the fallen creature, who by the law is guilty and already under condemnation; though temporal deaths and desolations are in a sense to be avoided by the morality and outward conduct of the creature.* **(Jonah 3)** Nor do the words seem to favor his notion at: for it is not said, beware lest you fall under the eternal vengeance of God; but, beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets; in

which he had, no doubt, his eye upon (**Hab 1:5,6**) Behold among the heathen, and regard and wonder marvelously, for *I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you; for lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and haughty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places which are not theirs. It is plain that temporal judgment was spoken of by the prophet, and the words of the apostle as plainly refer to it; Beware, therefore, says he, lest [that] come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets.* Now if the words of the prophet, concerning the desolation of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, meant the eternal perdition of that people, i.e. the Jews, then may the apostle's words be so taken, otherwise they cannot, without doing violence to the scripture. They had lost their city and temple before by the Chaldeans, whom God brought up against them for despising his prophets, which you may read, (**2 Chron 36:14-22**), and they were now in danger of losing them again by the Romans, which soon after came to pass: See (**Luke 19:41-45**).

Moreover, to make an offer of the means of grace (which God would have first made to the Jews) (**Acts 13:46**) is not attended with those absurdities, nor apt to nourish those mistakes about a general deign in God to

save all, and the ability of the fallen creature to receive that which is offered when it pleases, as the doctrine and practice of the offer of grace is. *The offer of the means, and exhorting men to receive the means and attend upon them, carries in it no impossibility of the unconverted sinner's acceptance; because reasonable creature in unregeneracy, may receive the doctrinal report and embrace the externals of instituted religion: but an offer of the grace of God, carries in it an impossibility of the unregenerate sinners acceptance. One dead in sins and trespasses (Eph 2:1) can no more accept of and receive the grace of spiritual life and salvation, than a dead man in his grave can accept of, and receive natural life, if it were offered over his tomb, One passage of Mr. Cotton's shall conclude here.*

*"First, we have him (that is Christ) and him drawing us and fitting us by his Spirit, whereby we come to see him; and then we mourn over him for all the wrong we have done him; this is that faith and that repentance that flows from Christ, and then brings us to him: if it flows not from him, but first brings us to him, it is not the faith and repentance of God's elect, nor that which the gospel holds forth." \**

*\*Treatise of the covenant of grace, p. 218.*

The next place he brings is [\(Acts 16:27,34\)](#). touching the jailer; which has been answered

already, *Further Enquiry*, p. 125, 126. but as here we have something said to support the sense he gives of it, and make it prove what he would have it, I shall not pass it by in silence, though mentioning his reasons may be a sufficient confutation. "If you look (says he) into the history of the jailer's conversion, you will find reason to think, that though he was scared and terrified when he sprung in and fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, Sirs, what I do to be saved? he was yet an unconverted person; for he was so far from having any right thoughts just before, that he was going to murder himself."

It is not supposed but that the jailer was an unconverted man a little before; so was the apostle Paul the moment before the Lord met him in the way to Damascus, whither he was going to persecute the saints; (Acts 9:1,2,3) but it follows not that he was un-regenerated, when it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, (Gal 1:16) and he [trembling] and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? (Acts 9:6). These cases seem to agree; for it is said, he called for a light, and sprang in, and came [trembling] and fell down before Paul and Silas, &c. *I cannot conceive reason to believe the jailer was dead in sins, when, under a sense of his sin and misery by nature, he cried, what must I do to be saved?* What time does he suppose necessary (seeing his

argument is drawn from the suddenness of the supposed change) for the Holy Spirit to quicken a dead sinner? It is not noon at three quarters after eleven o'clock, therefore it is not noon at twelve, is a way of reasoning, even children would smile at. Yet thus this gentleman argues here: but, as in the resurrection, the body shall be quickened and raised in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; **(1Cor 15:52)** so is the new life implanted in the soul, though the new born babe in Christ **(1Cor 3:1)** may not suddenly know it, or at present know what is the cause of its uneasiness and sense of want. *Growth is a work of time; (Eph 4:15) quickening is instantaneous. (Ezek 16:6)*

He further urges, that if the jailer had been born again, the apostle would not have said, believe, &c. but thou hast believed, &c. But this proves no more than the former: for our Lord bid his disciples believe in him, when it is certain, they were born again, and were believers; ye believe in God, believe also in me. **(John 14:1)**

It is said moreover, "*He pressed faith in Christ upon him, as the present incumbent duty upon him, if he desired safety.*"

This, by the way, is not well expressed, for

though comfort and peace. to a troubled spirit come in by believing and no other way, yet safety, **(Psa 12:5)** as it implies a being out of danger, is by God's own act, **(Prov 21:31)** whereby he chose his people in Christ, before the world began. **(Eph 1:4)** Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation. **(Isa 45:17)** *There is a saving from wrath, and a saving from fear: from wrath we are saved by the sacrifice of Christ, without any act of our own, or even the Holy Ghost's work. --- Jesus which delivered us from the wrath which is to come.* **(1Thess 1:10)** There's also salvation from fear, **(Heb 2:15)** which is effected by the Spirit through faith. A salvation from unsettledness and perplexity of heart, into a determination of conscience and rest on Christ, the way, the truth, and the life; **(John 14:6)** into establishment, and sometimes into a rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. **(1Pet 1:8)** Yea, the apostle said to the Corinthians, ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you. **(1Cor 15:2; 1Tim 4:16)** *That is, saved from error and seduction, by retaining the doctrinal truths of grace. These salvations come in by believing, but deliverance from curse and condemnation only by the sacrifice of Christ.* **(Gal 3:13; Rom 8:1)**

For an answer to Acts 17:30,31. I refer to *Further Enquiry*, p. 127, 128.

"Men may be endured (*says he*) in their disputing about the sense of the scripture.; but it is not to be endured that they should bring in, as the pure gospel, anything that is contrary to the Words of holy men; and to all the just consequence, which can possibly be drawn from it, by right reasoning."

We bring in nothing contrary to the words of holy scripture, *but maintain it to be the duty of all who hear the word, to believe whatever it declares.* His claiming the scriptures to be on his side, is but what all do. Is there not as plain scripture for general redemption, as for the sinner's duty of believing? and yet he will not allow that Christ redeemed Judas as he did Peter. It is the meaning of the scripture we are to be set down by. His just consequences to prove that it is the will of God that all unconverted sinners should have that faith which is the beginning of eternal life, [\(John 17:3\)](#) and to the everlasting enjoyment of God is inseparably connected, will not be found just consequences, drawn from the scriptures. His endeavor is but rolling the stone up hill. For it is to make a revealed will of God to contradict his revealed will. *God has revealed his will touching*

*personal election, particular redemption, and the everlasting salvation of his chosen; and has he revealed another will that all should partake of that salvation which he did not design for them? I pray for them, said our Lord, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. (John 17:9)*

He comes, pag.20, to another of our absurdities, which, says he, I cannot but caution you against. "They have not the face to deny, that Christ and his apostles exhorted sinners to believe and repent, and therefore allow that faith and repentance may be preached; but as far as I am able to understand, these are to be recommended to sinners as moral virtues, and not as supernatural evangelical graces."---And again, pag. 24. after he had told them in his way of drollery, to what purpose sinners should be exhorted upon our plan, as he calls it; adds, "*This must be the sum and substance of all we can have to say to sinners, upon the supposition, that they are to be exhorted to " faith and repentance only as moral duties."*

*Here he acknowledges that we allow of exhortations to sinners, which is just; but charges us with a fault, because we restrain them to moral duties only. In the first place, I observe, our opponents do not agree among themselves in*

this matter; there is confusion in their language. (Gen 11:7) The author of the *Modest Answer* saith that "faith is a moral duty, and repentance is a moral duty, the moral law requires that faith ". And indeed, there being no other law, whatever is the duty of a creature is so by the moral law, and consequently moral. But he plainly suggests, that there are duties required of unconverted sinners which are not moral, or our allowing of exhortations to moral duties would be all he could desire. Pray what new law hath he found, whose duties are not moral, or more than moral? Where must we look for it?

This seems not a slip of his pen because he has urged it more than once; and we stand charged by him as erroneous, for denying that unconverted sinners should be exhorted to supernatural acts, or as he has expressed it, supernatural evangelical graces. To which I answer, by supernatural, *I understand, that which is above the strength and reach of nature, under the common agency of the Spirit of God.* Nature, I consider, as under, and as above and before the fall. *As under the fall we constantly maintain, that it is the duty of the creature to do what it is now un-capable of, that is, to keep the whole law; because God made man upright.* (Eccl 7:29) Supernatural acts are such as were above the strength or reach of

nature when pure and perfect, under the common agency of the Spirit. Such I take the faith in question to be and therefore reckon it among the all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, ([Eph 1:3](#)) above and beyond the reach of nature when seated on its throne. And this was *Dr. Owen's judgment*.\* But this gentleman will have it to be the duty of natural men, ([1Cor 2:14](#)) to act above the sphere of nature's activity, even in its first and best estate; and makes them blamable for not doing what standing angels cannot do.

*\* Cause ways and means of knowing the mind of God in the Scriptures, p. 41.*

And whereas some who are not afraid to say anything, have given out that I have misrepresented *Dr. Ridgley's* opinion about this point, I shall here transcribe a passage out of his second *vol. p. 9th*, which is as follows.

*"Obj,* To this it is objected, that if Christ invites and calls men to come to him, as he often does in the New Testament; and when they refuse to do it, mentions their refusal with a kind of regret; as when he says, *ye will not come unto me that ye might have life*; this, they suppose, is no other than an insult on

mankind, a bidding them come without the least design that they should; as if a magistrate should go to the prison door, and tell the unhappy man, who is not only under lock and key, but loaded with irons, that he would have him leave that place of misery and confinement, and how he would rejoice if he would come out; and upon that condition, propose to him several favors that he has in reserve for him: This, say they, is not to deal seriously with him. And if the offer of grace in the gospel, answers the similitude, as they suppose it exactly does, then there is no need of anything farther to be replied to it; the doctrine contests itself; as it argues the divine dealings with men illusory."

**"Answ.** This similitude, how plausible so ever it may appear to be to some, is far from giving a just representation of the doctrine we are maintaining: for when the magistrate is supposed to signify his desire, that the prisoner would set himself free, which he knows he cannot do; hereby it is intimated, that though God knows the sinner cannot convert himself, yet he commands him to do it; or put forth supernatural acts of grace, though he hath no principle of grace in him: but let it be considered, *that this God nowhere*

*commands any to do."*

Here this eminent man of God hath in plain and strong terms expressed the same thing, for which we are indecently called unruly and impertinent praters, whose mouths should be stopped; and according to the judgment or passion of *Mr. Taylor*, the doctor's ought to have been stopped too: but he that judgeth us is the Lord.

I cannot well forbear, to appeal to the conscience of a certain young minister in London, whom, for the respect I bear to him, I forbear to name, if he did not (*upon my reading the above passage out of Dr. Ridgley last spring*) declare in the presence of a living evidence, that he was in our way of thinking: notwithstanding he has given himself a great deal of liberty since up and down in the country, to shew his opposition to us. **(James 1:3)** If he had been convinced of a mistake, he would have done the part of a friend, to have signified it to me; as also the reasons of the change of his judgment, before he had openly engaged himself in the opposition.

Pag. 21. he concludes, if our sentiment be right, viz. that the law of God does not command sinners to perform supernatural acts,

then Christ and his apostles did not preach the gospel at all. His words are, "If it be so then, what is properly the gospel never was preached by our Lord, and those whom he inspired in their exhortations, as far as we can find by the historical writings of the apostles and evangelists."

This is somewhat difficult to be understood, if it can be made sense of at all. Those whom "*he inspired in their exhortations,*" is at best an awkward phrase. Holy men were inspired, [\(2Tim 3:16\)](#) and we read in Job, there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. [\(Job 32:8\)](#) But this is different. If he would have it read thus, those whom Christ inspired never preached in their exhortations; then he confounds preaching and exhorting, [\(2Tim 4:2\)](#) which *God has distinguished. However, in one thing his expression is very plain, that is, what is properly the gospel, is, an exhortation to dead sinners, to believe with the faith of God's elect, and while in unregeneracy, to perform spiritual, supernatural acts, or to make themselves alive spiritually, which they must be before they can move spiritually.* The exhortation must suppose a command, or else, not to comply would not be sin; for where no law is, there is no transgression: [\(Rom 4:15\)](#) hence, the sense, of what he says is indeed properly the gospel,

is purely the law. *Not promises and declarations of grace, but commands, according to this, are the true gospel.* As to mistakes about lesser matters, I confess, tis too little to take notice of; nor would I have done what I have, had he not through the whole, used an ungentle freedom: but this is a point we ought to contend earnestly for, [\(Jude 1:3\)](#) that the gospel is not the law, and the law is not the gospel. Besides, he might have found several places in the New Testament, where Christ and his apostles preached the gospel, and did not command or exhort dead sinners to make themselves alive, nor even exhort at all: as [\(Luke 4:16-32; Acts 11:20,21\)](#) and something might be gathered from the account the apostle gives of the ministry, [\(1Cor 1; 1Cor 2:1-8\)](#).

The impertinence's with which he has filled up the 22nd, 23rd pages, and part of the 24th, I suppose he may have taken from the *Modest Answer*, p. 29. and now thrown them out with usury: but I shall leave such froth to fall, die and perish of itself. We are to preach the gospel, [\(Mark 16:15\)](#) and teach the observation of Christ's institutions; [\(Matt 28:21\)](#) and it may be, we use exhortations in the place Christ has appointed them, as much as those who make so much ado about them; but we are not to mingle and confound

the gospel with the law, the acts of the creature with the grace of God in the salvation of a sinner.

I come now to consider my account of faith, as he hath been pleased to give it, p. 24. which, indeed, at first sight, gave me some uneasiness; because he affirms that some necessary ingredients in saving faith, such as looking to Jesus for life and salvation, staying upon him, and flying to him for refuge, as a hope set before us, &c. are struck out of the account of this grace: which, had I done, to the dishonor of the truth, and injury of the children of God, I should gladly have published my retraction, and have gone with sorrow to my grave.

I would not render evil for evil; and that I might not injure him in pretending to give his sense, I set down his words, that the reader may see and judge.

*"We are told, says he, that faith is a believing upon an inwrought persuasion, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth; that special faith, or believing in Christ, is a possessing Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ; and it has been surmised, though not positively asserted, that every act of special faith hath the nature of appropriation in it. If men, on*

*this supposition, oppose its being allowed to be true, that it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ, they fight with their own shadow, for none will be so silly to say, a Christ-less person possesses Christ. You will at first view see, that what the Scriptures make to be necessary ingredients in saving faith, such as looking to Jesus for life and salvation, staying upon him, and flying to him for refuge, as a hope set before us—are struck out of the account of this grace." (Addr. p. 24.)*

Here he has given some of my words concerning faith, some he has left out without the usual mark of omission, the better to effect his purpose of exposing, &c. which I shall take notice of by and by. My account of faith seems very ridiculous to him, as indeed the faith of God's people does to many, who call it enthusiasm and fancy, as he has hardly forborne to do in his Address: but whether it agrees with the Word of God, and the experience of the godly, ought to be considered. My words are, "That faith as an act, is a believing upon an in-wrought persuasion, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth:"(Further Enquiry, pag. 12) which amounts to this; *That faith is a persuasion of the truth, which is made known in the soul by the Spirit of God.* That faith is a persuasion, no

man that hath either faith or common sense can deny. That it is a persuasion of or concerning the truth, is self-evident; otherwise it would be a mere nullity, an act without an object: that it, viz. the object, truth, is made known in the soul, is very clear from the Word; He hath given us an understanding **(1John 5:20)** of him that is true; which, truth is said by john to dwell in us. **(2John 1:2)** Not to dwell upon the lip only by profession , as it had been received by the ear, but to dwell in the heart, as it had been indelibly wrought there by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, *And that it is the work of the Spirit of God, as an indwelling Spirit,* **(Rom 8:11)** *will hardly be questioned by any of the generation of the righteous, whatever opposition it may meet with from the crowd of common professors.* I called it a believing upon persuasion, because believing, well expresses an active idea; I believe because God has persuaded me: **(Gen 9:17 margin)** I called it a persuasion upon inward knowledge, to distinguish it from the blind notion that the common Christian has; and on which he builds his hope, without any regard to a change wrought in his soul: and I added, being led by the Spirit into the truth, to give the glory of this work to God who is the efficient cause of it; and that my definition might agree to the faith which is in question,

viz, that faith which is a special part of God's salvation. *I doubt not but God's Israel, for whom I wrote, understand it, and know it to be according to Scripture, and rejoice to think they have such a faith, while others look at it as a matter of jest.*

What he seems to make most advantage of, is the following passage out of my thirteenth page, namely, that "special faith, or believing in Christ, is a possessing of Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ."

Here are two words *possessing* and *appropriating* noted by him; but whether he dislikes both, or only one, he does not tell us; therefore, seeing they are excepted against and rejected, as not belonging to faith, it behooves us to enquire of the oracles of God, whether they do or no. I shall begin with the former (*which he, indeed, by his following words, seems to level against*) and enquire, whether the soul that is born again, by faith possesses Christ.

To possess a thing, is a notion so common and easy, that it is not necessary to lay any thing of it. The distinction between right and possession, is commonly known and allowed by all. Right is that upon which we legally possess, and legal possession is an entering upon and enjoying that which we have a

right to.

Faith in Scripture is spoken of under metaphors taken from the senses, as seeing, tasting, handling; in the exercise of all which, there is a real enjoying or possessing of the object. The apostle speaking of that gracious work which God had wrought upon the souls of the believing Ephesians, saith, *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;* **(Eph 1:18)** and in another place, *ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.* **(Eph 5:8)** And when this blessing of the covenant was spoken of in the Old Testament, it is sometimes expressed by seeing; as, *They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.* **(Isa 35:2; Matt 13:16)** And concerning the serpent which Moses made by God's appointment and direction, it is said, *if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived.* **(Numbers 21:9)** Now there is no way of the eye's enjoying its object but by seeing of it; and when the eye sees any thing, the species of sight terminates in the eye, which thereby is joined to it, possesses and enjoys it. *Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the Sun.* **(Eccl 11:7)**

The apostle Peter speaks of it under the metaphor of tasting: *If so be ye have tasted that*

*the Lord is gracious. (1Pet 2:3)* And David, *0 taste and see that the Lord is good. (Psa 34:8)* When Jonathan, whose spirits were exhausted by the heat and burden, of the day, in a long battle against the enemies of Israel, found honey, he put forth the end of the rod which was in his hand, and dipped it in an honey-comb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes were enlightened. *(1Sam 14:27)* Upon tasting the honey he found his spirits to return. What did not Jonathan possess the honey which he tasted? Did he not enjoy it? Yes, he did; and felt strength renewed *(Isa 40:31)* thereby. Don't we possess and enjoy our food; when we feed upon it? When we taste pleasant fruit, do we not enjoy it? *and when a poor soul tastes that the Lord is gracious, it does then possess and enjoy the gracious Lord then.*

Faith receives Christ, *(John 1:12,13)*. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, (Rom 9:16) but of God.* Here the children of God, who are born of the Spirit, *(John 3:5)* and believe on the name of the Son of God, are said to receive him, and with him the privilege of adoption. The soul embraces him, as it were in its arms. The

apostle speaking of the Old Testament saints who died before Christ came in the flesh, saith, all these died in faith, not having received the promises, [\(Heb 11:13\)](#) that is, the things promised, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them. Here is receiving of Christ, [\(Song 3:5\)](#) seeing of him and his benefits in the promises, and embracing of them by faith plainly spoken of; and yet according to this teacher, *possessing of Christ is excluded from faith*. What faith has he found, that neither sees the Sun of Righteousness, nor has felt his healing beams? that hath not tasted that the Lord is gracious, nor been refreshed with the hidden manna? [\(Rev 2:17\)](#) that hath not, doth not receive Christ in the gospel, and lay hold upon him? Hath he found a new faith, that came newly up since the penning of the Old Testament, [\(Deut 32:17\)](#) since the times of the apostles, yea, since the days of our reformers and martyrs (whose account of faith he despises?) I am afraid it is a faith which doth not work by love; [\(Gal 5:6\)](#) *but produces pride and conceit, anger and evil speaking; a dead faith (which that faith must be that does not possess Christ) which though it may make assemblies and churches full, will reduce religion to a mere skeleton.* [\(John 15:4\)](#)

By the phrase possessing Christ, no injury is

done to our cause. His endeavoring to expose us on the account of that, has indeed betrayed his ignorance of the nature of faith. Let us now see what we are to fear, from that of appropriating of Christ: for this too seems grievous in his eyes. *"It has been surmised, says he, though not positively asserted, that every act of special faith hath the nature of appropriation in it."* My words are, in answer to an objection; "It is a query with me, whether there be any act of special faith, that hath not the nature of appropriation in it; and sure I am, there is none, where there is not right." *It is to be hoped I have not missed it in my surmise, and in my assertion too. He will not surely, deny, that all special faith hath an aspect of appropriation; or how can it be an element of God's salvation, to which the everlasting testament of God is inseparably connected with, may we not suppose, that it is an evidential act of special faith to appropriate Christ, to claim an interest in its object?* Nature does not always act to its height; yet no man in his wits will deny an infant to be a rational creature, because that infant, as far as he knows, does not reason: nor will any one say, that a man when he sleeps, is not a reasonable creature, though his rational faculties are not in exercise. God has said, Thou shalt call me, my Father, &c. And pray, does the Spirit work this disposition in regeneration? or when? We

don't suppose that faith as it views Christ, tastes the sweetness of his love, and feels the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness, whereby it is drawn to him to trust in him for ever, is free from disputing about its interest in the Lord, by reason of a different and contrary principle that is in the soul: [\(Gal 5:17\)](#) therefore, as Wollebius says, we do not teach such a confidence as is free from doubting, but such an one as does not finally yield to them. \*

\* *Christ. Theol. lib. I. cap. 29. can. 11.* Fiduciae tamen firmitatem non eam docemus, quae nullis cum dubitationibus luctatur, sed quae dubitationibus non finaliter succumbat.

And as I had the happiness to be a member of the church at Rowel, in the time of the eminently godly and judicious *Mr. Davis*, where I received the notions for which now I suffer reproach; and which, to the best of my knowledge, was a sentiment generously received and held, till they came under a change; and for quietness sake, gave up one thing after another, till they lost their eyes. I will mention one passage or two out of his *Treatise of Faith*, on [\(John 6:40\)](#). p. 1, 2. "Two things I will peculiarly remark from the words: *1.* That "the weakest act of saving faith that ventures on Christ, takes

possession of him, and eternal Life in him. 2. That the weakest act of saving faith is, and may, and ought to be improved as a sure evidence of our interest in Christ, and eternal life by him."

But admit that every act of faith does not appropriate Christ; what then? It cannot be supposed by any who are not perversely disposed to cavil, that by my words, "And here by special faith, or believing in Christ, understand a possessing of Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ," *I intended that there is no act of faith but that of a subjective assurance, or believing that Christ is mine.* No; but my design was, in the first place, to pitch upon that act of faith, which, I supposed none would say was the duty of all that hear the gospel preached; and then desired my opponent to assign a reason, why it is the duty of unconverted sinners, to believe with one degree of faith of the same kind, and not with another.

Here I stand, and here I must stand still; for till I am satisfied, by what law it is the duty of unregenerate sinners to believe in Christ, with that faith which is called, the faith of God's elect; and yet not their duty to believe, they have any interest in the grace that gives being and denomination to that faith, there's

no progress further for me. *I am very desirous to be informed, what the unregenerate soul is to believe more than the report; what the soul is to do, that agrees with the definition of faith; what he is to be persuaded of more than the truth of the doctrinal report, till God has given some token of his favor.* I really wish some would, laying aside all guile, **(1Pet 2:1)** vouchsafe to tell us in plain words what the unregenerate soul is, or has a right to believe more than the truth of the report: which we maintain is their duty to do. *Pray, what is that faith, what can it be that does not take hold upon Christ, possess Christ, and in some degree claim Christ; and yet is more than a believing of the report?* If it be said, it is a looking to him, a relying upon him; I would desire to know, whether it be a looking to him, &c. only as he is declared in the word without an internal revelation, or by a special revelation? If the former, it is a mere natural act, and not that faith which is in the question: if the latter, then the soul is spiritually enlightened, and so out of the question. Besides, by this gentleman's favor, reliance is no more of the essence of faith, than he imagines assurance to be: but reliance is an immediate effect of that inward knowledge and persuasion, by which we define faith. **(Psal. 9:10)** *And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* There's an inseparable connection between knowledge

of Christ and recumbency, yet may they be distinguished; the one as the cause or antecedent, the other as the effect or consequent. And farther, is he to rely that he may be a believer, or as being a believer?

*This gentleman will have it the duty of unregenerate sinners, to believe with that faith which is a special part of God's salvation; and yet at the same time, not their duty to believe the salvation they partake of is theirs which I cannot well understand*

To graft this notion upon the calvinistical scheme, makes confusion. For, that asserts, *That it is not the will of God, that all who hear the gospel should be saved with an everlasting salvation, by the covenant of his grace.* This is the known and acknowledged sentiment of all that hold the scripture doctrine of eternal personal election, as our reformers did; which appears evidently by the 17th article of the church of England. And it also maintains, *That the whole of God's salvation is inseparably connected to every special part, which is dispensed according to God's everlasting covenant.* This I take to be the sense of the doctrine of the final perseverance of the called of the Lord; and the meaning of the apostle, where he saith, *..--he that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ.*

**(Phil 1:6)** And yet, at the same time, which makes the confusion, our Calvinists assert, and would maintain, *That it is the will of God, that all who hear the gospel should have that faith, which is a special part of God's salvation, and a peculiar blessing of the covenant of Grace.* But,

If special faith takes possession of Christ, and hath the nature of appropriation in it, he seems to yield the point. His words are; "If men on this supposition oppose its being allowed to be true, that it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe in Christ, they fight with their own shadow, for none will be so silly to say, a Christ-less person possesses Christ."

Here he has lost the question: we are not talking about what a Christ-less person does, but what he ought to do, what is his duty in unregeneracy. If this be his sense of it, we are come to an issue; for it is as silly to say an unbeliever believes in Christ, as to say a Christ-less person possesses Christ. Or, if the faith, he affirms to be the duty of the unconverted, be only such an one as men can have in unregeneracy, which neither sees, nor apprehends and lays hold upon Christ, our controversy is at an end with him.

But, says he, "you will at first view see, that what the scriptures make necessary ingredients in saving faith, such as looking to Jesus for life and salvation, staying upon him, and flying to him for refuge, as a hope set before us—are struck out of the account of this grace."

Why staying upon him, and flying to him, rather than flying to him and then staying upon him? as the nature of the thing, and order of the apostle's words, [\(Heb 6:18,19\)](#) plainly imply.---*Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, &c* here's flying for refuge, and then abiding there: and why a hope, instead of *the hope*? which expresses it with more emphasis, according to our use of the article; and not as though there were other hopes set before us, and only allow Jesus a place among them: these I leave him to account for. But passing these by, as also, his making faith a compound made up of several ingredients, there is one thing I must take notice of, viz, he tells his readers, the things he mentions "are struck out of the account of this grace."

Suppose they had not been mentioned, it is not just to say they are struck out of the

account, unless we had denied that they did in any wise belong to faith: a man may give a short and imperfect account of a thing, and yet not deny that which is necessary to the perfecting of it: but, if, we have not only not struck them out of the account, but have taken them, or any of them into the account, and that even in the same place whence he has taken our account, how will he answer for his saying so, in the presence of God or man? I will give you my words as they are.

*"Faith, as an act, is believing upon an inwrought persuasion, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth. And though I don't say, it is a knowing more than the word; yet it is such an inward knowledge which no man ever could attain by all the declarations of the word only. And upon this knowledge follows that reliance, that recumbency, which Peter's words suggest; Lord, to whom shall we go? and David's words plainly express; and they that know thy name will put their fruit in thee. There's an inseparable connection between knowledge and recumbency."*

You see with what justice we are used. With what honor, as a gentleman, could he leave out part of my words, which immediately follow those he mentions, and contain what he tells you is struck out of the account; when, indeed, it is only struck out by his

own pen? It is possible a man may mistake the meaning of another's words; which is frequently done without design: but it's hardly to be thought, that he did not know of my words, when they were under his eye; especially, seeing he took the words that go before, and some that follow at a few lines distance. This one would think was done with design, and discovers the spirit of those whom David complains of; who have said, with our tongue we wilt prevail, our lips are our own: who is Lord over us? ([Psalm 12:4](#))

*Page 25.* He tells his students, what, upon our scheme, they must not tell convinced sinners, and what they must; "Nay, you must tell them, that till they can appropriate Christ, it is not their duty to trust in him; because special faith is a possessing Christ, an inward appropriating of him; it is an eye of the soul to see how fine grace has made the righteousness of Christ, and a tongue to sang his praises."

If this was intended to shew that the ministry is rendered defective by our hypothesis, that we have nothing to say to a convinced soul, it has been answered, (*Further Enq. pag. 153-161*) in removing a supposed consequence charged upon us in the *Modest Answer*. If designed to urge us

with an absurdity, it may be retorted thus; 'till they know they can trust in Christ (which no unregenerate sinner can do in an especial manner) it is not their duty to trust in him; because faith is a trusting in him: yea, and then his point is gone: for they must, according to his way of reasoning, tell unbelievers, that till they can believe in Christ it is not their duty to believe in him. Many of the ungodly multitude think they do trust in Christ, though they are strangers to an inherent work; and the scheme we oppose is suited to uphold them in their ungrounded confidence. Besides, it hath been already observed that we have no negatives in our commission, but are bid to preach the gospel, &c. ([Mark 16:15](#); [Matt 28:20](#))

He further advises his pupils, p. 17. to tell unconverted sinners, "if they would not perish, they must believe in Christ, and they must repent of their sins, leaving the Holy Spirit to bless the word of exhortation, as he in his infinite wisdom sees fit." *Why cannot he leave the preaching of the gospel; the preaching of the doctrine of God's love in giving Christ to die, making him to be sin; of the forgiveness of sins by the man Jesus, and the doctrine of free justification (Acts 13:39) by the imputed righteousness of Christ, with the Holy Spirit to bless it as he sees fit? and especially, seeing we are told that, they*

who were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen—when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. *And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord: (Acts 11:19-21)* a blessing, I do not remember any where to be said to have attended the exhortation or command. *Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Gal 3:2)* Has he never found the doctrine of grace more powerful, more effectual and healing to a wounded conscience, than the commands of the law, or exhortations? *(Jer 31:3)* I would not conclude he has not.

I suppose he would have it thought that the other words concerning faith are mine, viz. "it is an eye of the soul, to see how fine grace has made the righteousness of Christ, and a tongue to sing his praises." The author of the *Modest Question*, upon the parable of the king's son, Matt. 22. saith, "what he meant and intended by their coming, was, in the first place, their putting on the wedding garment, their putting on the Lord Jesus Christ by faith." In answer to which, among other things I have the following words: "*No; he who made our first parents coats of skins, clothed them. Provision and application are both of grace. God, who hath made Christ unto us*

righteousness, (1Cor 1:30) imputeth that righteousness; and gives faith to the soul, as an eye to see how fine grace hath made it; (i. e. not the righteousness of Christ, but the soul) and as a tongue to sing its praises."(*Pag.117.*) He may ridicule this, as he is wont to ridicule all things: but, whether it be so ridiculous to say, faith is as an eye, whereby the soul sees how fine it is, being adorned with the righteousness of Christ, and as a tongue to sing the praises of grace, I refer to the judgment of those who know the truth. See (Rev. 19:8,14; Song 1:5). and (Song 4:1,7; Isa 61:10). He may still call it rumbling out in-scriptural stuff: but it may one day appear, that he hath spoken unadvisedly with his lips.

He falls pretty warmly, *pag. 26*, upon those who do not distinguish faith from assurance; and indeed, it behooves him to bestir himself here; for, if faith possesses Christ, his cause is lost; as he himself confesses. "It argues, says he, a great deal of ignorance in men, for any in this day, to confound faith with assurance. " Their difference he gives in the following words. "Faith is a duty incumbent on all believers at all times—Assurance is a privilege which the Spirit bestows on believers, as he in his sovereign pleasure thinks fit:" and *pag. 28*. he entreats his young

students "rather to keep to the general notion of faith, than to give into the confused notion of those, who confound a constant duty, with a privilege bestowed by God at pleasure."

The difference between faith and assurance, he makes to consist in these things. Faith is a believers duty; assurance is a privilege: faith is a duty at all times; assurance is bestowed at pleasure, or sometimes: assurance is a gift of God, he bestows it; faith is a duty, not a gift bestowed upon the believer; for so we must take it to make a difference here. Let these differences, as he has expressed them, be a little considered.

That assurance is a privilege and blessing, is readily granted; but that the faith which is a special part of God's salvation, should not be reckoned a privilege too, cannot be complied with. No man will ever deny that faith is a privilege and blessing, who knows anything of it: *blessed is the people that know the joyful sound (Psalm 89:15)*—They are not said to be blessed only because of a privilege and blessing in reserve; but are already blessed, and enjoy a privilege many know nothing of: *(Luke 10:21)* and our Lord said to Peter, *Blessed art thou Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my father which*

is in heaven. **(Matt 16:17)** If it be a privilege to have the light rather than to be in darkness; it must needs be a privilege *to have God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shining in the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.*

"Assurance, says he, is bestowed by God."

Faith is a gracious bestowment of God at his pleasure too. Faith is a gift: *Ye are saved by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.* **(Eph 2:8)** The lowest degree of that faith which accompanies salvation, is as really the gift of God as the highest; it is like precious faith **(2Pet 1:1)** with that of the apostles. *It is the gift of God to discern the things of Christ: (1Cor 2:9,14)* to discern a precious suitableness in his blood and righteousness, **(John 16:14)** whereby the soul is made to cleave to, and rest upon him, **(Psalm 116:7)** is as truly the gift of God, as that faith whereby we apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Jesus. **(Phil 3:12)** The first spring of spiritual light in the understanding of a poor sinner, is the dawn of glory, the beginning of eternal life; **(John 17:2,3)** and shall surely grow up into further knowledge, and the full fruition of God in the state of glory. **(Phil 1:6; Psalm 17:15)**

Grace and glory ([Psalm 84:11](#)) are both of free gift. Why would this gentleman have believers think faith is not a gift? that it is not freely bestowed on them by the Lord? to what end? Surely, this is not the way to establishment: this is not the way to stir up to thankfulness and holiness; but to bind up souls in themselves. A persuasion and sense of God's benefits excite the soul to humble holy gratitude: *what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?* ([Psalm 116:12](#)) See [Psal. 103:1-7](#)).

He who hath nor that faith which is a peculiar gift of God, is, doubtless, a wretched unbeliever, whatever he may fancy himself to be, or others may think of him. *If this writer is contending for a faith that is not a blessing and gift of the covenant of grace, he is but taking pains to no purpose.*

Special supernatural faith is a privilege as well as assurance; and the one a peculiar favor bestowed by God on the election of his grace, as well as the other. The same eternal love that gives Christ, gives faith also, whereby the soul apprehends and takes possession of him. The distinction therefore, that he would express by those terms, is without difference; unless he would have us understand, that faith is a duty and a privilege; assurance a privilege, but not a

duty. *We have shewn that faith, as to its implantation, or to be born again, comes no more under the notion of a duty than creation, or the resurrection of the dead doth.* (*Futher Enquiry, ch. V.*) And, now, whether it doth not appear rather a duty to believe certainly the favor of God towards us, when he has manifested his loving-kindness in the soul seeing God himself declares it to be a fruit of his everlasting love; than for the soul to discover those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man; ([Jer 31:3](#); [Isa 64:4](#); [1Cor 2:9,11](#)) which are to be known only by the Spirit; and without the knowledge of which the soul hath no object of special faith, is a question, one would think, every man would answer in the affirmative upon hearing. It must be thought the duty of the natural man, ([1Cor 2:14](#)) to believe with that kind of faith which always supposes that knowledge of the object, which never was in the power of the creature to attain; but not the duty of a believer to have any certainty of his interest in the favor of God, who hath made a revelation of his son in him, and with loving-kindness drawn him to himself. ([1Cor 1:20,21](#); [Gal 1:16](#)) This is strange, but not true. No; for as light bespeaks the being of the sun; and as favors done us are testimonies of friendship: *so the manifestations*

*of God's love to the soul, point out the peculiar favorites of heaven, and are the pledges and tokens of God's love to that soul, and ought to be acknowledged as such. (Judges 13:23; 2Thess 2:16)*

But to make this matter as plain as I can, I will here distinguish assurance. Assurance is a certainty of the object, or truth believed; or, of our right to and interest in that object, or truth.

To deny the former assurance to be the duty of a believer, even at all times, is to run a desperate length. To deny it to be the duty of all who hear the word so to believe, *is what those he opposes dare not do: for we constantly affirm, that it is the duty of all to believe the record. (1John 5:10)* Yea, to exclude this assurance from the idea of faith, confounds faith with opinion: for if I have no certainty of the truth of *what I profess to believe, I have but a mere doubtful opinion: but, if I do indeed believe, I am persuaded of the truth of what I believe, to me it is certain; especially when I believe upon the evidence of a divine testimony.* We believe (said Peter) and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 6:69)

With whatever uncertainty souls may hold the truths of the gospel, who have received

them only by education, hearing, reading, learning, and the common illuminations of the Spirit; and have considered Christ in his person and offices, the discharge and effects thereof, and the whole of the gospel as a consistent system of truths, without a conviction of their suitableness to their own particular case; yet that soul that has seen them as suited to its own case and want; has been convinced of its own misery by nature, and of its absolute need of Christ; *that soul having heard and leaned of the Father, (John 6:45)* hath such an assurance of the truth as can never be taken away from it. It did not receive it at first in a way of reasoning; neither can all the reasonings in the world dispossess the soul of it. The truth is so wrought in and united with the understanding, that many times when it is most opposed, it holds it with the most sensible certainty.

But supposing that by assurance he means certainty of right to Christ; this seems to be denied to be a believer's duty in this place, if he means anything to his purpose, which is to shew the difference between faith and assurance. *It is not imagined, much less asserted, that the soul is not regenerated till it attains to an assurance of its interest in Christ.* That there are disputing, jealousies and fears about an

interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, when there is a conviction of our need, and a sight of the precious suitableness of the blood and righteousness of Christ, *for the blotting out of sin, and justification of a sinner before God, have been taken notice of, Further Enquiry, p. 157.* but, it follows not, that this soul hath not a right, or that it is not its duty to lay hold upon, and appropriate Christ. If he should say it is not its duty because not in its power, this argument would fall with insupportable weight upon himself: for no man will affirm, that it is in the power of an unregenerate sinner to believe with the faith of the operation of God, though they affirm it to be his duty. But why should it be thought not to be the believer's duty to appropriate Christ? *Is it not the duty of a believer to be assured of what God declares? God hath said, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth, should have everlasting life; (John 6:40) yea, that he is passed from death unto life: (John 5:24)* then certainly, it is the duty of such an one to believe his interest in Christ, and eternal life by him, or else it is not his duty to believe all that God hath declared. Besides, unbelief in the soul that is born again, and brought out of darkness into God's marvelous light, **(1Pet 2:9)** I conceive doth not consist in not believing the report of the gospel, assenting and consenting to the truth and goodness

thereof; for that it generally retains; but it includes not believing its interest in the promises, not believing with appropriation: **(Psalm 50:7)**. the Lord saith, I will testify against thee, i.e. against thy unbelieving thoughts as well as omissions, *I am God, even thy God.* **(Isa 49:14,15)**

I would not be mistaken, I don't say, persuasion of interest is the first act of faith put forth by the regenerate soul; there must be another, a former act, arising from the Spirit's work in the soul, before I can or ought to believe that Christ is mine. For unless Christ had died for all, there must be somewhat more than the declaration of his death and the end of it, with our assent and consent to the truth and goodness thereof, before we can, on good ground, believe our particular interest in it. **(Luke 4:22,28; Eph 1:18)** *But when he opens the eyes of our understandings, to see our wretched and helpless condition by nature;* **(Job 7:20)** *to discern a precious suitableness in Christ, as a bleeding Saviour, and see our need of him, whereby we are made to fly to him for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us; to the end we might have a strong (or firm and unwavering) consolation, God has given his word and oath,* **(Heb. 6:17,18)**. *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel,*

*confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable thing, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. (Isa 54:9,10)* Now I cannot understand, how the poor soul can have a strong consolation, that does not appropriate Christ unto itself. Nor yet, how it can be conceived to fall in and comply with the design of God, in giving his word and oath, *if it does not believe the refuge it hath laid hold upon is a refuge for itself.* (Psalm 9:9)

It is strange to me (but, who can account for it?) that he should assert, that it is the duty of all to believe with the faith of God's elect; and that, that faith consists in a looking to Jesus, staying upon him, and flying to him; and yet when the soul does these things, deny that it is its duty to believe itself for ever safe there. *I say again, who can account for such divinity? They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. (Psalm 125:1)*

Had he been disposed to have followed his own notion, instead of what he has done, *pag. 22, 23.* to let his students know how, upon our plan, as he calls it, they ought to exhort sinners; he might have informed them how, according to his own notion of faith,

they ought to exhort believers: viz. *"You must tell believers it is their duty to look to Christ, stay upon him, and fly to him for refuge, as a hope set before them; but you must not tell them, that they have any right to or interest in him: you must tell them, that it is their duty to trust him as a saviour, but not as their saviour, not as one that died for them; for that's not the business of faith, as believers, they are not to be concerned about that; because assurance of interest comes in another way, not by believing. All the comfort they are to take up in Christ is, that he is a saviour, without any regard to his being their Lord, and redeemer, who hath loved them, and given himself for them!"* Let any unprejudiced person judge, whether this is not more consonant to his sentiment, than what he hath said is to ours.

"I grant (says he) that some of our reformers defined faith, as that which carried its own evidence in it, which must imply assurance; and that many of the noble army of the martyrs, &c."

Well then, it seems we are not alone in this mistake, if it be a mistake; and he ought to have been more modest and sparing, for the sake of the martyrs and reformers, who defined faith as we do. The apostle John also saith, *he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.* (1John 5:10) Whether he

will allow faith, according to the apostle, to carry its evidence in itself, I know not; but this I am certain of, that it hath the testimony of God, which carries an indisputable evidence in it. *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.* (1John 5:9)

But (saith he) "they might run into this misapprehension, out of eagerness to oppose the papists, who deny the possibility of proper assurance; but what, as I apprehend, chiefly led them into it, was their own experience, and the strength of their faith."

Was it then the gracious experience of the martyrs, that led them into this culpable blunder, as *Mr. Taylor* calls it? and it ought to be reckoned a mercy, if a gracious experience has led others into it too. *Here, it's observable, he allows it was by the strength of their faith that they attained assurance, though a little above he excludes assurance from faith.*

To prove what nobody denies, viz. that believers are sometimes disconsolate, he saith, there are "many instances of persons, who, it is to be hoped, have the faith of God's elect, who are complaining of their want of comfort."

If he designs this to prove there may be faith where there is no certainty; or that faith doth not take possession of Christ, nor hath the nature of appropriation in it, it proves neither. *David had faith of interest in the Lord, when he complained for want of comfort: My God, my soul is cast down within me---and I will say unto God, my rock, why hast thou forgotten me? (Psa 42:6,9)* which is often the complaint of a child of God, when the Lord turns away the light of his countenance. *(Job 23:1-10)* Again, *(Psalm 42:11)* expostulating with himself, he saith, *why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* None ever mourned under a sense of the want of spiritual comforts and the light of God's countenance, who were strangers to them. *(Psalm 30:7)* No; this is a trouble the heart of a believer knows; and there is a joy attending it, which a stranger intermeddles not with. *(Prov 14:10)* Let the poor, the weak and despised of Christ's flock answer here: do you not in an hour of darkness, in a time of desertion find still an anchor hold within the vail, *(Heb 6:19)* a secret hope that stays you from fainting away? *(Psalm 27:13)* *have you not such hold on Christ, being kept by the power of God, (1Pet 1:5)* that you cannot let him go? don't you find, as David

did, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul?* (Psalm 94:19) does this man think that where there is a persuasion of God's love, there can be no sorrow in the heart, no troubles in the breast? alas! you know there may be darkness in an enlightened soul, and where the joy of the Lord is the secret strength of the heart, sorrows come; comforts under castings down (2Cor 4:9) as it were the company of two armies. (Song 6:13)

He adds, "If the men we have in view will deny, that such as walk in darkness, and see no light, have special faith, they deny what God himself supposed might be;" and gives for proof, (Isa 50:10).

From this place it is evident, that whatever darkness is meant in the text, they were walking in the fear of God under it; and it may be well supposed that the persons spoken to, knew that God was their God; for had they been ignorant of that, there had been no motive in the exhortation; *Let him stay upon his God.* "God, says he, supposed it might be." We suppose things, and make the best judgment we can, because of the imperfection of our knowledge, *but it is not so with the Lord, whose understanding is infinite.* I do not think it comely to talk of suppositions in

God.

As above, the reformers and martyrs (who had nor, as I know of, provoked him, nor had been alleged against him) fall under his censure; so here faith and true assurance can hardly escape. "I don't say but that they might notwithstanding, be pious persons; for it must be owned, *that by reason of the weakness of grace, enthusiasm may graft itself on faith, as well as spiritual pride may on true assurance, if Christians do not take care.*"

"Enthusiasm may graft itself upon faith," (says he) as if faith were a proper stock for it to grow upon. But what does he mean by enthusiasm? It usually signifies, when applied to religion, a misconception about being inspired, as *Dr. Moor* takes it, \* or a mistake about spiritual comfort. It is the latter of these, I conceive, that he means; and so expresses his contempt of a comfortable persuasion of our relation to Christ, and standing in the unchangeable love of God; making it a fancy. We might have expected from a spiritual guide, an example to the believer in faith; [\(1Tim 4:12\)](#) and that he should have taught and encouraged those who receive the truth in love, as Christ taught his disciples to pray; our Father which art in heaven: [\(Matt 6:9\)](#) But instead of that,

when those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, in whose hearts the love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, [\(Rom 5:5\)](#) take in the comfort of it, this must be esteemed a tincture of enthusiasm. And this "enthusiasm may graft itself on faith, as well (says he) as pride may on true assurance, if Christians do not take care." Indeed a false confidence cannot produce good fruit; *but, I have thought a true assurance would have born much fruit*, [\(John 15:4,5\)](#) according to the doctrine of our Lord, in [\(John 15\)](#). Yet this seems dangerous with him too, except Christians take more care of themselves, than God takes of them in bestowing the blessing. The apostle John saith, every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. [\(1John 3:3\)](#) But I than leave it with him to reconcile his expressions with the words and known sentiments of the apostles Paul, Peter and John, [\(Rom. 5; 1Pet 1:3-9\)](#).

\* *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, p. 2. sect. 2.*

I cannot conceive why he should call assurance a privilege bestowed by God, if there is so much danger in it as he suggests; but thus it is, and thus it will be with men in the ministry, whatever figure they make in the world, or character they bear in the

church, for want of some ripeness of experience, when they meddle with the mysteries of faith, and especially the Spirit's work; they handle them as men handle things with their gloves on.

*And now he comes near a close with us, we have a two-fold absurdity charged upon us at once.*

"They who are against sinners being exhorted, and pressed to believe and repent, are sensible that the writings of the prophets are full of exhortations to amend their ways, and turn to the Lord; this, says he, is a great difficulty upon their scheme; therefore to ward it off, they have run into a twofold absurdity; one is, that all which the prophets mean by turning to God, *is, for sinners to turn from idols, to break off from their false worship, and to reform their outward conduct; and that the death and destruction they are threatened with, is the demolition of the temple, and razing the walls of Jerusalem: another is, that sometimes declining believers are addressed to as sinners.*"

These absurdities, as he calls them, seem to be added, especially the latter, only to make up the number: for it's hardly to be thought, that anyone who has the least acquaintance with the scriptures, and God's method with his people, can be ignorant of this, that God

frequently speaks to, and exhorts his own children under declensions and decays, as backsliding sinners. To think otherwise discovers great ignorance, and if he does not really think so, it is rash beyond comparison, to charge for an absurdity, what he knows to be agreeable to the methods of God. Some instances, out of many contained in the scripture, I will produce, wherein God speaks to and exhorts his people as sinners. **(Jer 3:12,13,14,22)**. *Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, I will not make mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord [thy God] --- Turn O backsliding children, for I am married unto you.* See also, **(Jer 31:18,19,20; Isaiah 48:4,8,9)**. *I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass, .....I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. For my name sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain that I cut thee not off.* **(Hosea 11:7)** *My people are bent to backsliding from me.* **(Hosea 14 beginning)**; *O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God: for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, &c.* Though God does not speak to his people as unregenerate; yet he speaks to them as backsliders from him, as transgressors, a stiff-necked and rebellious

people, and notwithstanding exhorts them to return.

I come now to attend his proof of the former absurdity, viz. "That all which the prophets mean by turning to God, is, for sinners to turn from their idols, &c." Here, I desire it may be observed, That no interpretation of a text proves a position, till that interpretation be proved to be genuine: and that, that sense of a text which is contrary to the plain and evident meaning of another text, or militates against any known and established truth as it is in Jesus, cannot be the genuine and true interpretation of that place.

We have already answered (*Further Enq. ch. 6.*) most of the places alleged, yet it may not be improper to take further notice of them here, and what he offers to support the sense he gives. It will appear to every sober mind that contemning men by calling them "solemn triflers—the least degree above an ideal--men who will not stick to say anything, let it be ever so foolish,"---and the like instruments of a Churl, ([Isa 32:7](#)) have no aptness in them to inform the judgment, and demand assent; nor does it greatly move us to be so used, it having been the method of such as could not comprehend the truth, even in the apostles time, to scoff and deride; as ([Acts 17:18](#)). I

shall, therefore, pass this by, and apply to the work that is before me.

The first place he allegeth is, [\(Isa 55:6,7\)](#). which he concludes to be a call to unregenerate sinners to be regenerated, or to regenerate themselves. But it is observable, the prophet urges those to whom he speaks, with the consideration of God's nearness, and his being yet to be found. He ought to have shewn, before he concluded he had the meaning of the text, when and how God is near to unregenerate sinners, when he may be found of them, and when not: for these words, while he may be found, while he is near, plainly imply, the Lord was near and might be found; but probably, if they did not obey the voice of his servants, he would withdraw himself from them, so that they could not find him. This seems a key to the place. God had set his tabernacle [\(Lev 26:11\)](#) among his people Israel, had appointed them ordinances, and promised his presence in them to bless them: [\(Psalm 132:13-15\)](#) he had enjoined their attendance in his house, and to encourage their obedience, said, I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat: [\(Deut 12:5;Exo 25:22\)](#) and in all places where I record my name, will come unto thee and will bless thee. [\(Exo 20:24\)](#) But to deter them from

disobedience, he threatened the removal of his tabernacle, and with drawment of his presence, in case of their departure from him. Hence those words of David to his Son Solomon, — If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. (1Chron 28:9) Not that the Lord would cast off his beloved (Rom 11:1) to their everlasting perdition, but bring them under his providential rod; he would chasten them with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, (2Sam 7:14) as he said to David. This was verified in the captivities the tribes underwent for neglecting God's worship, (2Kings 17:5-7). And in the New Testament our Lord saith, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I. (Matt 18:20) A church state and ordinances were designed to be the seat (Psalm 132:14,15) of the Lord's presence, and means of a blessing to his people. We have found the ways of wisdom to be pleasantness, and all her paths to be peace; (Prov 3:17) and the want of a church state and ordinances, hath been found to be attended with darkness and death; *though nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Rom 8:38,39) Now the house of Israel was under grievous declensions at this time; and we

may justly suppose, that the prophet exhorted and stirred them up to return to their obedience and in the 7th ver. lays before them an encouraging motive: as if he had said, Though you have revoked from, and sinned grievously against the Lord in forsaking [\(Jer 21:13\)](#) of him, and by other provoking sins, which generally follow upon casting off God's fear; yet, seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him in his ordinances, before the glory is quite departed; [\(1Sam 4:21\)](#) for *therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.* [\(Isa 30:18\)](#) See [\(1Sam 12:20-25\)](#). But let us hear what he hath said.

"Here, says he, to take mercy and abundant pardon only for averting temporal judgments, when yet at last God might shew no "special mercy, and might be so far from pardoning, that after he had spared for a little space from worldly ruin, he might glorify his justice in punishing, would be very odd indeed."

Would it be odd indeed? He must be very ignorant in the scriptures and methods of divine providence, *that does not know, God's tender mercies are over all his works,* [\(Psalm 145:9\)](#) and yet his special and eternal mercy

([Psalm 103:17](#)) is bestowed only on some. And does he not know, that God often preserves nations that know him not, and families that call not on his name, from worldly ruin, and shields them providentially from the stroke of their fellow-sinners, and yet may glorify his justice in punishing them for ever? What if God willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? ([Rom 9:22](#)) Here's much long-suffering exercised towards those that perish. Did not a national reformation avert a temporal judgment from Nineveh? ([Jonah 3:10](#)) and yet it does not appear, that they were saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; and if not, God would glorify his justice in punishing them for ever. If he shall say, These are not acts of mercy and forgiveness wherein God abounds over the sins and provocations of his creatures. My answer is; Averting those judgments which are denounced against sin, is sometimes called putting away, or pardoning of sin, ([2Sam 12:13](#)).

However, this does not press us, because we don't understand this place in the sense he intimates. (*Vid. Further Enq. pag. 128*) But he gives another reason why this text in Isaiah, must intend a call to unregenerate men to

regenerate themselves, or be regenerated; that is, "because Christ is set forth in a glorious manner, as a saviour of the Gentiles in all nations," ver, 3,4,5. But,

It follows not, that because Christ is set forth as a saviour of the Gentiles, therefore the Gentiles, or yet the Jews are commanded to save themselves or put forth supernatural acts before they have a principle of grace. Christ is set forth to be the resurrection and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. [\(John 11:25\)](#) But who ever thought to infer from thence, that it is the duty of dead men to raise themselves and put on immortality? *It is indeed a sin not to believe that Christ is what he is set forth to be; but not the creatures sin not to be saved by Christ; and the faith we are speaking of is a part of his salvation.* It is the constant duty of a creature to love God, wherein it is active; but I do not conceive it to be consistent with common sense, to say it is the duty of a creature to be loved of God in Christ, wherein the chosen of God are altogether passive. And so it is in respect of regeneration and the resurrection of the body.

I suppose, he may imagine the third verse to contain an argument against us, Incline your ear and come, hear and your souls shall live,

&c. **(Isa 55:3)** But neither do these words conclude what he would have them: for, before there can be an inclining of the ear spiritually, (Psalm 45:10) a new and gracious principle must: be supposed. (*Vid. Dr. Ridgley's 2nd col. pag. 11*) And besides, the promise of life, or that their souls should live, lays us under no necessity to understand the words as he does: for to live, does not signify only, if at all, to quicken at first, but joy and comfort, or a fruitfulness in the soul that is born again: Now, saith the apostle, we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord: **(1Thess 3:8)** that is, it yields us joy and comfort to behold your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ: **(Col 2:5)** and, **(Rom. 8:13)**. *if ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* In neither of these places can the word live be taken for the implantation of that principle, which the Spirit implants in regeneration; or for justification before God.

Can any thing be more irrational and stupid, than the sense our opponents give of this text? Men are bid and commanded to come, being dead and remaining so, and urged to it, by pretending a promise that God will give them life if they do. *Hearing and coming to the Lord spiritually are acts of a gracious principle; No man can come unto me, said our Lord, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.* **(John**

**6:44,45)** Yet God, by this method, is represented as calling, and commanding dead sinners to perform those living acts of hearing and coming; and, in order to induce them thereunto, promising, that in case they do put forth those vital acts, he will give them that living principle, without which, he himself declares they cannot put them forth. *Can any thing argue the dealings of God with his creatures more illusory?* Would we not be ashamed to use our fellow creatures so? I am amazed to think, that men of thought should persist in so manifest an absurdity; though I don't wonder, that many godly unthinking men, who are content to see with their ears only, for want of better employment, toil in this maze in their pulpits by the month together. **(Jer 23:30,31)**

*After this gentleman has held forth the covenant of grace as conditional, proposing life to dead sinners, and that God will make an everlasting covenant with them, upon their compliance with the terms of hearing and obeying; he would have you think that he holds the promise to be free: "the wicked and the unrighteous are pressed to come to God through him, (meaning Christ) and, says he, mercy, peace and pardon are freely promised to them."*

What reason can admit a promise to be free, which is made to, and suspendible upon an impossible condition required of the creature; for it is impossible for a dead sinner to make himself alive. Here you may see what a Neonomian free promise is; "mercy, peace and pardon, says he, are freely promised." *But, it must be observed, there is a condition required of the creature, that he is no more capable of performing, than he is of raising the dead, or creating of another world.*

This master of Israel ([John 3:10](#)) has been pleased to give us a rule for judging of the exhortations in the prophetic writings; but why his rule will not hold in the writings of the New Testament, he has not been pleased yet to tell us: "*Wherever you find, says he, in the prophetic writings, an exhortation backed with a promise of a blessing of a spiritual nature, you may be sure that exhortation relates to something more, than a bare moral reformation.*"

He has set his reader to guess what he means by "bare moral reformation;" and, it may be, he found himself under necessity so to do. But palling that, I must observe two things. *First*, that his divinity is false: *Secondly*, if true, it would not answer his end. He will never be able to shew, as we have observed above, that the creature was ever exhorted to

do that which is not moral, or more than strictly so, and especially, in unregeneracy. There are promises of God's presence made to the observation of his institutions, which are positive in both testaments yet the observation of those institutions is moral; or else, not to observe them would not be sin; and the moral law respects the inward thoughts, as well as the outward actions; as our Lord shews, ([Matt 15:18,19](#)) otherwise thoughts would not be sinful or virtuous; which, I think, he will hardly deny them to be. But suppose any tolerable sense could be put upon his words, "you may be sure, that exhortation relates to something more than bare moral reformation;" pray how would that prove, that such exhortations were given to unregenerate men, to stir them up to regenerate themselves? which, if he does not intend by his exhortation to something more than a bare moral reformation, I cannot conceive he means anything at all.

But, says he, "if the aforesaid subterfuge will not serve the turn,—they have another silly surmise at hand, that, for ought we know, they might not be unconverted sinners who are exhorted to duty in the Old Testament but believers under decays and declensions.

I must observe, the scriptures of the Old

Testament were given to the church and none else, **(Psalm 147:19,20) (Rom. 3:1,2)**. *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? much every way: chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God.* Yet were there among them ungodly and unregenerate sinners; and we do not deny, that exhortations were to be given unto them, but we want proof that they were exhorted to regenerate themselves: for till that be done, nothing is done to purpose, from all the exhortations in the Bible. This, then, is what he is to prove, and in order to it, he brings **(Prov. 1:22-30)**. But this, I conceive, stands him in no stead at all: for the sense he takes it in establishes the notion of the day of grace being past before death; as **(Prov 1:28)**. *Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me, &c.* Whatever he may think about this notion, some have thought there never was a day of special grace, or an opportunity for the rest to be saved; but the election **(Rom 11:7)** shall surely obtain it. **(John 10:16)** And further, the evil to be avoided by receiving and observing the counsel of wisdom, does not appear to be the wrath which is to come, **(1Thess 1:10)** of which the apostle speaks, but some temporal calamities, distress and anguish; as may be gathered from **(Prov 1:26,27)**, and last verse. *But whoso harkeneth to me, shall*

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 *dwell safely, and shall he quiet from the fear of  
evil. (Prov 1:33)*

*He saith, page 32.* "that according to some men, they shall be destroyed for ever who die without the faith of assurance."

If here he means the blessed martyrs, they are gone into the inheritance, and cannot be affected with it; if he intends me, according to his sense of assurance, he uses me very unjustly; and for a confutation, I refer the reader to *Further Enquiry, p. 153-161*. I shall only add; according to some men's behavior, they value themselves on the account of such things, as every modest man would blush at.

**(Prov 8:4,5)** he concludes was spoken to unconverted sinners, and we must suppose too, that he imagines they were called to regenerate themselves, or to be regenerated: but the proof he offers, if I understand him, is a mere begging of the question, taking for granted what he ought to prove; viz, that these words were spoken to the unregenerate. "Solomon, says he, in his Proverbs, always means by fools unconverted persons." Whether he will admit the distinction between regeneration and conversion, I don't know; but I conceive, he ought to have given a reason, why fool in the

Proverbs should always signify an unregenerate person and not so in the New Testament: Christ said to his disciples *O fools and slow of Luke heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!* (Luke 24:25) I hope he will not doubt concerning the state of these. But it seems he wanted no proof.

"Indeed, says he, I was ready to imagine, that it was so clear that he meant by the fool a wicked person, that I could hardly think any who is the least degree above an *ideor*, would dream of anything else being meant by it."

Here is argument enough for some men. But I desire it may be considered, whether "anything else," agrees with person. And I am not only ready to imagine, but free to say, such porterly language deserves to be treated with the utmost acorn and contempt. When men would shew themselves witty, let them do it in a cleanly and decent way.

Be sharp, yet smooth, be witty, yet genteel.\*

\* *Coward's Licentia Poetica.*

(Prov. 9:4,5,6) he has huddled over with (Prov 8:4,5) and, I think, he could not have done better: for certainly Mr. M. and he too,

are sadly out, in choosing this text to prove a general call, wherein some are expressly required to come, and leave others; as ([Prov 9:6](#)). *Forsake the foolish and live*. Now if all were called, who are they that were to be forsaken?

There is yet one thing more he takes up against us; "It has been, says he, an absurdity, which has often been brought upon the stage, that the law is not to be preached by ministers; and many faithful dispensers of that which is the true genuine gospel, because they have declared the whole counsel of God, have not escaped the censure of unruly tongues, but have been styled legal preachers, both in our times and in the days of our fathers."

It is beyond my design to take notice of everything that falls in my way in this my examination of the *Address*; and which were I to do, would not be profitable to them whom I delight to serve. Several particulars in the above charge may be enquired into by those that have leisure and ability: as, why preaching of the law should be called, that which is the true genuine gospel? Who they are that "have declared the whole counsel of God?" and, why it should be called a censure of unruly tongues, by those who hold it their

duty to preach the law, to be styled "legal preachers," any more than they who preach the gospel, esteem it a censure to be called gospel preachers? It is somewhat strange men should be ashamed of the title, and yet glory in the thing. But these I shall pass by, and as the design of the author is, to charge an absurdity upon those who are not of his mind touching the preaching of the law, as far as I conceive myself concerned in it, shall briefly answer.

The passage, I suppose, that has given umbrage in my *Further Enquiry*, pag. 166 is as follows.

"However some may glory in telling the people, that the commission of a minister is to preach the law as well as the gospel, till I have light into that matter, I would say with the apostle, *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* ([Rom 1:16](#))

I shall freely declare what I do not mean by preaching the law; and then, what I do mean by it.

*What I do not mean by preaching the law.*

*First*, I do not mean opening and insisting upon that part of the word of God, which declares his will touching the conversation of reasonable creatures; and urging it upon them with proper motives But this ought to be done,

1. The unbeliever should be exhorted to moral virtues, and attendance upon God's worship, by the common goodness of God towards his creatures, and his gracious designs by the gospel; and for avoiding the temporal effects of sin; as poverty, to him that deals with a slack hand; surfeiting and loss of health, to those that give themselves to excess, to an immoderate and sinful use of the creatures, &c, and that they do not aggravate their guilt before God, the righteous judge, who will proportion their punishment to their crimes, unless of his free rich mercy, he purges them away by the blood of his Son.

2. All duties in common should be pressed upon believers, for avoiding the temporal effects of sin mentioned above, though the penal effects are taken away by the sacrifice of Christ: **(Rom 8:1)** and that by a *conversation becoming the gospel of Christ*, **(Phil 1:27)** they may *adorn the doctrine of God our saviour*, **(Titus 2:10)** and thereby put

*to silence the ignorance of foolish men; (1Pet 2:15) who, for want of knowledge and experience, speak reproachfully of it. (Rom 3:8) And further, the institutions of Christ must be opened, and laid before the children of God, and they moved to the observation of them also, by the consideration of the love of God, which is manifested in all that he has done for them in and through Christ. And this ought to be done for diverse ends; as, the provoking one another to love and good works. (Heb 10:24) —The enjoying more of the presence and communion of Christ, (Matt 18:20) who has promised his presence in his ordinances. (Exod 20:24; John 14:21,23) —Most of all, that they may express their gratitude to God for all his benefits bestowed upon them and by a manifest subjection to the sceptre of his kingdom, shew forth the praises and virtues of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light, (1Pet 2:9) that God in all things may be glorified. (1Pet 4:11)*

**Secondly**, I do not mean by preaching of the law, opening the word to set forth the state of man by nature; shewing the misery he is involved in by sin, and his utter impotency to help himself out of this his deplorable condition.

*Thirdly*, Neither do I intend the opening and properly insisting on the word, which sets forth the demerit of sin; ([Gen 2:17](#)) what the transgression of the law requires, ([Gal 3:10](#)) and what the sinner must undergo, unless redeemed by Christ's being made a curse for him: ([Gal 3:13](#)) *without shedding of blood there is no remission.* ([Heb 9:22](#)) The demerit of sin would I endeavor to set out, by insisting upon what Christ has undergone; as, the persecution, the sorrows, the agony and bloody sweat, the desertion and cursed death of the cross; ([Isaiah 53:3](#); [Luke 24:44](#); [Matt 27:46](#); [Phil 2:8](#)) all which were born and suffered by the *Prince of Life*, ([Acts 3:15](#)) on the account of the sins of many. ([Isaiah 53:8,12](#))

Neither of these things are meant, when I intimate I am not for preaching of the law: but, as long as it shall please God to honor me with his service, I would continue to use the preceptive and historical parts of his word, as well as the promises, with all the purposes and views above mentioned, and more. But, positively,

By preaching of the law, *I mean, preaching a covenant of works for the rule without the sanction is not a perfect law; and with it, a perfect covenant*

*of works. Do and live, transgress and thou shalt die, is all the idea I can form of the covenant under which God placed our first parents, and according to which he deals with angels.*

And this is done either more openly and directly; or indirectly and concealed.

By some the law is preached more openly, and they don't spare to declare upon an unscriptural presumption of God's merciful goodness, that he does not insist upon a satisfaction for sin: or, if they allow that justice must be satisfied for sin, they say, original transgression was atoned for by Christ; and as for actual transgressions, they imagine the reluctancy and penitence of the creature, will be a sufficient atonement: yea, some there are who are so ignorant, as to fancy if a man does but say, *Lord be merciful to me*, with their expiring breath, that it will purge away all their guilt, and procure them a mansion in glory. Thus they would advance the head of one attribute in God, and depress another, rear up a monument to the praise of mercy, on the overthrow and ruin of justice; contrary to the glorious gospel, in which mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. **(Psalm 85:10)** Of this sort are they who assert and maintain a power in fallen man,

contrary to the protestant articles, which if he uses (and a very little use of it they vainly imagine will suffice) God will accept it for righteousness, through the merits of Christ, justify their persons in it, and admit them to a life of felicity and glory in an eternal state to come, on the account thereof.

These are purely on a covenant of works, [\(Rom 8:3,4\)](#) and enemies to what God has done by Christ. Such were the zealous Jews, [\(Rom 10:1,2,3\)](#) and such, generally, are the nominal Christians.

There are others that preach the law more covertly; they are a little more refined in their notions, and acknowledge the impotency of fallen man, and his need of the righteousness of another, which they allow to be by Christ; but then they can't tell how to allow this righteousness to be for the justification of one sinner before God, *till the creature believes and repents; and so make it a mere cypher, till the sinner does something to stand before it.* Some embarrass the free promise with conditions directly, and darken the glorious gospel with terms proposed to and required of man, as entitling acts: thus while they speak it fair, they wound it under the fifth, rib. They make the gospel, which is glad tidings of great joy, to be, as to its special

benefits, suspend-able upon an impossible condition to man. These trouble the church with another gospel. **(Gal 1:6,8)**

*To handle any part of the word so as to direct the expectation, and give encouragement to the fallen creature to hope for salvation on the account of anything it does or shall do, is so far to establish the covenant of works, and abolish that of grace.* The modish endeavor to take it off, by telling the hearers, in a concluding word, "That you cannot do these things of yourselves, they are not in your power, you must be saved by grace, if you are saved, yet are they your duty, and except you do them you cannot be saved," is but the trumpet giving an uncertain sound. **(1Cor 14:8)** If urging faith upon the unregenerate, as some men do it, be not done with such a view (as it will have such a tendency) why do not ministers press other things upon their auditories, which they profess to be in their power to do, and which if done, would make them useful and serviceable in all the several stations and relations God has placed them in this world?

The answer some give, viz. That they do it that they may be pure from the blood of all men, is so void of reason, that it deserves no reply. Is not all the world become guilty before God? **(Rom 3:19)** and *their guilt cannot*

*be removed by the creature's act.*

**To conclude**, if the Lord gave his apostles commission to preach the law, which some men boast of, it is somewhere written, and when they produce it, I will confess my mistake. He gave them a commission to preach the gospel (**Mark 16:15**). *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature:* He could as well have said, and preach the law too, if that had been his mind. The apostle Paul saith, *Christ sent me—to preach the gospel:* (**1Cor 1:17**) had he received a charge to preach the law, how will you account for his faithfulness in concealing of it? Seeing all the succeeding ministers of Christ were to preach according to his commission. (**Gal 1:8**) Yea, and further, our Lord said, (**Luke 4:18**). *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel, &c.* but not a word of his being anointed to preach the law. And seeing the case was thus with the Lord, and with his apostles; and the apostle Paul said, *some who swerved in his day from the apostolic doctrine turned aside to vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the Law, not knowing what they say, nor whereof they affirm:* (**1Tim 1:6,7**) I shall again say with the apostle I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

Now he may see the mask, as he has expressed it, cast off; let him not, like an evil shepherd, sleep void of care, but if apprehensive of danger, arise and contend. But I wish him to be so wise to let mens heads and hearts alone, till he knows more of heads and hearts than the names of them: *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise think on these things.* (Phil 4:8)

**CONSIDERATIONS  
ON THE  
Modern Question  
AFFIRM'D, &c.**

I Shall take notice of a few things more relating to this controversy, occasioned by a posthumous piece of Mr. M's lately published called *The modern Question affirmed*. And in the first place, my definition and distinction of faith are objected to. I have as much right to define faith as another man hath; and the definition I have given, is in no other words than what the Holy Ghost has made use of, referring to that Grace. *Vid.* the above

*Defense*, p. 25. The defect this Author complains of is, I have not taken in the term [word;] I have not, but in lieu of it, he might have found the term [truth] which I judge equivalent, ([John 14:6](#); [Eph. 4:21](#)). Besides, he might have seen the same defect, as he calls it, in Dr. *Chancy's Doctrine according to Godliness*, edit. 1737. pag. 11. "What is faith? *Answ.* It is a confidence grounded upon knowledge, whereby God is trusted in for life."

My distinction of faith, is founded on the Word of God, and will stand with the Bible. *What I mean by natural, common, or historical faith, and what by supernatural, I hope, is sufficiently explained; (Enquiry, pag. 4-8.)* nor has he, as I find, once attempted to answer what I allege to support the distinction, but cavils at the Phrase *natural faith*. The Holy Ghost saith, *many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did: but Jesus would not commit himself unto them, &c.* ([John 2:23,24](#)) The faith in his name, mentioned here, Mr. M. did not account saving, in his Discourse of faith, pag. 7, or 8, and, I suppose, would not have called it supernatural then. Besides, I will direct his readers where they may find the phrase, *natural faith*: Dr. Goodwin, vol. II. b. 2. p. 50.

contents of chap. VII. "---His Saith (saith he) was natural both in respect of its motives and grounds, &c." \* And further, I called it natural, common, or historical faith; and he might have taken the latter as well as the former, if it would have served his turn as well. His causeless sneer at a word or two in my 4th page. as also his suggesting that I despise the assembly, and deride their catechism; and that I hold many great things to be attainable without the help of God, I pass by as weak, false and injurious, But I must distinction between the common agency of the Spirit of God, and his special work in regeneration. (*Enquiry, pag. 136,137*)

\* *Robert's Mystery and Marrow of the Bible, b. II. ch. 1. p. 35.* See the distinction in the same terms.

What I have alleged in favor of our Sentiments out of *Dr. Owen, Goodwin and Ridgley*, I have taken verbatim from their works, and referred to the places where they may be found; and I mean no more than what their words literally mean, and what they themselves evidently intend by them in the places where they stand and if they have in other places expressed themselves as if they were otherwise minded, I am not

accountable far that; they were but men, and no wonder if they were not always consistent with themselves: but seeing where I take them, it is plain they are consistent with the particular doctrines of the gospel, I embrace them there, and follow them as they follow Christ. Further, I still conceive, it will be easier for any unprejudiced person, to reconcile the places produced here, to those I have quoted, than to bring over those to what is produced here. But no more, lest any should think the contention to be about the opinions of men.

He seems to boast of his numbers; and, indeed, his argument from the greater number concludes. But though number gives the stamp of currency, it is not the badge of truth. Let those who are in his way of thinking, pitch upon any particular doctrine, as eternal personal election, particular redemption, &c. and see if it be received and owned by all, even the profane and ignorant multitude, as the notion we oppose is; and then consider how weighty the argument is, that all believe it, ([Luke 6:26](#)).

I am not ashamed to profess my value for *Dr. Chauncy's works*; nor did I know that it is not consistent with a just esteem for another man's works to love, or even prefer his. I

think, I have a right to say whose writings I prefer, Had I sought worldly interest, I would not have declared myself as I have done.

The arguments he gives for mine, are not mine, but his own, as they are formed, and he might use them as he would; I have nothing to do with them. My first argument proves, that unconverted sinners are not under condemnation for not believing Christ is theirs; or, for not believing anything more than the report of the gospel; because there is no foundation in the word of God, for them to believe more. How this is supported, and what use I make of it in this controversy, may be seen, *Enq. ch. II. vid. my above Defense.* I argue, ch, III. from the different relations Christ sustains to the church, and to the rest of mankind, that it is not the duty of the rest to believe with appropriation, and consequently, not their sin, that they have not believed more than the outward declaration; because God has not constituted that relation, nor given that right which is the ground of possession and appropriation. *Vid. Defense, ch. IV.* I argue from Adam's being a common person (which all Calvinists profess to believe) in form as follows. (*Enq. pag. 54.*) "What Adam had, we all had in him, and what Adam lost, we all lost in him; and

are become debtors to God on both accounts: but Adam had not the faith of God's elect before the fall, did not lose it for his Posterity; therefore they are not debtors to God for that in unregeneracy." He and Mr. Taylor too, might have seen this argument, and denied in form, if they had been inclined to have brought the controversy to a fair issue---I will venture the weight of all upon this argument alone. In ch. V. *I have demonstrated, that the faith in question, as to its principle, comes not at all under the notion of a duty, any more than creation itself does; and if men will be willfully blind, and not see the absurdity of making it to be a duty to act without principle, or to move before God gives being and life, there is no help for them in man.*

One thing I must observe here, that is, he was afraid once to mention the terms of the question (viz.) that faith which is a special part of God's salvation (though they are his own words) but in the room of them puts, trusting in Christ for salvation without taking notice of the knowledge that is necessary thereunto. *Dr. Chauncey says, "faith is a confidence grounded upon knowledge," &c.* The apostle saith expressly, that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God. **(1Cor 1:21)** Yea, God is said to have hid the things of the gospel from the wise, &c.

([Luke 10:21](#)). Yet it is affirmed to be the duty of a sinner to trust in Christ with a saving faith, without any regard to that knowledge which is antecedently necessary thereunto, and without which it never was possible to be done. Such a blind circle we must tread.

*We allow it to be the duty of all that hear the gospel, to assent and consent to the truth and goodness of every proposition therein; and particularly to this; That there is no other name given among men, whereby we can be saved; (Acts 4:12) consequently, that they ought not to seek after another saviour, but in their minds wait and abide here; yet this assent and consent is not that faith which we are concerned about; or, that whereby the soul is actually united unto Christ (as some express it) which is a special new covenant blessing, unless it arises from an higher spring, than that of nature in its best estate.*

The *Further Enquiry* stands as it did.

We might have expected his endeavors to defend his reasonings from the several scriptures made use of in the *Modern Question*: but it seems, he knew better than to attempt that. It is reasonable to believe,

that all but his second chapter was drawn up several months before my *Enquiry* was published; for it was given out that something was done to shew Mr. Hussey's inconsistencies; and to prove the point in controversy, another way than in the *Modern Quest*. Mr. Hussey's judgment in this point is well known, notwithstanding that slip of his pen, *Oper. p. 442*. As to the question, he proves it nowhere. It is not very difficult to dance the rounds with him here; but altogether needless. The method taken may serve to hold his un cautious subscribers in dark chains, and that's enough. *Here is nothing done to prove that Adam had the faith of God's elect before the fall;* (*Vid. Enq. pag. 129*) or, that it is in the power of his fallen Posterity to have it; or vindicate the justice of God in punishing his creatures, for not having and keeping what he never gave them. 'Till some of these than be attempted, I have little more to say. I look upon all besides to be but cobwebs, to entangle the weak, or garments of leaves to cover the nakedness of an indefensible cause. It is a known rule, That the question ought to be contained in the premises, and expressed in the conclusion. *Now the question is not*, Whether it be the duty of sinners to repent and believe the gospel; but, in plain terms, Whether the law binds men to have

that faith which is a special part of God's salvation? Neither of his syllogisms conclude in the terms of the question; therefore are not to the purpose. They prove not what they ought to prove.

Touching the method taken in the *Modern Question affirmed*, I will give you Mons. Robault's opinion in his preface to his philosophy; *That it is not a way to the acquisition of new truths, nor as such intended, but only a sort of exercise and sport of the mind, whose end is nothing else, but only to mix and entangle truth with falsehood, by the help of some little tricks and quirks, by which either side of the question maybe maintained, and neither of the Litigants seem to yield, though the propositions they hold be never so absurd, and the reason to the contrary never so strong.*

Only for instance, *I will take his last syllogism, p. 97. "Arg. 7. If the tidings of the Messiah's coming to save sinners were worthy of all acceptation, then Adam was bound to believe in him: but these tidings were and are worthy of all acceptation; therefore, &c."*

**Ans.** If by believing, &c. he intended, that seeing and relying that arises out of vital union to Christ, the consequence of the major is denied; if anything else be meant, it does not concern the question. Such are the

rest.

He should have replied to my answer given to consequences charged on our sentiment; (*Enquiry, chap. 8*) but instead of that, we have some of them with an addition of more, under the name of absurdities.

"*Abs. 1.* It pretends to be a truth, yet can be profitable to nobody."

*Answ.* It is proved to be truth, and that the contrary is but a mere covenant of works; believe [for] salvation, and [do] for life, sound the same thing. Besides, we have the negative, *vid. Enq. p.164.*

"*Abs. 2.* ---It tends to keep back poor sinners from believing in Christ."

*Answ.* Faith is the gift of God. That *faith that can be hindered by man, must be in man's power to have.*

"*Abs. 3.* It leaves a poor, dark, doubting believer without relief."

*Answ.* The contrary does, *vid. Enq. pag, 153-161.*

"**Abs. 4.** It blocks up the only way to God."

**Answ.** By this the unregenerate sinner's duty is made the only way to God; and Christ, the only way shut out.

"**Abs. 5.** —It tends to make unconverted sinners careless about salvation."

**Answ.** Personal election has as much tendency to make sinners careless, and has been charged with the same by the enemies of the gospel.

"**Abs. 6.** --It shuts up parents from bringing up their Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," &c.

**Answ.** This has not so much as a shew of common sense: and what follows it, *p. 93.* is feigned and known to be false.

"**Abs. 7.** It shuts out repentance for impenitence and unbelief."

**Answ.** We allow unbelief to be a sin; though we deny it to be sin not to be spiritually united to Christ, which is a special fruit of electing grace.

"**Abs.. 8.** It shuts people up under a covenant of works."

*Answ.* Then it is according to the doctrine of the scriptures; for man was made under a covenant, and now, God hath concluded them all in unbelief, &c. ([Rom. 11:32](#)).

"**Abs. 9.** It contradicts the very words of Christ."

*Answ.* We assent and consent to every word of Christ; but the notion we oppose is proved to be a mistake; and it carries in it a great discouragement to souls, because it tells them, except they have that faith which it is impossible for them to have, unless God gives it, every ordinance they attend will aggravate their guilt. *Besides, by this the gospel makes man's condition worse than it was by the fall; seeing it asserts that his guilt is aggravated for not doing what is not in his power; whereby the gospel is made to be not only eventually, but inevitably a Curse.*

The bitter reflections on the moral character of some, I know not who he means, nor what he intends by them. The whole is a sad verification of the account given in my introduction to my *Enquiry*, &c. and an explanation of the character hinted at in the

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preface to the work. But as he is gone to rest; and remembering the sweet converse I have had with him, I pass it in silence. The Rev. Prefacer could not forbear to cast a little dirt; which I hope never to return. How far he looks upon himself to be concerned in this controversy, time may shew.

*Finis.*