

**LETTERS TO A FRIEND, CONTAINING
THE WRITER'S OBJECTIONS TO HIS
FORMER WORK, ENTITLED
DIALOGUES ON IMPORTANT
SUBJECTS, PUBLISHED IN 1819**

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Letters to a Friend, Containing the Writer's Objections to His Former Work, Entitled Dialogues on Important Subjects, Published in 1819 by James Harington Evans

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JAMES HARRINGTON EVANS

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CONTAINING

S.H. 1027.

THE WRITER'S OBJECTIONS TO HIS
FORMER WORK,

ENTITLED,

Dialogues on Important Subjects,

PUBLISHED IN 1819;

TOGETHER WITH

HIS REASONS FOR BELIEVING IN THE PROPER DEITY OF
THE SON OF GOD,

AND THE

DIVINE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

—◆—
BY

JAMES HARINGTON EVANS,

*Once a Minister of the Establishment, and formerly Fellow of
Wadham College, Oxford.*

—◆—
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1826.

137.

PREFACE.

IF the error of man, with regard to the truth of God, were the effect of mere mistake, if it were only the consequence of the darkness of the human mind, and that darkness were not the result of sin, the acknowledgment of such error would be attended with comparatively little regret. But when the blindness of the understanding is connected by an unerring apostle with the blindness of the heart, Eph. iv. 18. there is in the conviction of our errors enough to humble us and abase us before God for ever. The writer of

these letters feels, he trusts, in some small degree, a consciousness of this.

But while he feels it, he must allow, at the same time, that it is not an un-mixed feeling which pervades his mind in the confession of it. For if there be something unspeakably painful, as most certainly there is, in the remembrance of having been betrayed into a denial of any portion of Gospel truth, there is, at the same time, a satisfaction which neither his lip nor his pen can ever fully utter, in the acknowledgment of the divine goodness, in being enabled to say, that he denies it no more. It yields such a consoling testimony of the faithfulness, love, and patience of an ever-gracious God, it so declares him to be God and not man, whose ways are not our ways, whose thoughts are not our thoughts, as constrains him to cry out,

“ O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, because we have sinned against thee, but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses.”

With regard to the propriety and wisdom of this publication, there may possibly exist a diversity of sentiment. Some may be of opinion that it would have displayed more prudence if the public mind had not been recalled to the consideration of a controversial subject, and if the writer had suffered his former work to have passed quietly into oblivion, than, by again disturbing its ashes, to cause it, in some measure, to revive in the minds of men.

But others may take quite an opposite view, and may regard the open and explicit disavowal of the contents of that work, as the very least which could be done by one who bears the

name of Christian, as the least attempt which could be made to undo, as far as in him lieth, that which has been done amiss.

It is needless to say that the writer is of the latter opinion. He is far indeed from asserting that consequences are to be disregarded by any wise and prudent man. He is far from maintaining that they are not to be duly weighed before any decision of moment should take place in the mind; and that the obligation to any action should not be very obvious and very powerful, for a man to decide on its performance, when such action appears to be attended with even the probability of evil.

The present occasion, however, does not appear to him to be one, the consideration of which is attended with

any real difficulty. While there seems but small probability of evil as likely to arise from the publication of this little work, the obligation to send it forth into the world seems exceedingly obvious and powerful. It is the payment of a debt. It is the wish to neutralize a poison. It is the endeavour to expose false opinion, and to expose it too, it is humbly conceived, as it could not be exposed by another individual, namely, by him who once maintained it. It is the confession of error before men and unto God, as openly too as the error itself was openly avowed.

More than seven years have now elapsed since the Dialogues were published. The writer has had time, therefore, as well as opportunity, neither has the anxious desire been wanting, to revise and consider the con-