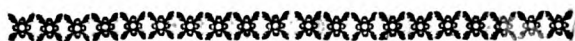

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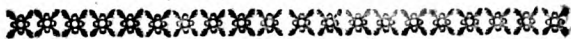


A

CONVERSATION

RELATIVE TO

Some DOCTRINAL MINUTES, &c,





A
CONVERSATION

BETWEEN

RICHARD HILL, Esq;

The Rev. Mr. MADAN, and

Father WALSH, Superior of a Convent
of *English Benedictine Monks at Paris,*

Held at the said CONVENT,

July 13, 1771;

In the Presence of

THOMAS POWIS, Esq; and others,

Relative to

Some DOCTRINAL MINUTES, advanced by the
Rev. Mr. *John Wesley* and others, at a Confe-
rence held in *London, August 7, 1770.*

To which are added,

Some REMARKS, by the EDITOR,

And the MINUTES themselves prefixed.

As also

Mr. WESLEY's own Declaration concerning his
MINUTES verified, by another Hand.

L O N D O N :

Sold by E. and C. DILLY, in the Poultry. 1771.

[Price SIX PENCE,]

Extract from the MINUTES of
a CONVERSATION,

Between the Rev. Mr. *J. Wesley*, and
others, at a publick Conference held
in *London, August 7, 1770*, and
printed by *W. Pine, Bristol*.

TAKE heed to your Doctrine.

We said in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." Wherein?

1. With regard to *Man's Faithfulness*. Our Lord himself taught to use the expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not *faithful in the unrighteous mammon*, God will not give him the true riches.

2. With regard to *working for life*. This also our Lord has expressly commanded us.

us. *Labour* ERGAZESTHE, literally *work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life*. And in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

3. We have received it as a maxim, that "a man is to do nothing, *in order to* Justification." Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should *cease from evil and learn to do well*. Whoever repents, should do *works meet for repentance*. And if this is not *in order* to find favor, what does he do them for?

Review the whole affair.

1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

He that now believes in Christ, with a loving obedient heart.

2. But who among those that never heard of Christ?

He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness according to the light he has.

3. Is this the same with, "He that is sincere?"

Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is

4. Is not this, " Salvation by works ? "

Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*.

5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years ?

I am afraid about words.

6. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid : we are rewarded, *according to our works*, yea, *because of our works*. How does this differ from *for the sake of our works* ? And how differs this from *secundum merita operum* ? As our works *deserve* ? Can you split this hair ?

I doubt, I cannot.

7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those, who by their own confession, neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule ?

It is a doubt, God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure, that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness ? His own saying so
is

is not proof: For we know, how all that are convinced of sin, undervalue themselves in every respect.

8. Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified *state*, tend to mislead men? Almost naturally leading them to trust, in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, *according to our works*? According to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behaviour.



A CON-

A CONVERSATION between
Richard Hill, Esq; the Rev.
 Mr. *Madan*, and Father *Walsh*,
 Superior of a Convent of *Eng-
 lish Benedictine Monks* at *Paris*,
 held at the said Convent, *July*
 13th, 1771, in presence of
Thomas Powys, Esq; and others.

Mr. *Madan*. SIR, I suppose
 you have often
 heard of the different sects amongst
 the Protestants in *England*?

Superior. Very often, sir.

Mr. *Madan*. Have you ever
 heard of the Methodists? *

* By Methodists was meant by the Que-
 rift, Mr. *J. Wesley* and his followers.

B

Super-

Superior. Yes, fir, very often.

Mr. Madan. I can shew you their tenets, settled by some of their chiefs at their last conference at *London*. Here they are. [*giving the extract of the minutes.* See page 5, 6, 7, 8.]

After the *Superior* had carefully perused them, he was asked by

Mr. Madan. Do you agree with that doctrine, fir?

Superior. No indeed, fir, we do not hold such principles as those.

Mr. Madan. What fault do you find with them?

Super-

Superior. They are too near Pelagianism. *

Mr. *Hill.* The principles of the Roman Catholick Church are nearer to the Church of *England* than those?

Superior. A great deal, fir; those of that paper are too near Pelagianism, the author is a Pelagian.

* *Pelagius* lived in the end of the fourth century. He denied the doctrines of election, perseverance, the imputation of *Adam's* sin and *Christ's* righteousness. He taught, that our salvation depended on man's faithfulness; and that man could do something in order to procure justification, and to find favour with God. *St. Augustin* vindicated the doctrines of God's sovereign grace, and man's inability, against this heretic, who was publicly excommunicated by the whole Catholick Church.

Mr. *Madan*. What do you think of the author's asserting, that those who are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect; do you think sinners can undervalue themselves?

Superior. No, by no means; having too high thoughts of themselves makes them live in sin.

Mr. *Madan*. Can we have any good in us before Justification?

Superior. Certainly not; our Justification is by Christ alone: for if St. *Paul* says, that we are not sufficient of ourselves to have a good thought, how much less to perform good works.

Mr.

Mr. *Madan*. Can we cease to do evil, and learn to do well, before Faith ?

Superior. No, we cannot.

Mr. *Madan*. St. *Paul* saith, whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.

Superior. Undoubtedly.

Mr. *Madan*. I wish, sir, you would favour us with some strictures upon that paper in writing ?

Superior. Sir, I am so taken up, that I have not time, or I could say a great deal upon it.

Mr. *Hill*. Your doctrine is nearer that of the Protestants ?

Superior. O, sir, a great deal, that is Pelagianism.

Several

Several other particulars occurred in the same conversation, which cannot be so minutely recollected as the above, but throughout the whole, the Superior shewed a detestation of the principles in the minutes, as attributing too much power and goodness to man, whom he acknowledged to be so fallen in *Adam* as to be destitute of both.

We do verily believe, from what the Superior said, that the principles in the extract are too rotten for even a Papist to rest upon.

And from a review of all that passed, it may be supposed, that Popery is about the midway between

tween Protestantism and Mr. *J. Wesley*.

Since the above conversation and remarks were committed to paper, I have been informed that Mr. *Wesley*, at his late conference held at *Bristol*, complained of a misrepresentation of his sentiments, and that he and upwards of fifty of his preachers then assembled, signed the following manifesto.

‘ Whereas, the doctrinal points
 ‘ in the minutes of a conference,
 ‘ held in *London*, *August 7*,
 ‘ 1770, have been understood to
 ‘ favour justification by works :
 ‘ now we, the Rev. *John Wesley*
 ‘ and

‘ and others, assembled in confe-
 ‘ rence, do declare, that we had
 ‘ no such meaning ; and that we
 ‘ abhor the doctrine of justifica-
 ‘ tion by works, as a most peri-
 ‘ cious and abominable doctrine ;
 ‘ and as the said minutes are not
 ‘ sufficiently guarded in the way
 ‘ they are expressed, we hereby
 ‘ solemnly declare, in the sight
 ‘ of God, that we have no trust
 ‘ or confidence, but in the alone
 ‘ merits of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 ‘ for justification or salvation,
 ‘ either in life, death, or the
 ‘ day of judgment ; and though
 ‘ no one is a real christian be-
 ‘ liever, (and consequently can-
 ‘ not be saved) who doth not
 ‘ good works, where there is
 ‘ time

‘ time and opportunity, yet our
 ‘ works have no share in meri-
 ‘ ting or purchasing our justifi-
 ‘ cation, either in whole, or in
 ‘ part.’

Now, I would only observe, that the sole design of writing or speaking is to convey ideas, and in whatever point of view any number of words or sentences strike the hearer or reader, there we are to look for the true sense of what is written or spoken. If this were not the case, there would be no use at all in letters, or even in speech itself; the plainest affirmations and clearest decisions would be still nothing but mere ambiguities, and liable

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to

to a thousand different constructions, infomuch that no man's real sentiments could ever be known; even Mr. *John Wesley's* fine courtly performance, intituled ' *Free thoughts on the present state of publick affairs,*' might be interpreted as a severe libel upon the king, the ministry, and the princess dowager, and as the highest elege upon *Wilkes*, liberty, and forty-five: for it is not at all more certain, that the political labours of Mr. *Wesley* are intended as a defence of his majesty and his ministers, than that his theological labours (I mean as given us in the minutes of 1770) are a defence of justification by works. And we have just as much reason
to

to suppose that the declaration itself does not convey its proper meaning, as the minutes themselves which gave rise to it.

But as a striking proof how little any of Mr. *Wesley's* assertions are to be depended upon, I beg leave to present the reader with the following contrast, containing on the one side, what he has advanced in favour of imputed righteousness; on the other, what he has said against it. *

* I also intended to have drawn another contrast, from Mr. *Wesley's* various assertions upon the doctrine of sinless perfection, but I was fearful of extending my little piece into a folio volume.

P R O.

Why should you think it a strange thing that the righteousness of Christ should be imputed? — *Mr. Wesley's Christ. Lib. vol. ix. p. 231.*

Christ bestoweth his righteousness on us by imputation. — *Christ. Lib. vol. xiv. p. 281.*

Come then, IMPUTE, impart,

To me, thy righteousness. Again,

Let faith and love combine

To guard thy valiant breast;
The plate be righteousness divine,

IMPUTED and imprest. *Mr. J. Wesley's Hymns.*

The righteousness that saveth us, is wrought already by God. — *Mr. Wesley's Christ. Lib.*

We are only to believe and accept this righteousness which is offered us. When that is done, it is God's part to frame us and fashion us for a holy life. — *Ibid.*

Christ's obedience in fulfilling the law, is imputed to all that believe unto righteousness, as if themselves had fulfilled it. — *Christ. Lib. vol. xiv. p. 221.*

C O N.

For Christ's sake do not dispute for the particular phrase, the imputed righteousness of Christ. — *Mr. Wesley's letter to Mr. Hervey.*

The use of that term (viz. the imputation of righteousness) is not scriptural; it is not necessary; it has done immense hurt. — *Ibid.*

To say, the righteousness which justifies is already wrought out, is a crude, unscriptural expression. — *Ibid.*

The nice metaphysical doctrine of imputed righteousness, leads not to repentance, but to licentiousness, and makes men satisfied without any holiness at all. — *Ibid.*

It is neither a safe nor scriptural way of speaking, to say, the obedience of our surety is accepted instead of our own. — *Ibid.*

Not-

Notwithstanding these manifest contradictions, Mr. *Wesley* affirms, that his opinion has been always one and the same on this head, and if he were to go on affirming and contradicting forty years more, I fear he would never have the candour to acknowledge his own inconsistencies. And yet this identical gentleman has written a book, entitled, ‘*A preservative against unsettled notions in religion* :’ and to this very day both he and his disciples are blaming the rest of the christian world, as void of charity and brotherly love towards them, and are for ever crying out, union, union. But how is this union to be maintained? Only by wading
after

after Mr. *John Wesley* through the quagmires of Pelagianism and Arminianism : --- by paying the most sacred deference to all his cautions against what authors are to be read, and what preachers to be heard ; --- by putting out one's eyes to believe him consistent through all his inconsistencies ; --- and by tamely giving up the most precious and essential truths of the gospel, whensoever they clash with any of his own favourite opinions. Upon these easy terms, union with Mr. *John Wesley* might soon be established. But whosoever would presume to bear an open honest testimony against any of his dogmatical decisions, or dare to mention his strange
pre-

prevarications, is immediately held forth as a persecuting, vindictive, blood-thirsty monster, actuated by cursed party spirit, and under the influence of fatan himself. * All attempts to reason with such furious bigots as these, would

* These mild and dove-like expressions have lately been vented from the shop of a staunch admirer of Mr. *Wesley*, (probably one of his perfect class) in a printed circular letter, dated *July 2, 1771*, and written, as I suppose by the post mark, from *Bristol*. The letter itself is too poor to deserve any notice; however, what is wanting in skill is amply made up in bitter invective against Calvinism, and in true zeal for the *Weslean* system; whilst the author, like a thoroughly exasperated Arminian, happily displays his candour, in bringing up the old story of *Servetus*, and attributing the same spirit which caused him to be put

to

would be only like whifling to the wind. But I am fully persuaded, that there are many humble, excellent, catholick-spirited christians, in society with Mr. *Wesley*, though these are for the most part kept in much bon-

to death, to all who have the misfortune of differing from Mr. *Wesley*. He also greatly laments the loss of that charity among professors, which *believeth all things, and endureth all things*; though all the idea he seems to have of it himself, consists in believing all things which Mr. *John* believes, and in enduring all things which Mr. *John* chooses should be endured by his own followers, concerning marriage, tea, snuff, &c. against which Mr. *John* gravely exercised his pen, whilst he remained a stranger to the happiness of drinking a comfortable dish of tea, with Mrs. *Wesley*, his present lady.

dage

dage, by being continually sent to pore upon their own corrupted hearts, instead of being led to view themselves always compleat in Christ; and whenever they begin to taste the sweetness of free gospel salvation, are frightened from it by bugbear cautions, to beware of Calvinism, Antinomianism, a partial God, &c. It is therefore for such as these that this little piece is chiefly intended, and if it prove a word in season but to one soul, I shall not regret my labour.

With regard to Mr. *Wesley* himself, it is not for me or any other man to determine concerning his state as a christian. It is

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certain

certain there may be much zeal which is not according to knowledge ; and it is also certain, that much sea and land may be compassed to make profelytes, by those who are nevertheless strangers to real conversion themselves. I confess however, I had for many years an high veneration for Mr. *Wesley*, even though I differed from him in those points deemed calvinistical. But his late minutes have obliged me to form very different sentiments of him ; and these sentiments are so far from being changed into more favourable ones, by the late declaration at *Bristol*, that I am thereby more than ever convinced of his unsettled

fettled principles, and prevaricating disposition.

I shall not enter into any dispute with the author of the circular letter, concerning the propriety or impropriety of the printed paper, dated *Bath*, and signed *Walter Shirley*. Suffice it to say, that I was not present when that paper was drawn up, nor did I know the contents of it till it was sent to me after its publication. I readily acknowledge that Mr. *J. Wesley*, as leader of a sect dissenting from the articles of the church of *England*, has a right to maintain his own principles; and yet I think it the duty of every christian, so far as he be-

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lieves

believes those principles to be unfound and dangerous, to testify his abhorrence of them.

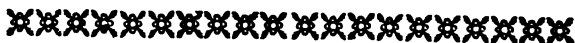
I would conclude with observing, that there cannot be a more unfair way of proceeding, than to condemn doctrines on account of the practices of some individuals who hold those doctrines. That there have been, in all ages, those who profess to know God, whilst in works they deny him, is but too certain; and we might as well charge the sins of *David*, *Lot*, *Noah*, the incestuous *Corinthian*, and even, of *Judas* himself, upon our Lord, and the apostles and prophets, as attribute the personal crimes of
any

any one or more professing what is called Calvinism, to the system of divinity taught by that eminent reformer *John Calvin*. I mention this, because a late writer in the present controversy has defended his cause with some weapons of this sort; but however he and I may differ in some particular points, I have the highest veneration for his many and great excellencies, and know his candour to be such, that I am persuaded upon a review of that part of his publication, he will sincerely wish it had been left out; not only for the reasons I have mentioned, but because he must be very sensible how much these

these things expose religion, in the eyes of the world, and that he hath thereby opened a door of retaliation, against certain persons of his own principles, which, however, I forbear to make use of.



The



*The Rev. Mr. John Wesley's de-
claration concerning his minutes,
verified, by another hand.*

Whereas, the religion and fate of three
nations,
Depend on th' importance of our con-
versations ;
And as some objections are thrown in
our way,
Our words have been construed to mean
what they say ;
Be 't known from henceforth, to each
friend, and each brother,
Whene'er we *say* one thing, we *mean*
quite *another*.

T H E E N D.

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