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DIALOGUE

Between an

ANTINOMIAN

AND

HIS FRIEND.

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The THIRD EDITION.

B R I S T O L :

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DIALOGUE, &c.

Antinomian.

ELL met, my Friend. I am glad to see you. But I am sorry to hear you have changed your Religion.

Friend. Changed my Religion! I don't know what you mean.

A. Why, you once believ'd, we are saved by Faith.

F. Undoubtedly; and so I do still.

A. Do you believe then, that the * *whole Work of Man's Salvation, was accomplished by JESUS CHRIST on the Cross?*

F. I believe, that by that one Offering, he made a full Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World.

A. But do you believe, that CHRIST's Blood and our Sins went away together?

F. To say the Truth, I do not understand it.

A. No! Why, did not CHRIST, when he was upon the Cross, take away, put an End to, blot out, and utterly destroy all our Sins for ever.

F. He did then pay the Price, for the Sake of which all who truly believe in him, are now saved from their Sins; and if they endure to the End, shall be saved everlastingly. Is this what you mean?

A. I mean, He did then heal, take away, put an End to, and utterly destroy all our Sins.

F. Did he then heal the Wound before it was made? and put an End to our Sins, before they had a Beginning? This is so glaring, palpable an Absurdity, that I cannot conceive how you can swallow it.

A. I thought you would come to your *Carnal Reasoning.* What has *Faith* to do with *Reasoning?*

F. Do you ever read the Bible? Does not God himself say to Sinners, *Come now, and let us reason together? Isa. i. 18.* Does not our Lord reason continually

* *The Words printed in Italick, are transcribed from late Authors. I am not willing to name them.*

mually with the Scribes and Pharisees? St. *Peter* with the *Jews*, *Acts* ii. 14, &c. and St. *Paul*, both with the *Jews* and *Gentiles*? Nay, is not great Part of his *Epistles*, both to the *Romans* and to the *Galatians*, and the far greatest Part of that to the *Hebrews*, one entire Chain of *Reasoning*?

A. You may do what you please. But I don't *reason*, I *believe*.

F. Now, I *believe* and *reason* too: For I find no Inconsistency between them. And I wou'd just as soon put out my Eyes, to secure my *Faith*, as lay aside my *Reason*.

A. But do not Men abuse their Reason continually? Therefore 'tis best to have nothing to do with it.

F. So! now you are doing the very Thing you condemn. You are *reasoning* against *reasoning*. And no Wonder; for it is impossible, without *reasoning*, either to prove or disprove any Thing.

A. But can you deny the Fact? Do not Men abuse their Reason continually?

F. They do. The Fact I deny not. But I deny the Inference drawn from it. For if we must lay aside whatever Men abuse continually, we must lay aside the Bible; nay, and Meat and Drink to.

A. Well, but come to the Point. In what do you trust, for Justification and Salvation?

F. In the alone Merits of CHRIST, which are mine, if I truly *believe*, that he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.

A. If! So you make Salvation *conditional*!

F. And do not you? Else you make GOD a Liar: For his express Words are, *He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned*. What is this but to say, *If* thou believest, (there is the *Condition*) thou shalt be saved.

A. But I don't like that Word, *Condition*.

F. Then find a better, and we will lay it aside.

A. However, I insist upon it, *nothing else beside* *it* is required in order to Justification and Salvation.

F. What do you mean by *nothing else is required*?

A. I mean, *There is but one Duty, which is that of Believing*. One must do nothing, but quietly attend the *Voice of the LORD*. *The Gates of Heaven are shut upon*

Workers, and open to Believers. If we do nothing for Heaven, we do as much as GOD requires.

F. Do you really mean, We are to do nothing, in order to present or final Salvation, but *only to believe?*

A. Do not I tell you so? *To believe certainly, that CHRIST suffered Death for us, is enough; we want no more. We are justified, by our submitting in our Judgments, to the Truth of GOD's Grace in CHRIST JESUS. It is not necessary that a Man do any Works, that he may be justified and saved. GOD doth not require thee to do any Thing, that thou mayst be saved or justified. The Law sets thee to work; but the Gospel binds thee to do nothing at all. Nay, the Works are not only not required, but forbidden. GOD forbids us to work for Justification. And when the Apostle Paul presseth Men to believe, it is as much as if he had bid them not to work.*

F. Let Paul be permitted to answer for himself. In the 26th Chap. of the *Acts of the Apostles*, he relates how our LORD sent him, to open the Eyes of the Gentiles—— that they might receive Remission of Sins. (v. 17, 18.) Whereupon (saith he) I was not disobedient to the heavenly Vision: But shew'd — to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to GOD, and do Works meet for Repentance. Observe; He obeyed the heavenly Vision, by teaching the Gentiles, before they were justified, before they had received Forgiveness of Sins, to repent and do Works meet for Repentance. So far was he from bidding them not to work, while he was pressing them to believe.

A. You are got to your carnal Reasoning again.

F. Carnal Reasoning, I perceive, is a *Cant Term* which you use, when you know not what else to say. But I have not done with this Instance yet. Did St. Paul indeed preach to those Heathens, according to the Instructions given him from Heaven, or did he not?

A. Without doubt he did; otherwise he would have been *disobedient unto the heavenly Vision.*

F. How then say you, that a Minister of CHRIST ought to preach nothing but "Believe, believe?" And, that to tell Men of *doing any Thing, is preaching the*

the Law? Do you not herein condemn not only the great Apostle, but also Him that *sent* and commanded him *thus to preach?*

A. Why, surely, you would not have us to be *under the Law!*

F. I fear you know not what that Expression means. *St. Paul* uses it thrice in his Epistle to the *Romans*, five times in that to the *Galatians*, and in one Passage of his former Epistle to the *Corinthians*: Where he declares, in what Sense he was himself *under the Law*, and in what Sense he was not. *Unto them that are under the Law* (that still adhere to the whole Jewish Dispensation) *I became as under the Law*, (I conformed to their Ceremonies) *that I might gain them that are under the Law*: *But unto them that are without the Law*, (unto the Gentiles or Heathens) *as without the Law*: *Being*, mean time, *not without Law to GOD*, but *under the Law to CHRIST*, (1 Cor. c. ix. v. 20, 21.) It is plain, therefore, the Apostle *was under the Law of CHRIST*, tho' he was not *under the Law of Ceremonies*.

A. But does not *St. Paul* say to the Believers at *Rome*, *Ye are not under the Law, but under Grace?*

F. He does; and his Meaning is, *Ye are not under the Jewish, but the gracious Christian Dispensation*: As also in the next Verse, where he says, *We are not under the Law, but under Grace*.

A. But what does he mean, when he says to the *Galatians*, *Before Faith came, we were kept under the Law?*

F. Doubtless he means, *we were kept under* (cb. iii. 19) *the Jewish Dispensation*, till we believed in *CHRIST*. And so we read in the next Chapter, (v. 4, 5.) *When the Fulness of Time was come, GOD sent forth his Son, made under the Law* (the Jewish Dispensation) *to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons*: Might serve *GOD*, without Fear, in Righteousness and Holiness, with a free, loving, child-like Spirit.

A. You can't persuade me to this; I know better. *The Law of Works* (the *Moral Law*, as you call it) is nothing to me. *From any Demand of the Law, no Man*

is obliged to go one Step, to give away one Farthing, to eat, or omit one Morfel. For, what did our LORD do with the Law? He abolish'd it.

F. However, ought not we, after we believe in him, to obey all the Commandments of CHRIST?

A. Obey! Law! Works! Commandments! O what Legalness is in your Spirit! So, I suppose, your Comforts vanish away when you are not assured that you obey all CHRIST's Commandments! On the contrary, a spiritual Man beholdeth Justifying Grace in believing, without his Obedience to Commands for external Worship and good Works.

F. But how does this agree with numberless Texts of Scripture? In particular, with those Words of our LORD, *Think not that I am come to destroy (or abolish) the Law: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law.—Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least Commandments, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Mat. v. 17, &c.*

A. I tell you plainly, I won't reason.

F. That is as much as to say, "I won't be convinced. I love Darknes rather than Light."

A. No: It is you that are in Darknes. I was so till a few Weeks since. But now my Eyes are opened. I see my Liberty now. Now I am free. I was in Bondage long enough.

F. What are you free from?

A. From Sin and Hell, and the Devil and the Law.

F. You put the Laws of GOD in goodly Company. But how came you to be free from the Law?

A. CHRIST made me free from it.

F. What! from his own Law! Pray where is that written?

A. Here, Gal. iii. 13. CHRIST hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.

F. What is this to the Purpose? This tells me, that CHRIST hath redeemed us (all that believe) from the Curse, or Punishment justly due to our past Transgressions of GOD's Law. But it speaks not a Word
of

of redeeming us from the Law, any more than from Love or Heaven.

But what do you mean by *Bondage*?

A. Why, the being bound to keep the Law.

F. You have no Tittle of Scripture for this. *Bondage to Fear and Bondage to Sin* are mentioned there; and *Bondage to the Ceremonial Law of Moses*: But according to *your* Sense of the Word, all the Angels in Heaven are in *Bondage*.

A. Well, I am not bound. St. Paul himself says to Believers, *Why are ye subject to Ordinances*. Col. ii. 20.

F. True: *i. e.* Why are you *Christian* Believers subject to *Jewish* Ordinances? Such as those which are mentioned in the very next Verse, *Touch not, taste not, handle not*.

A. Nay, that is not all. I say, *Outward things do nothing avail to Salvation*. This is plain: For, *if Love to GOD, and Love to our Neighbour, and relieving the Poor, be altogether unprofitable and unavailable, either to Justification or Salvation; then these outward Works, in submitting to outward Ordinances, are much less available*.

F. Do you speak of the Ordinances of CHRIST?

A. I do. *They bring in the most dangerous Kind of Popery, and pervert the pure Gospel of CHRIST, who persuade Men, that if they do not submit to the Ordinances of the LORD JESUS, he will not confess them before his Father*. And I affirm, *It is better not to practise outward Ordinances at all, than to practise them on these Gospel-destroying Principles, to the ruining of our Souls*.

F. What Scripture do you produce for this?

A. I wish you would not build so much upon the *Letter*: It is your *Letter-Learning* too makes you talk of *Inherent Righteousness*.

F. Do you say then, a Believer has no *Inherent Righteousness*?

A. That I do. I say, *God will save us to the utmost without any Righteousness or Holiness of our own*. To look for *Inherent Righteousness*, is to deny the Spirit, and trample under foot the Blood of the Covenant. *Believers have not any inherent Righteousness in them*. Our Righteousness

sanctification is nothing but the Imputation of the Righteousness of CHRIST.

F. Now I believe, that CHRIST by his Spirit works Righteousness in all those to whom Faith is imputed for Righteousness.

A. By no means; all our Righteousness is in CHRIST. It is wholly Imputed, not Inherent. We are always righteous in CHRIST, but never righteous in ourselves.

F. Is not then every Believer righteous or holy?

A. Doubtless; but he is holy in CHRIST, not in himself.

F. Does he not live a holy Life? and is he not holy of Heart?

A. Most certainly.

F. Is he not, by plain Consequence, holy in himself?

A. No, no, in CHRIST only: Not holy in himself: He has no Holiness at all in himself.

F. Has he not in him the Love of GOD, and of his Neighbour? yea, the whole Image of GOD?

A. He has. But this is not Gospel-Holiness.

F. What vain Jangling is this? You cavil at the Name, while you allow the whole Thing I contend for. You allow, a Believer is holy both in Heart and Life. This is all I mean by inherent Righteousness or Holiness.

A. But I tell you, this is not Gospel-Holiness. Gospel Holiness is Faith.

F. Stand to this, and you still give up the whole Cause. For, on your Supposition, I argue thus:

Faith is Holiness or Righteousness:

But Faith is in every Believer:

Therefore Holiness or Righteousness is in every Believer.

A. Alas, alas! I pity you. Take my Word for it, you are in utter Darkness. You know nothing yet of true Faith; nothing at all about it.

F. Will you then be so kind as to explain it to me?

A. I will. I will make it as clear as the Sun. I will shew you the very Marrow of that Doctrine, which I recommend, with all my Heart to all, as the most wholesome Doctrine of JESUS CHRIST.

Many

Many think they know it, when they have but crude carnal, indigested Notions of it. And they imagine we rest contented with such a Faith as theirs, namely, that CHRIST has died to ward off the Wrath of GOD, to purchase his Favour, and as an Effect of that, to obtain certain inherent Qualities and Dispositions, to make us meet for the Kingdom of Heaven. Was this our Faith, it would be requisite to seek after this sort of Sanctification, and not to be at rest, without we felt something of it. But on the contrary, we believe, that the Blood shed upon the Cross, has put away and blotted out all our Sins, and that then there was an Everlasting Righteousness brought in: By believing which our Hearts and Consciences are made as perfectly clean as tho' we had never sinned. In this consists true Purity of Soul, and not in habitual Qualities. And who so are thus made pure and perfect, are delivered from the Dominion of Sin. They do also bear forth the Fruits of Righteousness, not in order to become more holy but because they are perfectly holy, through Faith. 'Tis true, we have still the vile, sinful Body, which continually disposes the Mind to Evil. But the Blood of JESUS makes us free from Sin, and as it were, destroys the Connexion.

F. Of all the Accounts I have ever yet heard, this is the most crude and indigested. But let us go over it Step by Step. You first descrided, what you judge a false Faith, viz. A Faith that CHRIST hath died, to ward off (or appease) the Wrath of GOD, and to purchase his Favour (suppose, for me, a lost Sinner:) And as an Effect of that (of GOD's Favour bought with the Blood of CHRIST) to obtain for me certain inherent Qualities and Dispositions, to make me meet for the Kingdom of Heaven. Now, how do you prove this to be a false Faith?

A. Easily enough. For Men are obliged to support it by Frames, Feelings and Works.

F. And did not you allow, just now, that whoever has true Faith, is holy both in Heart and Life? that he has in him, the Love of GOD and of his Neighbour; yea, the whole Image of GOD?

A. I did. And what then?

F. Why

F. Why then you have abundantly confuted yourself: For you have allowed, that *true Faith* not only cannot be supported, but cannot exist, no not for one Moment, without *certain inherent Qualities and Dispositions*, (viz. the Love of God and of all Mankind) *which makes us meet for the Kingdom of Heaven*. You have allowed, that *true Faith* cannot subsist, without a holy *Frame of Heart*, a Continuance in *Good Works*, and a *feeling Sense of God's Love to me a Sinner*.

A. I hear you. Go on.

F. You said next, *was this our Faith, it would be requisite to seek after this Sort of Sanctification*. From your own Words it appears, that this is *your Faith*, if you have any *true Faith* at all. See then that you *seek after this Sort of Sanctification*, viz. the Love of God and of your Neighbour. For if you can *be at rest*, tho' you *feel nothing of it*, 'tis plain your Heart is not *clean*, but *hardened*.

A. You may say what you please. You know no better.

F. You went on. *On the contrary we believe, that the Blood shed upon the Cross, has put away and blotted out all our Sins*. Why, who believes otherwise? If you mean only, that CHRIST then *put away the Punishment* of all our Sins, who believe in him. What a marvellous Discovery is this? I pray, whom doth this arguing reprove?

A. It reproves you, who deny, that *an everlasting Righteousness was then brought in*.

F. I do not deny it: No more than you understand it. But I ask, in what Sense was it *brought in*? What was it *brought into*? Was it *then first brought into the World*? You cannot say this, without saying that all who went out of the World before that Hour were lost. Or was it *brought into the Souls of Believers*? Then Believers have an *inward or inherent Righteousness*. You had better therefore let this Text alone. It will do no Service at all to your Cause.

A. I see plain, you are as *blind as a Beetle* still. I am afraid your *Head-knowledge* will destroy you. Did not I tell you, *Our Hearts and Consciences are made perfectly clean by our Believing*? *And that in this consists true*

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true Purity of Soul; and not in habitual Qualities? Thus we are made perfectly holy. And tho' the vile sinful Body continually disposes the Mind to evil, yet the Blood of CHRIST makes us free from Sin, and as it were, destroys the Connexion:

F. Destroys the Connexion of what? I doubt you have stumbled upon another Word which you do not understand. But whether you understand yourself or no, 'tis sure I do not understand you. How can my Mind at the same time it is continually disposed to Evil, be free from Sin, perfectly clean, perfectly holy?

A. O the Dulness of some Men; I do not mean really holy, but holy by Imputation. I told you plainly, the Holiness of which we speak, is not in us, but in CHRIST. The Fruits of the Spirit (commonly called Sanctification) such as Love, Gentleness, Long-suffering, Goodness, Meekness, Temperance, neither make us holy before GOD, nor in our own Consciences.

F. I know these cannot atone for one Sin. This is done by the Blood of CHRIST alone: For the Sake of which GOD forgives, and works these in us by Faith. Do I reach your Meaning now?

A. No, no, I wonder at your Ignorance. I mean, we are not made good or holy, by any inward Qualities or Dispositions: But being made pure and holy in our Consciences, by believing in CHRIST, we bear forth inwardly and outwardly the Fruits of Holiness. Now, I hope, you understand me.

F. I hope not. For if I do, you talk as gross Nonsense and Contradiction as ever came out of the Mouth of Man.

A. How so?

F. You say, *We are not made good or holy by any inward Qualities or Dispositions!* No! are we not made Good by inward Goodness? (Observe we are not speaking of Justification but Sanctification.) Holy by inward Holiness? Meek by inward Meekness? Gentle by inward Gentleness? And are not all these, if they are any Thing at all, *Inward Qualities or Dispositions?*

Again, just after denying, that we have any inward Holiness, you say, *We are made holy in our Consciences,*
and

and bear forth inwardly and outwardly the Fruits of Holiness. What Heaps of Self-contradictions are here?

A. You do not take me right. I mean, these inward Dispositions are not our Holiness. For we are not more holy, if we have more Love to GOD and Man, nor less holy, if we have less.

F. No! Does not a Believer increase in Holiness, as he increases in the Love of GOD and Man?

A. I say, no. The very Moment he is justified, he is wholly sanctified. And he is neither more nor less holy, from that Hour, to the Day of his Death. Entire Justification and entire Sanctification are in the same Instant. And neither of them is thenceforth capable either of Increase or Decrease.

F. I thought we were to grow in Grace!

A. We are so: But not in Holiness. The Moment we are justified, we are as pure in Heart as ever we shall be. A new-born Babe is as pure in Heart, as a Father in CHRIST. There is no Difference.

F. You do well to except against Scripture and Reason. For till a Man has done with them, he can never swallow this. I understand your Doctrine now, far better than I like it. In the main, you are talking much and saying nothing: Labouring, as if you had found out the most important Truths, and such as none ever knew before. And what does all this come to at the last? A mere, empty Strife of Words. All that is really uncommon in your Doctrine, is a Heap of broad Absurdities, in most of which you grossly contradict yourselves, as well as Scripture and common Sense. In the mean time, you boast and vapour, as if ye were the Men, and Wisdom should die with you. I pray GOD to humble you and prove you, and shew you what is in your Hearts!

F I N I S.