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A S E C O N D

D I A L O G U E

B E T W E E N A N

A N T I N O M I A N

A N D

H I S F R I E N D .

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

Late Fellow of LINCOLN-COLLEGE, OXFORD.

*Do we then make void the Law thro' Faith? God forbid.
Yea, we establish the Law. Rom. iii. ult.*

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A SECOND

DIALOGUE, &c.

Friend. * * * * * E L L met. You have had time
* * * * * W * * * * * to consider. What think you of
* * * * * * * * * * our last conference ?

Antinomian. I think, *the giving
of scandalous names has no warrant*

from scripture.* Mr. C——'s *Dial.* Page 2.

F. Scandalous names ?

A. Yes. You called me *Antinomian*. But our Sa-
viour bids me, *not return railing for railing.* *ibid.*

F. St. Peter does, and that is all one. But how is
that a *scandalous name* ? I think it is properly *your
own*. For it means, *One that speaks against the law*.
And this you did at that time very largely. But pray
what would you have me call you ?

A. *A preacher of God's righteousness.* p. 1.

F. What do you call me then ?

A. *A preacher of inherent righteousness.* *ib.*

F. *i. e.* In opposition to God's righteousness. So
you mean, a preacher of such righteousness as is in-
consistent with that righteousness of God which is
by faith.

A. True : for I plainly perceive you know but one sort
of righteousness, that is, the righteousness of inherent
qualities, dispositions and works. And this is the reason
why the language of the Holy Ghost seems foolishness unto
you : even because the natural man receiveth not the
things of the Spirit of God. p. 11. 12.

A 2

F. Are

* The words in Italic are Mr. Cudworth's words.

F. Are you absolutely sure, that *this is the reason*, why I do not think or speak as you do?

A. The thing itself speaks. *Thou hast forgotten the Lord, and has trusted in falsehood. Therefore (saith the Lord) I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.* P. 1.

F. Peremptory enough! but you will not return railing for railing! So, out of mere tenderness and respect, you pronounce me *a natural man*, and one who *hath forgotten the Lord, and hath trusted in falsehood!*

A. And so you are, if you don't believe in Christ. Pray let me ask you one question. Do you believe, that *Christ hath appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself?*

F. I do.

A. But in what sense?

F. I believe, he made, (by that one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And yet he *hath not done all which was necessary for the absolute (infallible, inevitable) salvation of the whole world.* If he had, the whole world would be saved: whereas, *be that believeth not shall be damned.*

A. But is it not said, *he was wounded for our transgressions, and with his stripes we are healed?* and is he not the Lamb of God that *taketh away the sins of the world?* P. 4.

F. Yes. But this does not prove, that he *put an end to our sins, before they had a beginning.* ih.

A. O ignorance! Did not *our sins begin in Adam?*

F. Original sin did. But Christ will not put an end to this, before the end of the world. And as to *actual*; if I now feel anger at you in my heart, and it breaks out in reproachful words: to say, Christ put an end to this sin, before it began, is a glaring absurdity.

A. But I say, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,*

them,—he hath made him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. And St. Peter says, who his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree.

F. To what purpose do you heap these texts together? to prove that Christ put an end to our sins, before they had a beginning? if not, spare your labour. For they are quite foreign to the present question.

A. However, that is not foreign to the present question, which you said the other day, viz. That Christ has ONLY redeemed us from the punishment due to our past transgressions. ib.

F. I neither said so, nor thought so. You either carelessly or wilfully misrepresent my words. On your quoting that text, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law*, I replied in these terms: * “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 redeeming us *from the law*, any more than from love or heaven.”

A. Past transgressions? then who must redeem us from those which are to come? since there remains no more sacrifice for sin? ib.

F. The same Jesus Christ, by the same merit of that one sacrifice, then applied to the conscience when we believe (as you yourself have often asserted) but whatever punishment he redeems us from, that punishment supposes sin to precede; which must exist first, before there is any possibility of its being either punished or pardoned.

A. You have a strange way of talking. You say, *we are forgiven, for the sake of the blood of Christ*.

P. 5.

F. And do not you?

A. No. I say, *We have forgiveness in his blood, and not merely for the sake of it*.

F. You are perfectly welcome so to say.

A 3

A. Well

* First Dialogue, p. 6.

A. Well, enough of this. Let me ask you another question. Do you affirm, that salvation is conditional? ib.

F. I affirm, *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.* And can you or any other, deny this? if not, why do you fight about a word? especially after I have told you, find me a better, and I will lay this aside.

A. When this faith leaves you just in the same state it found you, i. e. still having the condition to perform.

p. 5.

F. Not so: for faith itself is that condition.

A. Nay; Faith is only necessary in order to receive forgiveness or salvation, not to procure it, by way of condition. ib.

F. Enough, enough. You grant all that I desire. If you allow, that Faith is necessary in order to receive forgiveness or salvation, this is the whole of what I mean, by terming it a condition. A procuring or meritorious cause, is quite another thing.

A. But you say, that faith is not true faith, unless it be furnished with love, p. 6.

F. Furnished with love! where did you pick up that awkward phrase? I never used it in my life. But I say, you have not true faith, unless your faith worketh by love: and that tho' I have all faith, so that I could even remove mountains, yet if I have no Love I am nothing.

A. Will you answer me one question more? Is not a believer free from the law?

F. He is free from the Jewish ceremonial law, i. e. he does not and need not observe it. And he is free from the curse of the moral law; But he is not free from observing it. He still walks according to this rule, and so much the more, because God has written it in his heart.

A. But St. Paul says, *Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth.* p. 8.

F. He is so. He put an end to the Mosaic dispensation, and established a better covenant, in virtue whereof

whereof faith is counted for righteousness to every one that believeth.

A. But still as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse. (Gal. iii. 10.) Are they not?

F. They are; as many as still seek to be justified by the works of the law, i. e. by any works antecedent to, or independent on, faith in Christ.

A. But does not the apostle say farther, ye are become dead to the law? Rom. vii. 4. ib.

F. You are so, as to its condemning power, if you truly believe in Christ. For there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. But not as to its directing power; for you walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. You love him and keep his commandments.

A. That is not all. I maintain, a believer is entirely free from the law. ib.

F. By what scripture do you prove that?

A. By Gal. iv. 4, 5. God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.

F. The plain meaning of this I mentioned before, (1st. Dial. p. 5.) "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. So you say, Christ was made ONLY under the Jewish dispensation, to redeem the Jews from that dispensation? p. 8, 9.

F. I do not say so. By inserting only you quite pervert my words. You cannot deny, that Christ was made under the Jewish dispensation. But I never affirmed he was made under it only to redeem the Jews from that dispensation,

A. Was he made under the moral law at all?

F. No doubt he was. For the Jewish dispensation included the moral (as well as ceremonial) law.

A. Then the case is plain. If he was under the moral law, we are redeemed from the moral law. ib.

F. That

F. That does not follow, *be redeemed them that were under this (as well as the ceremonial) law.* But from what did he redeem them? not *from the law*: but *from guilt, and sin, and hell.* In other words, he redeemed them from the *condemnation of this law*, not from *obedience to it.* In this respect they are still, *not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.* 1 Cor. ix. 21.

A. Under the law to Christ! No. The Greek word is *ἐννομος χριστου*, in a law to Christ, i. e. the law of love and liberty. ib.

F. Very true. This is the exact thing I mean. You have spoken the very thought of my heart.

A. It may be so. But a believer is free from the law of commandments, call it moral, or what you please.

F. Do you mean only, that he obeys the law of Christ, by *free choice*, and not by *constraint*? that he keeps the commandments of God out of *love*, not *fear*? if so you may triumph without an opponent. But if you mean, he is free from obeying that law, then your liberty is a liberty to disobey God.

A. God forbid. It is a liberty to walk in the Spirit, and not fulfil the lust (or desire) of the flesh. p. 8.

F. Why this is the thing I am contending for. The very thing I daily assert is this, that christian liberty is a liberty to obey God, and not to commit sin.

A. But how do you understand those words of St. Paul, that Christ *blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way*? Col. ii. 14.

F. I understand them of the Jewish ordinances: as it is plain St. Paul himself did, by the inference he immediately draws (v. 16.) *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink (the ordinances touching these being now taken out of the way) or in respect of an holiday (once observed; or of the new-moon, or of the (Jewish) sabbaths.*

A. But how could the *hand-writing of these ordinances* be said, to be *against us*, or to be *contrary to us*?

F. I

F. I will not insist on the criticism of those, who render the words, *over against us*: as alluding to that *band-writing on the wall*, which appeared *over against king Belshazzar*. The words of St. Peter suffice, which will bear no dispute, who speaking of these same ordinances, calls them *A yoke which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear*. Acts xv. 5, 10.

A. You must then understand those words of our Lord, of the *moral law alone*. *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: 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, till all be fulfilled*. Matt. v. 17, 18. But I say, our Lord has fulfilled every jot and tittle of this law too.

F. I grant he has. But do you infer from thence, “therefore he has destroyed the law?” Our Lord’s arguing is the very reverse of yours. He mentions his coming to *fulfil the law*, as an evident proof that he did not come to *destroy or take it away*.

But suppose you could get over the former verse, what can you do with the following? *verily I say unto you, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till heaven and earth pass, (or which comes to the same thing) till all be fulfilled*. The former evasion will do you no service, with regard to this clause. For the word *all* in this, does not refer to the law, but to heaven and earth, and *all things* therein: the original sentence running thus, “*Ἐως ἂν πάντα γένῃται*.” Nor indeed is the word *γένῃται* well rendered, by the ambiguous word *fulfilled* (which would easily induce an English reader to suppose it was the same word that was rendered so just before.) It should rather be translated *accomplished, finished, or done*; as they will be in the great and terrible day of the Lord, when the *earth and the heaven shall flee from his face, and there shall be no place found for them*.

A. But why did you say, *my account of sanctification was crude and indigested?* (Dial. p. 9.)

F. Let

F. Let me hear it again. If it be better digested, than it was, I shall rejoice.

A. Our minds are either defiled and impure, or pure and holy. The question is, which way is a defiled and impure mind to be made a good one? you say, by love, meekness, gentleness. I say, by believing in Christ. By this my conscience becomes purged and clean, as though I had not committed sin. And such a purged conscience bears forth the fruit of love, meekness, gentleness, &c. It is therefore absurd to say, we are made good by goodness, meek by meekness, or gentle by gentleness. We are only denominated so, from these fruits of the Spirit.

P. 10.

F. You have mended the matter a little, and not much. For 1. The question (say you) is, which way is a defiled and impure mind, to be made a good one? Nothing less. The present question between you and me is this, and no other, "Has a believer any goodness in him at all? any love, meekness, or gentleness?" 2. You say, an impure mind is made good by goodness, &c. I say, by believing in Christ. This is mere playing upon words. If the question stood thus, which way is an evil mind made good? you are conscious, I should make the very same reply, By believing in Jesus Christ. 3. By this my conscience becomes purged and clean, as though I had not committed sin. Here you run away from the question, notwithstanding that express caution, "Observe, we are not speaking of justification, but sanctification." (Dial. p. 11.) 4. And such a purged conscience bears forth the fruit of love, meekness, gentleness, &c. You here give up the cause. You grant all I desire, viz. that "there are these dispositions in all believers." It avails nothing therefore to add, but we are not made good by goodness, or gentle by gentleness. We are only denominated good or gentle, from these fruits of the Spirit: since a believer can neither be made nor denominated so, without having goodness or gentleness in him.

A. There

A. Then how dare you affirm, that a believer in Christ, *is not really holy?* - p. 11.

F. You have forgotten yourself. I affirm that he is. If you affirm so too, our dispute is at an end. For if he is *really* holy, then he is *inwardly* or *inherently* holy. And if you grant this, you may express it as you please. I have no leisure for *strife of words*.

A. But why will not you cut off all occasion of such strife, by *speaking as I do?*

F. I cannot, in conscience, *speak in the way that you do*: and that for several plain reasons: (even setting aside that main consideration, whether the things you speak be right or wrong.)

1. Because it is a *confused way of speaking*: So that unless a man has both a clear apprehension, and a large measure of patience, he will hardly find out any consistent meaning in what you say.

2. Because it is an *insincere way of speaking*. For you seem to mean, what you do not.

3. Because it is an *unscriptural way of speaking*. The scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, speaking frequently and expressly, both of *holiness*, of *good works*, of the *law* and the *commandments* of God, as expressly and frequently to the full, as of believing in Jesus Christ.

4. Because by experience I find, it is a *dangerous way of speaking*, and that both to the speaker and to the hearers: to the speaker, as it has a peculiar tendency, to puff him up, to engender pride; to make him exalt *himself* (under pretence of exalting the *grace* of God) and despise others: to the hearers, as it keeps many who are before our eyes, from ever awaking out of the sleep of death: as it throws others again into that fatal slumber, who were just beginning to awake: as it stops many in the midst of their christian course, and turns others clear out of the way: yea, and plunges not a few into all the wretchedness of unclean living. In consideration of this, I the more earnestly desire when I speak on this

this head in particular, to *speake as the oracles of God*; to express *scriptural sense in scriptural words*: in every *phrase* I use, to keep as close as I can to *the law and the testimony*: being convinced there are no words so fit to express the deep things of God, as those which *holy men of old spake*, when they were moved by the Spirit of God.

LONDON,
Aug. 24, 1745.

F I N I S.



