

he died for them, and tied to accept him for their Redeemer and Saviour? Whereby they should have believed that which in itself is most untrue, and laid hold of that in which they had no kind of interest."

Pred.—But what then do you mean by the words, election and reprobation?

Friend.—I mean this: First, God did decree from the beginning to elect or choose, in Christ, all that should believe to salvation. And this decree proceeds from his own goodness, and is not built upon any goodness in the creature. Secondly: God did from the beginning decree to reprobate all who should obstinately and finally continue in unbelief.

Pred.—What then do you think of absolute, unconditional election and reprobation?

Friend.—I think it cannot be found in holy writ, and that it is a plant which bears dismal fruit. An instance of which we have in Calvin himself; who confesses that he procured the burning to death of Michael Servetus, purely for differing from him in opinion in matters of religion.

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## A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

AN ANTINOMIAN AND HIS FRIEND.

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ANTINOMIAN.—WELL 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 do not know what you mean.

Ant.—Why, you once believed, we are saved by faith.

Friend.—Undoubtedly; and so I do still.

Ant.—Do you believe, then, that the "whole work of man's salvation was accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross?"\*

\* The words printed as quotations, within inverted commas, are transcribed from late authors. I am not willing to name them.

Friend.—I believe, that, by that one offering, he made a full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

Ant.—But do you believe that “Christ’s blood and our sins went away together?”

Friend.—To say the truth, I do not understand it.

Ant.—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?”

Friend.—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?

Ant.—I mean, He did then “heal, take away, put an end to, and utterly destroy, all our sins.”

Friend.—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.

Ant.—I thought you would come to your “carnal reasoning.” What has faith to do with reasoning?

Friend.—Do you ever read the Bible? Does not God himself say to sinners, “Come now, and let us reason together?” (Isaiah i. 18.) Does not our Lord reason continually 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?

Ant.—You may do what you please. But I do not reason; I believe.

Friend.—Now, I believe and reason too: For I find no inconsistency between them. And I would just as soon put out my eyes to secure my faith, as lay aside my reason.

Ant.—But do not men abuse their reason continually? Therefore it is best to have nothing to do with it.

Friend.—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.

Ant.—But can you deny the fact? Do not men abuse their reason continually?

Friend.—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 too.

Ant.—Well, but come to the point. In what do you trust for justification and salvation?

Friend.—In the alone merits of Christ, which are mine, if I truly believe that he loved me, and gave himself for me.

Ant.—*If!* So you make salvation conditional!

Friend.—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?

Ant.—But I do not like that word, *condition*.

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

Ant.—However, I insist upon it, “nothing else beside faith is required” in order to justification and salvation.

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

Ant.—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.”

Friend.—Do you really mean, we are to do nothing, in order to present or final salvation, but “only to believe?”

Ant.—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 anything, that thou mayest 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 presses men to believe, it is as much as if he had bid them not to work.”

Friend.—Let Paul be permitted to answer for himself. In the twenty-sixth chapter 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.” (Verses 17, 18.) “Whereupon,” saith he, “I was not disobedient to the

heavenly vision ; but showed—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.”

Ant.—You are got to your “carnal reasoning” again.

Friend.—*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 ?

Ant.—Without doubt, he did ; otherwise he would have been “disobedient unto the heavenly vision.”

Friend.—How then say you that a Minister of Christ ought to preach nothing but “Believe, believe?” and, that to tell men of doing anything, is “preaching the law?” Do you not herein condemn, not only the great Apostle, but also Him that sent and commanded him “thus to preach?”

Ant.—Why, surely, you would not have us to be “under the law !”

Friend.—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,” meantime, “not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.” (1 Cor. ix. 20, 21.) It is plain, therefore, the Apostle was “under the law” of Christ, though he was not “under the law” of ceremonies.

Ant.—But does not St. Paul say to the believers at Rome, “Ye are not under the law, but under grace?”

Friend.—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.”



Ant.—But what does he mean, when he says to the Galatians, “Before faith came, we were kept under the law?”

Friend.—Doubtless he means, we were kept under the Jewish dispensation, till we believed in Christ. (iii. 19.) And so we read in the next chapter, “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;” (verses 4, 5;) might serve God, without fear, in righteousness and holiness, with a free, loving, child-like spirit.

Ant.—You cannot 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 morsel. For what did our Lord do with the law? He abolished it.”

Friend.—However, ought not we, after we believe in him, to obey all the commandments of Christ?

Ant.—*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.”

Friend.—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 nowise pass from the law. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. v. 17, &c.)

Ant.—I tell you plainly, I will not reason.

Friend.—That is as much as to say, “I will not be convinced: I love darkness rather than light.”

Ant.—No; it is you that are in darkness. 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.

Friend.—What are you free from?

Ant.—From sin, and hell, and the devil, and the law.

Friend.—You put the law of God in goodly company. But how came you to be free from the law?

Ant.—Christ made me free from it.

Friend.—What! from his own law? Pray, where is that written?

Ant.—Here, Galatians iii. 13: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Friend.—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.

But what do you mean by bondage?

Ant.—Why, the being bound to keep the law.

Friend.—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.

Ant.—Well, I am not bound. St. Paul himself says to believers, “Why are ye subject to ordinances?” (Col. ii. 20.)

Friend.—True; that is, 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.”

Ant.—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.”

Friend.—Do you speak of the ordinances of Christ?

Ant.—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.”

Friend.—What scripture do you produce for this?

Ant.—I wish you would not build so much upon the letter: It is your letter-learning too makes you talk of inherent righteousness.



Friend.—Do you say then, a believer has no inherent righteousness?

Ant.—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 is nothing but the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.”

Friend.—Now, I believe that Christ by his Spirit works righteousness in all those to whom faith is imputed for righteousness.

Ant.—“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.”

Friend.—Is not, then, every believer righteous or holy?

Ant.—Doubtless; but he is holy in Christ, not in himself.

Friend.—Does he not live a holy life; and is he not holy of heart?

Ant.—Most certainly.

Friend.—Is he not, by plain consequence, holy in himself?

Ant.—No, no, in Christ only; not holy in himself: He has no holiness at all in himself.

Friend.—Has he not in him the love of God, and of his neighbour; yea, the whole image of God?

Ant.—He has. But this is not gospel holiness.

Friend.—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.

Ant.—But I tell you, this is not gospel holiness. Gospel holiness is faith.

Friend.—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.

Ant.—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.

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

Ant.—I will. I will make it as clear as the sun. I will show 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 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 though we had never sinned. In this consists true purity of soul, and not in habitual qualities. And whoso 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. It is 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."

Friend.—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 described 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?

Ant.—Easily enough; for men "are obliged to support it by frames, feelings, and works."

Friend.—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?"

Ant.—I did. And what then?

Friend.—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.

Ant.—I hear you. Go on.

Friend.—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, though you feel nothing of it, it is plain your heart is not clean, but hardened.

Ant.—You may say what you please. You know no better.

Friend.—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?

Ant.—It reproves you, who deny that "an everlasting righteousness was then brought in."

Friend.—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.

Ant.—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 purity of soul, and not in habitual qualities? Thus we are made perfectly holy." And though "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."

Friend.—Destroys the connexion of what? I doubt you have stumbled upon another word which you do not under-

stand. But whether you understand yourself or no, it is 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?"

Ant.—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, longsuffering, goodness, meekness, temperance, neither make us holy before God, nor in our own consciences."

Friend.—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?

Ant.—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.

Friend.—I hope not. For, if I do, you talk as gross nonsense and contradiction as ever came out of the mouth of man.

Ant.—How so?

Friend.—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 anything 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 bear forth, inwardly and outwardly, the fruits of holiness." What heaps of self-contradictions are here!

Ant.—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."

Friend.—No! Does not a believer increase in holiness, as he increases in the love of God and man?

Ant.—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.

Friend.—I thought we were to grow in grace!

Ant.—“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.”

Friend.—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 meantime, 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!”

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## SECOND DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

AN ANTINOMIAN AND HIS FRIEND.

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“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: Yea, we establish the law.” (Romans iii. 31.)

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FRIEND.—WELL met! You have had time to consider. What think you of our last conference?

ANTINOMIAN.—I think, “the giving of scandalous names has no warrant from Scripture.” (*Mr. Cudworth’s Dialogue*, p. 2.)

Friend.—*Scandalous names!*