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A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A METHODIST AND A CHURCHMAN

*by William Law*

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OF  
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WILLIAM LAW, M.A.

## A DIALOGUE BETWEEN

### A METHODIST AND A CHURCHMAN

**Methodist.** Say what you will, sir, I must still stand to it, that almost all the sermons of your bishops and curates, for these last hundred years, have been full of soul-destroying doctrine. (Mr. Berridge's Letters, page 20.)

**Churchman.** Pray, what is that doctrine?

**Methodist.** It is the doctrine of salvation, "partly by faith, and partly by works; or justification by faith and works." (Ibid. page 13.)

**Churchman.** Salvation by faith and works, is a plain, and very intelligible scripture-truth. But salvation partly by faith and partly by works, is a false and groundless explication of the matter, proceeding either from art, or ignorance. What sounder gospel-truth, than to say, that we are saved by Jesus Christ, God and man? But, what falsier account could be given of it, than to say, that if so, then we are saved, partly by Jesus, and partly by Christ; that Jesus does something, and Christ adds the rest. For is not Jesus Christ, as such, the one undivided savior, with one undivided operation? And who can more endeavor to lose the meaning, and pervert the sense of this gospel-truth, than he, who considers Jesus, as separately, and Christ as separately, doing their parts one after the other, the one making up what was wanting in the other, towards the work of our salvation?

Now to separate faith from works, in this manner, the one partly doing this, and the other partly doing that, is in as full contrariety to scripture, to all truth, and the nature of the thing, as to separate Jesus from Christ. For as the one savior is manifested in and by Jesus Christ, one undivided person; so the one salvation is manifested, when faith is in works, and works are in faith, as Jesus is in Christ, and Christ is in Jesus.

Again, how plain and good a scripture-truth is this, that the loving of God with all the powers of the heart, soul, and spirit, and the loving our neighbor as ourselves, is the one true fulfilling of the whole Law and

prophets. But how falsely would this be set forth by him who should say, that it is partly the love of God, and partly the love of our neighbor, the one adding that which the other wanted, and doing that which the other could not do; as if they were two separate things, which with their different powers make up the fulfilling of the Law. For these two loves, or rather the two names of love, are, in the strictest truth, but one thing, one divine spirit of love, from one ground, full of one and the same operation, no more different, or separable from one another, than flame is different, or separable from its flying upwards. Thus St. John, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar”; but he could not therefore be a liar, if the love of God was a different, or separate thing from the love of our neighbor.

Yet this is your friend’s false and mistaken way of setting forth justification, if so be, it is by faith and works; namely, his dividing them asunder from one another, and ascribing his own invented partlys and partlys, first to one, and then to the other; all which is as mere fiction, and full of the same absurdity, as if some other scholar, should with the like partlys set forth the state of a living creature; viz., that if it is in a living state, it must be so, partly by life, and partly by its living operations, as if life and its living operations were two distinct and separate things, that contributed their separate powers, and joined in their different actions, to make and keep up a living creature. This, and not one jot less, is the absurdity of your partlys and partlys, ascribed to a justification, supposed to be the effect of faith and works. For Christian faith and Christian works, are as much one and the same indivisible thing, as life is one and the same indivisible thing with its living operations.

**Methodist.** I can call all this nothing else but quibbling about words, and mere running away from the one only thing, which ought to be debated, and that is, whether St. Paul hath not, over and over, placed the whole of justification in and by faith alone?

**Churchman.** Let me ask you, did you ever hear or read of a dead faith, and a living faith, or do you think the difference between them to be nothing at all, but that the one has as much of justification in it as the other?

**Methodist.** This is a trifling question, since you know, as well as I do, that our awakened preacher has expressly declared, that there is dead faith, and that it is then dead, when it worketh not by love.

**Churchman.** Well then, if so, the matter stands thus; works prove faith to be living; want of works prove faith to be dead; and thence you conclude, that it is a soul-destroying doctrine, to teach Christians, that they are to be saved by faith and works. Surely, sir, you are not quite awake.

**Methodist.** You are growing hot, my friend, but be as hot as you will, I must tell you in the words of Mr. B\_\_\_\_\_, “That be you ever so sober, serious, just, and devout, you are still under the curse of God, provided you have any allowed reliance on your own good works, and think that they are to do something for you, and Christ to do the rest.”

**Churchman.** In answer to this, I only say, that be you and your friend ever so full of faith, so that you could remove mountains, you are still under the curse of God, provided you have any allowed reliance upon your own faith, and think that it is to do something for you, and Christ to do the rest. For a reliance upon our own faith, and a reliance upon our own works, are just that same good thing, and equally contrary to the truth of faith, and the truth of works.

**Methodist.** What true Methodist ever called true faith our own faith? Does not the scripture say, it is the gift of God?

**Churchman.** What true Christian ever called good works our own works? Does not scripture say, “it is God who worketh in us, both to will, and to do?” Now if your faith may be called good and saving, because it is God’s gift, and power within you; then a Christian’s works may be called good and saving, or such as work out his salvation, because they are all wrought in God, and by his power working in him. But now, suppose one man to rely on his own faith, and another to rely upon his own works, they then are both of them carnally minded, and the faith of the one, and the works of the other, are equally the same worthless, filthy rags. On the other hand, do but (as plain scripture requires you) ascribe good works of the same original, and divine power, as a right faith must be ascribed to, and then faith and works are equally one power of God to salvation, because

equally the same saving, redeeming, and sanctifying work of God in our souls.

**Methodist.** I wonder you should thus strive to puzzle and darken one of the greatest, and most plain truths of the gospel. Can anything be more plain than the case of the Pharisee, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are; I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess,” etc.? Here you have works pleading their cause. Now how came the publican without any works, saying only, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” to be justified rather than this good working Pharisee? Can anything be more decisive than this?

**Churchman.** Let it then be supposed that the Pharisee had said, God, I thank thee, that my faith is not like other men’s faith, it needs not the help of fasting and praying, etc. I ask you, had this been a better Pharisee than the other? Had this boasting of a faith been better than that boasting of works? Or might not Christ have here justly said, that the publican’s “God be merciful to me a sinner,” had more of God and goodness in it, than the Pharisee’s boasting of his solitary faith? But now, if such a passage as this, of a Pharisee boasting of a faith without works, was to be found in scripture, and condemned by Christ, surely it would be great delusion to appeal to it, as a full and decisive proof of the vanity and insignificancy of faith, and of its being rejected by Christ, as of no avail. Yet this would be full as well, as to appeal to what Christ said of the Pharisee’s boasted works, as a full proof that works are rejected by Christ, as worse than nothing.

**Methodist.** Say what you will, I am fully assured of this great truth, thus expressed by our friend, “That the moment a man seeks to be justified by his own obedience to God’s laws, that moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an interest in him.”

**Churchman.** Here just the same answer as before will be sufficient, viz., that the moment a man seeks to be saved or justified by his own faith in God, that moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an interest in him. This is just as good an argument against faith itself, as your friend’s is against works. For own faith and own obedience are at the same distance from God, and are as mere works of the flesh, as self-seeking and self-love. But if your friend would have spoken to the purpose of the matter in

hand, he should have expressed himself thus, viz., that the moment a man seeks to be justified, or made acceptable to God, by works wrought by the Spirit of Christ living in him, that moment he falls from Christ, and ceases to have an interest in him. Had he thus expressed himself, you see what an absurdity there had been in it, and yet, without thus expressing himself, his words are quite foreign to the matter, and touch not those works, which are affirmed to be essential to a justifying faith. For the true Christian man never thinks, or talks of being justified by any own obedience, any more than of being washed and saved by his own precious blood. But though he has no own obedience, no own works, any more than he has an own will, and own love, yet he has an obedience and works, and will and love that reach heaven, and unite with God. How so? It is because by the supernatural WORD and SPIRIT of God, come to a fullness of birth in him, his obedience, his works, his will, his love, are that which they are, and do that which they do on earth, to the glory, and by the same Spirit of God, as angels do in heaven. This is the new creature that is justified by faith and works. Suppose faith to be not from Christ, or works not from Christ, and then they are both of them but works of the flesh. But add Christ to faith, and Christ to works, and then they are but one and the same power of God to salvation, and all difference between faith and works is lost, and nothing remaineth, but “Christ in us the hope of glory.” But your friend forgetting, or not knowing, that no works, are called salvation works, or pleaded for as such, but those that Christ worketh in us, considers, and confounds all works as own works, and selfish works, and so condemns Christian works, and the necessity of them, upon no other ground, but because own works, which proceed from self, are false, vain, and unprofitable to our salvation. Whereas our blessed Lord, has in the plainest manner distinguished them from one another, and shown us, when and how works are good and godly, and works of salvation, justification, and sanctification. “When thou dost thine alms,” saith he, “do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, to be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.” Here you see what an own work is, and why it has no salvation goodness in it, it is because it is done only to trumpet forth its own glory. Now where anything like this trumpet goes along, either with that which we call faith, or works, though it should have ever so heavenly an appearance, it has only the nature, and can have only the

reward of vainglorious alms. God said to a holy prophet of old, “Cry aloud, and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet.” Here is one kind of a religious trumpet. The Pharisees were learned men, and full of religious zeal, and they also had their religious trumpet, which our Lord condemned. Therefore zeal and trumpeting, are not good, and things to be trusted to, because they pretend religion, but may be as different from one another, as a Pharisee is from a holy prophet. This ought to be well considered by all, who set a trumpet to their mouths in God’s cause; for if all that was alive in the trumpeting prophet, be not alive in them, they will begin too soon, and run before they are sent by God, to preach of the true life, and the true death, to a world ignorant, and careless about them. Again, our Lord saith, “when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Very I say unto you, they have their reward,” and can have no better reward, because he that thus prays, makes prayers an own work of own glory, and therefore they are but an abomination before God. But now, will you from hence tell the world, that alms and prayers are soul-destroying things, or at best but mere filthy rags, that signify nothing to him that uses them, because such alms and prayers are said to be so by Christ?

For has not Christ in this very place taught you the direct contrary, and said as much of the salvation-power of good works, as he has said of the nothingness of Pharisaical works? “When thou dost thine alms,” saith he, “let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth.” And again, “When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” Why is all this secrecy? It is, that the whole work, may be solely from, and to, and for God, and that self may have neither beginning, nor end, or the least share in it. Now I ask, have these alms and these prayers nothing of salvation-goodness in them, when our Lord therefore commands them, that we may thereby obtain a reward in heaven? Can they help us to a reward in heaven, without helping forward our salvation? If a heavenly reward follows such works as these, must they not on the same ground, in the strictest sense of the words, be called saving alms, saving prayers, as any faith, from Adam or Abraham to this day, can be called saving faith? What are all the promises made to the faith

of the fathers, of a “city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”? what is that better and heavenly country, which was to be the reward of their faith, but these very rewards here promised by Christ to the works of Christian alms, and Christian prayers? Our blessed Lord’s whole divine sermon on the mount, is nothing else but a continual doctrine of good works, and a continual doctrine of such rewards as belong to the faithful, diligent workers. No blessedness is ascribed to a single faith, but all along to some one or other godly work. “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Do good to them that hate you. Give to him that asketh you.” But why all this? It is, “that you may be children of your Father, which is in heaven.” Surely then such works as make us to be children of our Father, which is in heaven, may be said to be saving works.

**Methodist.** Well, now I fully believe, what a very great man has often said, that you have not one right thought or notion about justification. But however for once, I must desire you to say, what, and when, and where justification is.

**Churchman.** Surely I shall not be much mistaken, if I shall venture to say, it is then and there, where is no condemnation. Now St. Paul saith, “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” If you ask him, who are those that are in Christ Jesus? he tells you in the very next words, they are those “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” But no one doth, or can walk after the flesh, but he who doth the works of the flesh, nor anyone walk after the Spirit, but he who doth the works of the Spirit. So then whether you consider justification, or condemnation, works are the whole of the matter. No condemnation but from our evil works, no justification but from our good works. Evil works are from the spirit of Satan, working and ruling in our animal birth of Adam’s poisoned flesh and blood. Good works are from the Spirit of Christ, working in that blessed seed of the woman, or incorruptible seed of the WORD (common to all men) till it comes to a birth of the new creature, created unto good works in Christ Jesus. Thus the works of the devil in us, are our only condemnation, and the works of Christ in us, are our only justification. And by thy works, thou shalt be justified, is just the same scriptural, immutable truth, as by thy works thou shalt be condemned.

Would you see the truth of justification, and the truth of condemnation, free from all possibility of mistake, look how the righteous judge of all the world, will proceed at the last day. Mankind is then to be divided into two sorts of people, the one called sheep, the other goats. To the sheep, saith Christ, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Whence now comes this blessedness, or how came they to be the blessed heirs of such a prepared kingdom? The one sole reason of it, is thus given by Christ, namely because of their good works. “For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, naked and ye clothed me, sick and in prison, and ye visited me.” Here you have the last, full and final justification, ascribed to nothing else but works, done in and by and for Christ. Is there here any room left for you, or any Christian to ask one single question, or have the least doubtful thought about justification, what it is, and how it comes to pass? Can you be taught by an higher authority, or in plainer words, that works, Christian works, are all the justification that will stand you in stead at the last day?

Again, to the goats saith Christ, “Go ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Whence now have these goats their cursed state, that casts them into the hell of the devil? The one sole reason given by Christ, is because they had not done those works, by which his sheep were justified and blessed, and made to inherit the kingdom of heaven. Here you have the last, full and final condemnation, ascribed to no one thing else, but the want of works. And who is it that teaches you, but he who is the truth itself, and the father of all truth, both in men and angels.

What occasion then for so many labored critical volumes, about faith and works in order to justification? If you hold more or less, or anything else about justification, than that which Christ has here asserted, the spirit of anti-Christ must have helped you to it. For call anything a justifying faith, but good works, and then you have your doctrine as surely from anti-Christ, as if you were to hold, that they were the blessed sheep, whom Christ called goats and cursed. Christ is the one great infallible teacher about justification, and what he has said in two or three words about it, can no more have anything taken from it, or added to it, or altered in it, than his last sentence on his judgment seat. Deceive not yourself, my friend, with a faith, that hath not all its goodness, its truth and perfection,

from works. For what greater deception can you fall under, than to believe, that anything can be your justification, or your condemnation, whilst you are in the body, but that which will be your justification, or condemnation, after you are risen from the dead? Now after this determination of Christ, that nothing but works will pass for justification at the last day, look at the determination made by your friend, saying, in the fullest contradiction of Christ, “that justification by faith and works, is a most pernicious, papistical, and damnable doctrine. Which doctrine,” says he, “I am verily assured, no one can hold, and be in a state of salvation.” (Letters, page 22.)

Is not every word here, in full condemnation of Christ’s doctrine of his sheep and their salvation through works, as a most pernicious and damnable doctrine, tending to the destruction of all those who believe it, and walk according to it?

For does he who preaches up salvation by faith and works, teach anything else, but that very doctrine which Christ taught, when he said, Come ye blessed, because of the works, which ye have done, and go ye cursed, because wanting the works, which ye should have done. Say no more then, that papists, and popish Protestants, have invented this damnable doctrine of faith and works. Christ is the author of it, and he has sealed it with the same certainty, as the day of judgment. Your friend’s “verily assured,” is quite as outrageous and frantic, as if he had said, I am verily assured, that damnation will be the state of all preachers and hearers, who do not as fully exclude works from justification now, as Christ will require them for justification hereafter.

**Methodist.** But pray, sir, if I am to give up my friend’s doctrine, must I not give up St. Paul also, as a deceiver and false apostle, for so he must be, if justification is by works? What are his epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, and Ephesians, but so much pains taken, to prove that we are saved, or justified, by faith alone.

**Churchman.** I am as much for all St. Paul’s doctrine, as for any other scripture, and fully believe that he said nothing about faith, but what he said by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. But if you believe that St. Paul ever said one single word about faith, as it signifies a single act, or operation of the mind, or that he ever distinguished, or divided Christian

faith from Christian works, you may be said to have read him with eyes that see not, and ears that hear not.

**Methodist.** Surely your St. Paul and mine cannot be the same person, or you could never talk at this rate.

**Churchman.** I would ask you whether St. Peter taught a faith without works, when he said to the Jews, “This is the stone, which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” <sup><4011></sup>Acts 4:11, 12. Now did it ever come into your head, from reading these words of St. Peter, that he there taught a salvation through Christ (that is, through the gospel religion) by faith without works? See also what Christ himself had spoke before of this very stone, and the builders that rejected it, therefore, saith he, “I say unto you, the kingdom of God,” that is, this very stone, “shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,” <sup><416></sup>Matthew 21:43. Now would you from these words of Christ, on which St. Peter’s words are grounded, have ever thought of proving that the religion of the gospel, called by St. Peter the headstone of the corner, and by Christ the kingdom of God bringing forth its fruits, must be a religion of faith without works. What could be more extravagant than this, and yet not more so, than to pretend to prove it from any words of St. Paul. For I defy anyone to show, that he hath ever said any more, or other thing about faith alone, or meant anything else by it, as our salvation, but strictly and to a tittle, that same which St. Peter calls the stone, or that Name alone, by which salvation is to be had. St. Paul’s faith alone, is nothing else, means nothing else, but the gospel religion alone, and only attests that divine truth spoke from the beginning to the end of the New Testament, that the gospel dispensation, or religion, alone, can be the salvation of men. When St. Paul speaks of works, as quite unprofitable, nay hurtful to salvation, nothing is meant by them, but Jewish and heathenish works; and by that faith, which he opposes to them, and sets up in the stead of them, he always means the whole system of gospel truths, the whole process of Christ, with all the salvation doctrines that belong to it. This is St. Paul’s faith alone, by which we can only be saved, just the same thing as St. Peter’s saying, there is no other Name under heaven but this alone, by which we can be saved. The only difference between Peter and Paul is this, that Peter, in his

short expression, calls that the Name alone by which we can be saved, which Paul, in his short expression, calls faith alone, and both of them mean the whole of that, which Christ calls the kingdom of God with its fruits thereof; which kingdom of God is neither more nor less, than the whole gospel system of Christ's process, with all the benefits and doctrines essential, or belonging to it.

Away then with your idle fancy of Paul's ever distinguishing Christian faith from Christian works, or ever giving the smallest preference of the one to the other. To the Jews, who said to Christ, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Christ saith, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him, whom he hath sent." This St. Paul's sole and whole doctrine about faith alone, it is to believe in Christ, and that belief is the whole Christian work, the whole work that God requires, the whole salvation work. But why so? Because to believe in Christ, is to embrace all and the whole of that, which Christ was, did, suffered, taught, and commanded, as the one only salvation of men.

**Methodist.** I must confess you have said more than I expected to hear, and more than I can at present answer. But pray show me how it appears, that St. Paul by his faith alone, means nothing else but the Christian religion alone, or the system of gospel doctrines alone.

**Churchman.** You might as well ask me, how it appears that Paul was an apostle, or witness of Jesus Christ alone; for how could he be an apostle of Christ alone, if he meant anything by his faith alone, but the whole that is meant by the whole gospel religion of Christ? Therefore wherever St. Paul ascribes salvation to faith alone, you have the fullest proof, that he himself could possibly give you, that by faith alone, he means neither more nor less than the whole gospel religion alone. St. Paul has these words, "God forbid, that I should glory in anything, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here you see, all is rejected by the cross of Christ alone, this alone is his glory, and a good glory it was; but would not all that is true and good in this speech of Paul's be perverted and lost, unless by the cross alone, you understand the whole process, doctrines, and precepts, of a crucified savior, that is, the whole Christian religion? Now thus it is with faith alone; and if Paul had said, God forbid that I should glory in anything but in faith alone in Christ, he had said just the same

thing, as when he would have no glory but in the cross alone. For where all that is Christian joy, or hope, or comfort, or salvation, is ascribed to any one single thing, whether it be called faith alone, or the cross alone, there that faith, and that cross, must stand equally, and only for the whole gospel religion. And then to say, that a man is saved by the cross alone, or by faith alone, is the same sound, and good truth. "I know whom I have believed," saith the apostle, and if he had said, I know whom I have followed, whom I have obeyed, the thing had been just the same. For to follow Christ, or to be in the faith of Christ, or to be a disciple of the cross, are three different expressions, but the meaning of them all, is but one and the same.

"I am not ashamed," saith St. Paul, "of the cross of Christ," just the same as if he had said, I am not ashamed of the gospel kingdom of Christ. For that he means by the cross, the whole religion of the gospel, he tells you, in saying, that it is the power of God to salvation; and what is, or can be this power, but that whole process, precepts, and doctrines of Christ, which make the whole religion of the gospel? Again, "I have determined," saith he, "to know nothing among you but Christ, and him crucified." But will you thence infer, that all other knowledge, whether of the birth, life, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, was rejected by him as quite useless and unprofitable? Yet this would be full as well, as to infer, that because he saith, by faith alone ye are saved, therefore no works are to be admitted as saving, but are to be rejected as vain and quite unprofitable to salvation. For the knowledge of Christ crucified alone, and faith alone, are then each of them put for the whole gospel-religion, and not for faith, as signifying a single power of the mind, nor for the cross, as meaning the single crucifixion of Christ.

Further, drop now for a while this consideration of faith, in which St. Paul has used it for the whole gospel-doctrine, and consider faith in the sense, in which our Lord and the whole scripture most frequently speak of it, as a living working power of the mind, that wills, and desires, and hopes, and trusts, and believes, and obeys; and in this sense of the word, it will be absolutely true, that works have just the same salvation in them, that faith hath, because in the very nature of the thing, works are of the same nature with, and inseparable from faith, let the faith or works be what they will, because faith is nothing else, has nothing else, but what its works are. This

is equally true of every man, and every faith in the world, he has no works, but the workings of his faith. For as life has no existence but in and by its living operations, so faith hath no existence, but in its own workings. Now if you will have a life alone without its living operations, then you must have a life that is without motion, without will or desire, without hearing, seeing, feeling, or any inclination to anything, and then you have a life, that is just as good as a dead carcass. So if you will have a Christian faith that is alone, and not made up of works, you must have a Christian faith, that has no penitence, no humility, no denial of self, no hunger after righteousness, no striving to enter in at the strait gate, no love of God, or your neighbor. For faith cannot be alone, or without works, till it is without all these workings. And then you have a faith alone, that is just as able to fight St. Paul's good fight of faith, as the dead carcass is to take a city. And let me tell you, that these works are not only the very essence of faith, and inseparable from it, but that faith itself can have no beginning, but from some one, or other of them, nor any further growth, but as these grow more and more. For faith and its works beget, and are begotten of one another, for as it must be said, that humility and penitence are the true fruits, or works of faith, so it may be as truly said, that humility or penitence are the first root, or seed, from whence faith gets its birth — faith, considered as an act or operation of the mind, is like any other faculty or power, it cannot be alone, any more than will, desire, longing, hoping, fearing, wishing, loving, trusting, or rejoicing, can any of them be alone, or in a state of separation from the rest. And to ascribe salvation to any one of these tempers alone, and by itself, would be as consistent with scripture, and the nature of the thing, as to ascribe it to faith alone, considered as a single thing, and separate from all other works, or working of the mind.

But faith, not considered as the working of the will, or an operation of the mind, but as meaning the whole system of gospel-religion, may and must be alone salvation, without anything else but itself, and that for the same reason, as St. Peter says, that Christ alone, is the only stone, or the only Name whereby we can be saved.

Would you therefore come out of that thickness of darkness, which a blind Babylonish spirit of dispute, has in these latter ages brought into St. Paul's doctrine of faith without works, this must be your way.

You must take, or put faith for the whole gospel-religion, when he opposes it to, or separates it from works, and then you will rightly understand why he saith, By faith alone ye are saved. You must also put Jewish, or heathenish to the works, which he excludes from faith, and then you will rightly understand what works he declares to have no salvation in them. This is the true, unerring key to all his whole doctrine about faith without works.

**Methodist.** But where has St. Paul himself told you, that by faith alone, he means the whole gospel-religion alone?

**Churchman.** He has told it me, as often, and wherever he has said, that by faith alone we are saved. For how could he more show you, that he means neither more nor less by it, than by telling you that it alone is salvation? Would you have salvation to be obtained by something different from the whole of gospel-religion? Fancy now St. Paul explaining himself, and saying, when I ascribe salvation to faith alone, I do not mean by faith, the whole of gospel-doctrine; what greater absurdity could you charge upon him?

His doctrine of faith alone, and without works, is nothing else but the gospel-religion alone, in opposition to the religion and works of Jews and heathens, and is solely directed to these two sorts of people, and not, as is blindly imagined, to set Christian faith in opposition to Christian works, which would be no better, than teaching a Christian to be good without goodness.

To the Jews he thus speaks, “We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law.” Here faith and works stand for the two religions, the one of Christ, and the other of Moses. For what are the works of the Law, but the whole of the Mosaic religion, or what the faith of Christ, but the whole new religion of the gospel? Therefore to tell these people, that they were to be saved by faith alone, and without works, was only telling them, that they were to be saved by leaving or turning from Judaism to Christianity, or that they could not enter into the kingdom of God, or the gospel-faith, or the church of Christ (for they all mean the same thing) till they had done with, and left off all the works of the Law? “I testify,” says he, “unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.”

To the heathens, or Greeks, he preaches the same doctrine with regard to their religious state, namely, that all the works of their religion and lives, must be forsaken and turned from, that by embracing the religion, or faith of Christ, they might be saved. I have, says he, “kept back nothing that was profitable unto you. publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jew and to the Greek, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” Repentance towards God, signified the necessity of their having done with their former religion, works, and manner of life; faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, signified the necessity of their becoming members of a new gospel-church, or kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Not a word through all St. Paul, that rejects any works, but those which Jews and heathens were satisfied with, and would not give up for the gospel state of the kingdom of God, which kingdom, is called by Paul, the faith of Christ. Not a word of the sufficiency of faith alone, but where it stands for the whole of gospel-doctrine.

Again, St. Paul hath himself told me, that by faith alone he means the gospel-religion alone, in the following passages, “I have,” says he, “fought the good fight, I have finished my course,” and as a proof of this, he adds, “I have kept the faith.” Must not faith here stand for the whole gospel-religion? Again, “Before faith came, we were under the Law.” Does not faith here as certainly signify the whole religion of the gospel, as the Law signifies the whole religion of Moses? Again, “If they who are under the Law, be heirs, then faith is made void,” that is, the whole religion of Jesus Christ, is made needless, and of no use or benefit. Can he more plainly tell you, that by faith, as opposed to the works of the Law, he means nothing else, but the whole of the gospel-doctrine? This is said to the Jews. To the gentiles at another time, he speaks the same truth in these words; “By grace ye are saved through faith in Christ, and that not of yourselves, not of works, lest any man should boast, it is the gift of God,” the very self-same gift, of which Christ spoke to the woman at Jacob’s well, saying, “if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith, give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” Now what is this gift of God with his living water, but the Christ of God with all his redeeming process, from his birth to his ascension into heaven, freely given by God, that man might thereby be

saved. Therefore this faith, or gift of God, by which alone we can be saved, signifies neither more nor less, than the whole gospel-means of salvation. The apostle adds, “and that not of yourselves, not of works, lest any man should boast.” Here works are totally excluded. But what works? Why only works of self, and works that man could, or would, boast of. But these works are only therefore excluded from gospel-faith or salvation, that godly works which have nothing of self, or boasting in them, may come up in their stead. This the apostle affirmeth, saying, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained,” ~~and~~ Ephesians 2. How great then is that learned delusion, which opposes Christian faith to Christian works, because Paul opposes it to the unChristian works of Jews and heathens; or because he will not allow their several works to have any salvation in them, therefore will have it, that the true followers of Christ, neither can, nor ought to have any salvation from their doing the works, which Christ has taught and commanded them to do. A believer, or a hearer, without doing, is but one and the same self-deceived person. In the gospel, we have a father bidding his son go to work in his vineyard. The son consents, and saith, “I go, sir, but he went not.” This consenting and not doing, is the perfection of a faith without works.

**Methodist.** Surely you never minded these words of St. Paul, “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness.”

**Churchman.** Surely you have been deaf to all that has been said, or you could never come now with such a text as this. For no more is said in it against working, or against any other works, but that very single thing, which he saith in these words, “that by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” Now if it be the apostle’s repeated doctrine, that the deeds or works of the Law, must of all necessity be forborn, or ceased from, must he not for that very reason say, to him that worketh not, that is, to him that ceaseth from working, as the Law, or religion of Moses requires, and turns to the faith of Christ, called the kingdom of God, this faith becometh his righteousness. But how doth it become his righteousness? The apostle tells you, “It is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” Now what is the redemption through Jesus Christ, but

a redemption by and through all that, which Christ, as God-man, was, did, suffered, obtained, taught, and commanded, that is, through and by the whole of the gospel-religion? How is Christ our propitiation, or peace, but by that which he is, and does in the inward change, and renewal of our nature, in creating us again to good works, in bringing forth a new creature, not born of man, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God? What is faith in his blood, but the same thing as faith in his cross, and what is faith in either case, but a hearty willingness, and full desire wholly to cease, or turn away from all heathenish, or Jewish works, and to embrace and give up ourselves to all that is meant, taught, and required by the gospel-faith, or kingdom of God?

Would you know the whole of St. Paul's doctrine about faith, and against works, or working, you have it all summed up by himself in the following words, "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." What room then for one single word about what he means by not working? Faith stands here for the gospel-religion, and the deeds of the Law signify the religion of Moses; no wonder therefore that he saith a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law. So sure therefore as you conclude either more or less, or other than St. Paul's own conclusion, so sure you may be, that you abuse the apostle, falsify his doctrine, and sow your own tares amongst his wheat.

**Methodist.** Let me here ask you, in the elegant words of a last most amiable divine, "Must the efficacy of Christ's obedience be enforced by the accession of our works, maimed and worm-eaten things?"

**Churchman.** There may, for aught I know, be elegance enough in these words, but truth and sense is quite wanting. For what have our good works to do with the efficacy of Christ's obedience, either as to the lessening, or increasing of it; or how has his obedience anything more added to it by our good works, than it has anything taken from it by the evil works of those who crucified him? What careful doer of good works, ever said or thought after this manner? "I strive to obey thy will, O God, that thereby Christ's obedience may be made more perfect, than it was in him. I lift up my eyes and heart towards heaven, that Christ's sitting there at thy right hand, may be more powerful than it is in itself."

On the other hand, what a wise man of faith would he be, who should abstain from prayer, etc., least he should seem by such worm-eaten petitions, to be adding something to Christ's all-sufficient intercession in heaven. Again, fancy another man of faith alone, saying thus, "I cannot have any care about denying myself, taking up my daily cross and following thee. I cannot do these things, as helping forward my salvation, because that would be no better, than presuming to help thee to be a more full and sufficient savior, than thou art in thyself, and without my works."

Can anything be more absurd, or irreligious than this? And yet all of it is manifestly contained in the elegant words of your friend. If we walk as Christ walked, and do the works of Christ, we shall on that account be rewarded with him. This is the same good doctrine, as when the apostle saith, "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Here you see our own sufferings are not only required, but made the ground of our reigning with our suffering savior. But what man, not intoxicated with the elegance of words, would call, or look upon this, as adding our maimed, worm-eaten sufferings, to make the sufferings of Christ, greater and more valuable than they are in themselves? As silly a thought, as to say, that our following of Christ, is helping him to be the Son of God.

Our blessed Lord keeps our eye continually upon good works, or things that we ourselves are to do. "Strive," says he, "to enter in at the strait gate; Ask, and ye shall receive; Seek, and ye shall find; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." He does not say, all is already gained, received, found, and opened, by what he has done and suffered. Now if this striving, asking, knocking, etc., were but maimed, worm-eaten things, surely it had been better to forbid, than to command them. Or if he had said to his disciples, that this striving and seeking were such maimed, worm-eaten things, surely he had said as much against them, and with the same intention of turning them from them, as when he bid them "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," and compared their goodness to whited sepulchers, full of stench, corruption, and dead men's bones.

You vehemently accuse the clergy, with acting contrary to the articles of the church, because preaching up justification along with works. But you quite forget, that your making Christian works no better than maimed, worm-eaten things, stands in full contrariety to many of the best prayers

in our liturgy. Thus, how many collects are like this, “Grant, O Lord, that by thy holy inspiration, we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same.” Is this prayer in vain; or if God hears us, can no better works come from it, than worm-eaten things? Agreeable to this prayer, St. Paul saith, “I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me”; the same may everyone say as well as he; but according to your new light, these all things, are but worm-eaten things.

Again, what difference is there between the old man and his deeds, which we are to put off, and the new man in Christ, that is to be put on, if he has no deeds, but what are maimed, worm-eaten things? But hear now what Christ saith of the necessity, the excellency, and efficacy of Christian good works, in the following words, “Whosoever heareth my sayings and DOETH them, is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock. And when the floods arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock.” Here you see the excellence, the power and efficacy of Christian good works, compared by our Lord to the strength and firmness of a house built upon a rock, which floods and tempests cannot overthrow. How could he more fully show you, that they are the beginning, the continual strength and support of the divine life, than by comparing them to a rock on which a house begins, and from which it hath all its power of standing against all floods and tempests? How could he better show you, that this rock of good works, all proceeding from his power within us, is that very rock, on which he builds a church, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail? On the other hand, call anything salvation but Christian works, and then you have Christ’s word for it, that you are “like the man that without a foundation built his house upon the sand, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell, and great was the fall of it.” Hear again what our Lord saith of Christian works, “A good man,” saith he, “out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good”; but how could this possibly be, if Christian works could be no better than maimed, worm-eaten things? And here by the by, let me desire you well to observe, whence it is, that the good man bringeth forth good things. Not as your orator tells you, because Christ’s goodness, or righteousness is outwardly imputed to him, and so made his. No, truth itself tells you the direct contrary, that it proceeds

from the good treasure of his heart, and therefore is a goodness born within him. Now, whence has he this good treasure of his heart, and what is it? It is that treasure of a divine life, or nature, which Adam had at first, and to which he died, and which by the free grace and mercy of God, was secured to him and all his posterity, as a seed of the woman, a preserved remains, or power of his first divine nature. Christ in Adam, was his first glory and perfection of life; Christ remaining in fallen Adam, as a preserved seed of his first divine nature, is the only ground and foundation, of his being able to be made again in Christ a new creature. This divine seed of the woman, is so much of Christ remaining in him; and thence it is, that Christ alone hath power to be the mediator and redeemer of man, because that which is to be raised from death into life in us, is nothing else but the incorruptible seed of himself in us. This, sir, is that good treasure of the heart, out of which the good man bringeth forth good things, and is in itself nothing more or less, than a seed of Adam's first divine life within us, preserved by God's never-ceasing love towards man, as his covenant of grace and redemption within us, which seed, as it comes through the mediation of Christ to a new power of life in us, causes all those different sensibilities, called humility, penitence, fear, prayer, faith, hope, and earnest seeking after God.

Will you now ever say a word more, about your fiction of an outwardly imputed goodness, when Christ has so expressly told you, that its birth is from within, from the good treasure of the heart, which is himself within us. And to show, that all must come from this divine root, preserved within us, as good fruit doth from a good tree, he saith, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt." "For (N.B.) the tree is known by its fruit." No, say your imputation-doctors, that need not be; let some good hand only hang good fruit outwardly upon it, and then you will rightly know the tree by its fruits. And it will be more glorious to the tree, to have a variety of good fruit outwardly imputed to it, or hung upon it, than to have good fruit from its own good root.

**Methodist.** Our present matter is not about the doctrine of imputation. If you will not stick closely to the point of faith alone, I must beg leave to depart.

**Churchman.** The doctrine of the outward imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the doctrine of faith alone, is but one and the very same individual point; for what is your faith alone, but a faith in that imputed righteousness?

The righteousness of Christ we must have, or he can be no savior to us. This is granted on both sides. But you, for the great glory of God, and the great good of man, are for having it only outwardly imputed to us; which is just such a glory to God, and would be such a good to a blind man, as if instead of opening his own eyes, only the good far-seeing eyes of an angel were outwardly imputed to him.

On the other hand, we believe, and contend for an inward birth of Christ's righteousness in us, because it was the birth of our first glorious father, and because it is to the eternal glory of God, and the eternal good of man, that his inward sinful nature be quite destroyed, by a birth of his original righteousness rising up in its stead; that so, all that was lost in Adam, may be found again in Christ. Can you possibly be told this in stronger terms, than when Christ saith, "Except a man be born again from above, of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"? St. John beareth witness to this truth, saying, "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin"; the same as saying, till a man is born of God, he continueth under the power of his sinful nature. But why does such a man not sin? The apostle tells you, because his seed, that is, the seed of God, remaineth in him. Had St. John the least thought of a righteousness of Christ outwardly imputed, when he places all our freedom from sin, and power over it, to a seed of God remaining in us? Or if he had ever heard of such a thought in other people, how could he more fully condemn it, than in saying, "Little children, let no man deceive you, he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

Here you see all is deceit, be they notions, opinions, faiths, hopes, imputed righteousness, or whatever else you can name, all is deceit, till a man by doing righteousness, is righteous even as he is righteous. Then it is, that Christ's righteousness is become his righteousness, and this alone is the righteousness of Christ that is his full and only justification in the sight of God; and that for this one reason, because it is Christ himself, that is, his divine and righteous nature born within him. Which the apostle thus

strongly asserts, “If ye know that he is righteous”; what follows from this knowledge? The apostle adds, then, “ye know, that everyone that doth righteousness (N.B.) is born of him,” that is, hath a birth of his divine and righteous nature, brought forth in him; and consequently, he that is not born of him, hath nothing of Christ’s righteousness — to be his salvation.

**Methodist.** I must say again, that you ramble strangely about with multiplicity of words. Our doctrine is, that works have no share in saving us, because, as our friend strongly expresses it, “Christ will either be a whole savior, or none at all.”

**Churchman.** Had your friend said, We can have no salvation but in Christ alone, he had said a good scripture-truth; but this strange unscriptural language of a Christ, who will either be a whole savior, or none at all, has the same bad meaning in it, as if he were to say, Christ will do nothing for us, unless we forbear to concur, or do anything along with him.

Now Christ saith, “Follow me. Take my yoke upon you.” But if following of Christ, if taking his yoke upon us, is necessary, then something that is to be done by ourselves, is as necessary to our salvation, as that which is done by Christ for us, and some works are as truly salvation-works, as any acts of faith are saving.

**Methodist.** Who ever denied, that we are to follow Christ, and take his yoke upon us?

**Churchman.** But will such works do us any good, or recommend us to God?

**Methodist.** I will give you no answer, but in the decisive words of our friend; “If,” says he, “you think that you have any good service of your own, to recommend you to God, you are certainly without any interest in Christ.”

**Churchman.** Own service is but like own will, and no more good can come from it, than from the natural old man with his deeds. But our savior has assured us, that there is a good man, who out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good. Now these are the good works that are pleaded for as absolutely necessary, and essential to a true and saving faith.

Say now that if we think such good works recommend us to God, we are certainly without any interest in Christ, and then it were better, that you should preach such doctrine to stocks and stones, than to Christian ears. For who can receive it, without giving up the most constant and repeated salvation-doctrines of scripture? What more frequent through all our Bible, than passages of the same nature with this: “To do good, and to communicate, forget not. (N.B.) For with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Now must a man who believes this, and thinks, that such things recommend him to God, be therefore certainly without any interest in Christ?

Hear Christ himself thus calling out for good works, in all those who expect to have any interest in him, “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Will such a caller upon the Lord, without good works, have his sufficient excuse, by saying, Lord, I thought thou wouldst be my whole savior, or none at all; and therefore, I durst not think of recommending myself to God, by doing his will, lest I should thereby lose all interest in thee.

**Methodist.** If you do not like my friend’s expression, take the same truth in other words of some most excellent divines. Thus says one, “Nothing is required in order to our participation of Christ and his benefits; there is no clogging qualification, no worth to be possessed, no duty to be performed, in order to our full participation of Christ and all his riches”; for all which he gives this solid reason, because, “It is not a matter of bargain, nor the subject of sale, but a deed of gift, the gift of righteousness; and gifts we all know, are not to be purchased, but received.”

**Churchman.** As wild and extravagant words as ever met together, as may thus be fully shown. Christ said to his disciples, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”; and that they might more fully understand the true meaning of that, he said also, “Strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth to life.” Now, what Christ here saith of the strait gate and narrow way, is strictly so much said of himself, and how he is the savior of the world; for the way and gate could not lead to life, if they meant anything else but Christ himself. Now Christ and his benefits, considered as the blessed strait gate, and narrow way to life, provided by God, is wholly and solely

the free grace and gift of God; here was no bargain, or sale of anything; nothing was done on man's part to obtain it, and that for this very good reason, because Christ was thus given by God before the foundation of the world, and again, before there was a man born of a woman.

See then the miserable delusion of your doctors, who, from this scripture-truth, that God has freely, and out of mere mercy to the fallen state of man, provided, and given a blessed narrow way, and strait gate to eternal life, thence conclude, that no pains, or trouble of striving to get into this narrow way, and through this strait gate, need be taken, (N.B.) because, without any pains of our own, he freely gave it to all mankind; though there could be no blessedness in the gift, but because blessed are they, who with all their powers, works, and endeavors of spirit, soul, and body, strive to walk in this narrow way, and pass through this strait gate. Is not all this as gross a delusion, and in as full contrariety to the nature of the thing, as to conclude, that because God has freely prepared and given us a cup of salvation, therefore there is no need that we should drink it; or think that our own drinking it, need not be added to make his free cup of salvation a benefit to us.

Now, gross as all this is, it is the strong foundation-absurdity, on which alone, your great divines build all their rhetorical flourishes of a salvation that is wholly the gift of God, without any works of man belonging to it. For they have not a word to say against salvation-works, but that works did not produce God's first free gift of a savior to us; and therefore, works can no more belong to this free gift of a savior, after he is given, than they did before he was given to us; being too systematically blind to see, that as a strait gate and narrow way were only given to us, that we might do that which we could not do before they were given, or as the cup of salvation is only given, that we may drink that, which we could not drink before it was given, so Christ was only and solely given for the sake of salvation-works, which we could not do, till in him and by him we became new creatures, created again unto good works.

How easily may you now see the vanity of these, and suchlike flourishing words; "The gift of the great eternal sovereign are intended, not to recognize our imaginary worth, but to aggrandize our views of his mercy and grace."

Just as full of scripture-truth, and good sense, as to say, that God's gifts of five and ten talents, are not given us with this intention, that our good use of them may appear, and that God may have occasion to say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant," but to show us how great are the talents and riches of God. Or again, that God's gift of a strait gate and narrow way to life, is not given us, that our well striving in it may appear, but only, that the greatness of God's goodness to us may be shown thereby.

See again, what the same writer says of the man who is in the truth of the gospel; "He labors neither first nor last to acquire any requisite to justification." When Christ himself has told him, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned": surely, this is enough telling him, that from first to last, nothing but works have either justification or condemnation in them. See again what another of your excellent divines saith; "Do not think by any preparatory works, to make yourselves worthy of Christ." What is this but saying, do not believe Christ when he is speaking of worthiness and unworthiness, when he says, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me. He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me." Do not believe St. Paul, when he exhorteth the Thessalonians, "to walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory." Again, have a care of these words of Christ, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; for you may easily be thereby led to think, that repentance-works have some kind of worthy preparation in them, to make you fit for the kingdom of God.

And now let me tell you, that two or three old heresies joined together, would not more abuse and contradict the gospel, than your three doctrines,

- (1.) of faith without works.
- (2.) Of a righteousness of Christ only outwardly imputed to us.
- (3.) Of absolute election and reprobation.

These are the scandal and reproach of the reformation, wherever they are found, and have nothing to support them, but that implicit adherence, and systematic obstinacy, which keeps Romish scholars steady to a Trent-creed.

Gospel-salvation, is on God's part, a covenant of free grace and mercy, and cannot possibly be anything else; on man's part, it is wholly a covenant of works, and cannot possibly be anything else. For the sake of works, man was that which he was by his creation: for the sake of works, he is all that is, by his redemption. Works are the life of the creature, and he can have no life better or worse than his works that which he does, that he is.

THIS DO AND THOU SHALT LIVE, is the Law of Works, which was from the beginning, is now, and always will be, the one Law of Life. And whether you consider the Adamical, patriarchal, legal, prophetic, or gospel-state of the church, DOING IS ALL. Nothing makes any change in this. Nay, it is not only the one law of all men on earth, but of all angels in heaven. And this as certainly, as our best and highest prayer is this, "thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

"This do, and thou shalt live," was the only Law of Life given to Adam in paradise. Adam could not have been capable of this law, but because the divine nature, or a birth of Christ within him, was his first created state. No law of doing God's will could have been given to, or received by any of his posterity, but because a seed of the first divine life, or Christ in man, was by God's free grace and mercy, preserved and continued in Adam, and secured to all his posterity, as a redeeming seed of the woman, which through all ages of the church, should continue bruising the head of the serpent, till this first seed of life became a God incarnate, with all power in heaven and on earth, to restore original righteousness, and to raise again in fallen man, that first birth of himself, which was in Adam before he fell; this was the one power that he gave them to become sons of God.

**Methodist.** Nothing more need be said against all your doctrine, but that it is direct Arminianism.

**Churchman.** Do you think then, that no more need be said in defense of your doctrine, than that it is true Calvinism? I have appealed to nothing for what I have asserted, but to the words of Christ and his apostles, and would no more consult a Calvin, an Arminius, or a Zinzendorf, how I was to understand them, than I would pray to God to be led by their spirit, instead of the Spirit of Christ. Nor is the one a wit better or worse than the other. Christ said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." And again,

“He that is of God, heareth God’s words.” If therefore you want hearing ears, or are not of God, to consult a grammarian how you are to understand the words of Christ, is as sure a way as you can take, to be content with spiritual deafness and blindness, and never to be taught of God, so long as you live.

If I have called the Law of Works, the one Law of Life, it is because Christ hath said the same, to the lawyer, who asked him, what he should do to inherit eternal life. Christ asked him, “What is written in the Law?” He answered, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, spirit and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.” To which Christ said, “Thou hast answered right, THIS DO AND THOU SHALT LIVE.” Here you have just the same thing said of works, as is said of faith; “The just shall live by faith.” Therefore you can have no fuller proof given you, that faith and works mean but one and the same thing, whenever life is sometimes ascribed to one, and sometimes to the other, and therefore faith and works can no more be two things, than eternal life can be two things. Again, hear how St. Paul asserteth the Law of Works, to be the one Law of Life. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things DONE in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Now if you have your senses so exercised to discern between good and evil, as to think, that the Law of Works asserted by Christ and his apostle to be the Law of Life, is fitter to be received, or not received, just as a Calvin, or an Arminius, are with it, or against it, where must you look for the people, who have eyes and see not, ears and hear not?

**Methodist.** I am quite tired with disputing in this manner, but yet will add one thing, which you will not be so able to puzzle, as you have the scripture, and which must be acknowledged to be decisive, at least with regard to our awakened preacher. He heard a voice (as he really thought from heaven) saying unto him, “Cease from thine own works.”

**Churchman.** Whencesoever the voice came, it spoke well, and might have been just as beneficial to him, as if it had said, “Cease from thine own wisdom, thine own faith, or thine own projects in religion”; for these are not only alike, but the very same thing. But if he took an advice to cease

from his own works, to be an advice to cease from works, that were not his own, it is much to be feared, he misunderstood his adviser.

If the voice had said, “Cease from thine own faith,” would he have taken this to be a sufficient divine authority, to call the Christian world to a religion of works without faith, and to have told them of the damnable doctrine of adding faith to works? Yet this would be full as well, as to preach against good works, as having no salvation -goodness in them, because he was bid to cease from his own works.

If you knew a minister, so full of experience from his own works, as to be quite uneasy at their insignificancy for many years, both with regard to himself, and his hearers, such a man might well be said to have his eye too much upon his own works, to mistake the nature of them, and to expect that from them, which can only be done by quite another power. To such a man as this, how wholesome would the advice be, “Cease from thine own works.” And why so? Because thou canst neither be thine own savior, nor the savior of them that hear thee, by anything that can be called thine own work. If therefore your fruitless preacher, instead of making a division between faith and works, in order to preach with divine success, had said to himself, and to his hearers, we have hitherto lived and labored in vain, because (as the prophet speaks) “we have committed two evils; we have forsaken the fountain of living water, and hewed out to ourselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water”; now when, or how may we be said to have “forsaken the fountain of living water”? It is when we expect or seek for good in anything, but that, which God is, and does by his own WORD, LIGHT, and SPIRIT within us. Look after anything but this, have any trust in, or dependence upon anything else but this divine operation, and then be as full of religious zeal, as you will, you have forsaken the fountain of living water. Collect, divide, distinguish, and new model all doctrines, notions, and opinions, as nicely as ever you can, you are only making a new-fashioned, cracked cistern that can hold no living water in it. What is the reason that sin and wickedness overflow, like a flood, the whole Christian world? It is because popish, and Protestant churches, have been age after age, wholly taken up in hewing out of the gospel-rock their several opinion-cisterns. The pope has his infallibility, and therefore his cisterns can have no failure, or crack in them. Protestants have a Luther, a Calvin, an Arminius, a Beza, a Socinus, a Zinzendorf, etc. And if their

cisterns are free from cracks, it is because they have nouns and pronouns, verbs and adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions, to cement and strengthen them. What infallibility does in popish, that criticism does in Protestant countries, and so (sad truth!) the one fountain of living water is everywhere forsaken, and quite out of date. What wonder then, if Christianity is but an empty name, a vain battle of opinions, instead of the life and power of God, born, dwelling, and manifested in our fallen nature. And here let me tell you, that all that you see, or hear, or read of the best notions, truths, or doctrines, whilst you place anything in them, as considered in themselves, are to you only broken cisterns, that afford no water of life. Eugenius said one day, how charmed he was at first with the doctrines of the spiritual life, and the glories of a new birth; but that now, after some years striving to be good by the knowledge of such things, he found himself to be but just where he was, before he knew anything of them. But did anyone ever tell Eugenius, that these doctrines were the fountain of living water, and that by drinking of them he would have eternal life? How good are these words of Christ, "Unless a man be born again from above, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."? But how useless are they to him, who is not thereby turned to seek and expect it all from God? How good is it to know that abyss of death, into which our father Adam has plunged us; but how unprofitable is this knowledge, unless it makes us all hunger and thirst after that essential operation of the divine nature in us, which lived in Adam before he fell? All scripture-doctrines whether of life or death, are nothing in themselves, nor have any power of godliness in them, but are only to show us, again and again, this great truth, that the departure from God into whatever it be, is the death of deaths; and the cleaving wholly and solely to God, is eternal life.

Think of anything but God, as the cause of goodness; or that his goodness can be your good, but by being born in you, as it was in Adam and holy angels, and then, though you have all the three Christian creeds, you have turned your Christian-God into an outward idol. For a God, not living and working within in you all that is, or can be called your good life, is but an outward idol of a God. And be assured of this, that as is the birth and working life within you, so are you, and can neither here, nor hereafter, be anything else, but that which is born within you. Righteousness imputed

from without, is but like such imputed wickedness. And you may as well frighten yourself with fearing, that the devil's wickedness should be outwardly imputed to you as to think of having any righteousness of Christ, but that which of him and by him, is born in you.

But to return to Eugenius; let it be supposed, that having found himself, not sanctified by his former notions, that he had recourse to others quite contrary to them; as faith without works; Christ's righteousness, not as a new birth in us, but only outwardly imputed to us: The number of saved and damned to all eternity, neither greater or less than God's absolute decrees had made it. Suppose him now so charmed with the sweet sound of these doctrines, to be under such a sense of their saving power, as to be forced to come forth as a preacher of eternal death and damnation to all, that would not seek to be saved by them. Could Eugenius possibly give fuller proof, that he had forgotten and forsaken the one fountain of living water, and was calling the Christian world to a rotten cistern instead of it?

**Methodist.** This kind of reasoning comes too late; God has already set his seal to the truth and goodness of our friend's preaching; thousands from far and near flock about him. Sighs, groans, swoonings, screamings of young and old, proclaim the two-edged sword, that is in his mouth. If you will not allow this to be proof enough, it is in vain to talk any further with you.

**Churchman.** All this is so far from being proof enough of the truth and goodness of his doctrine, that it is not proof at all. If it will do for him, it will do for Mohammed, and every successful deceiver.

Zinzendorf has plenty of this proof. Not only these kingdoms, but great part of Europe and America, bear witness to it. And yet of these Moravians, carrying conviction wherever they go, and gaining such awakened converts out of every part of the reformation, as are ready to sell lands and houses, and lay the price at their feet, of these, your friend says, he bears a "preaching testimony against their corrupt principles and practices, and might as well be called a murderer, as a Moravian." What becomes now of your success, as being God's seal set to the truth of your doctrine?

If Rome was allowed to send her preaching missionaries amongst us, to attack with full liberty of speech every Protestant form of religion, to travel from place to place, daily telling all the men and women they could get together, on hills, in churchyards, or elsewhere, that dreadful soul-destroying doctrines had been constantly preached to them ever since the reformation; that they had lost all interest in Christ every since they left the pope; that church and sects, however setting themselves above one another, were all equally in a certain state of damnation, and must be so, till they had true priests and true sacraments, nowhere to be had, but in the one ancient, infallible mother -church of Rome. If I should say, that damnation thus thundered out, to awaken people from their reformation-dream of safety, would soon have converts ten times more numerous, and much greater crowds of various followers, than you have yet to boast of, who could have any show of reason to deny it?

**Methodist.** Poor man! Can you not see the miserable and wretched state of Christendom, that heathen wickedness reigns everywhere, that nothing of Christianity is left amongst us, but an outward profession, destitute of every goodness but that of words and doctrines? How then ought you to rejoice, that the mercy of God has here and there raised up awakened preachers, to shake the hardened hearts of such apostate Christians? Who that has any spark of goodness in him, would endeavor to stop their course?

**Churchman.** Whoever would, I am sure I would not. I wish from my heart, that not only every parish, but every house had such a divine preacher in it. Nay, though some should preach Christ out of envy, and others through strife, yet I would rejoice, if such contentious preachers, did but preach the truth as it is in Jesus. But now supposing (as is but too true) that we have only the words and doctrines, but not the spirit of Christianity, they are in the state of those that never had it, and must be called to that same change of life, as they were, before they can be Christians in spirit and in truth.

The gospel thus began, “REPENT, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This kingdom was God’s free gift; his own love was the sole cause of it; but it was only given to repentance, because nothing else could possibly receive it. This “repent,” in order to the kingdom of God, was the only

preaching which Christ set on foot, and sent into every city and village. But what do your preachers now say? Do they call the present unChristian world, as Christ ordered the unChrisian world to be called, to the kingdom of God? Do they say to Christians become workers of iniquity, that have long resisted God's Holy Spirit, long abused all gospel-blessings, trampled all its pearls under their feet, and ever since their baptism, been wallowing in the mire of their sensual lusts; do they cry aloud to these miserable sinners, repent, and bring forth works meet for repentance, or it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment than for you? So far from this, that they teach and affirm with vehemence to all these sinners that no repentance, no qualifications, no requisite, no preparation, is necessary to put them in full possession of Christ and all his riches; and all for this absurd reason, because righteousness, that is, the means of righteousness is the free gift of God, and was not procured, or obtained by any works of men, therefore salvation can require no works of man. Who can be blinder than he, who sees not the difference between a savior prepared and given, and that salvation which is to be from him? Or who can more confound the most distinct things, than he who affirms that of salvation, which is only true of the savior alone. It is true of the savior to say, that he is freely given of God, to be the savior of all men; but it is not true to say of salvation, that it is freely given to all men.

The works of man, do no more towards making Christ to be the all-sufficient savior of the world, than towards making him to be God and man; but to have salvation from this free-given, perfect savior, all is requisite, all is to be worked, labored, and done, which he commands us to have, and do, and be. Therefore saith St. Paul of this perfect savior, "that he is the author of salvation (N.B.) to all that obey him." Here you see what an error it is, to speak of savior and salvation, as one and the same thing, equally free and independent on man's works. The perfect, all-sufficient savior, is the free gift of God, that all men might be saved: but salvation is no free gift, but stands in the utmost contrariety to it; it is to be purchased. A savior you cannot, you need not buy, he is already given you without price and without money; but all the salvation that you can have, must be bought of this savior, there is nothing gratis here. But what are you to give for it? All that you have from fallen Adam, all that the

world, the flesh, and the devil have treasured up in you; nay, houses, lands, fathers, mothers, brethren, etc., are all to be forsaken, they must all of them lose that place and power, that they had in you, or you have no salvation, though you never wanted a free-given savior. Think of coming to Christ without these requisites, these qualifications, these preparation-works, and then you will be just as welcome as the prodigal son would have been, had he come to his heavenly Father with his harlots in his arms, that he and they might have rings and the best robes put on them, without their giving or doing anything for them. What now is the parable of all that penitence of the prodigal, his renunciation of himself, his forsaking his way of life, his sense of his great unworthiness to have his first son-ship, his begging to be admitted to the labor and obedience of an hired servant, what is all this for, but to tell every son of fallen Adam, that he is this very prodigal, this keeper of harlots, living with, and like swine in a strange country, till he thinks of going to Christ with all those qualifications, preparations, and changes of life and manners, with which the prodigal son went to his father? May it not now be justly said with St. Paul, “Who hath bewitched you,” ye foolish preachers, to come forth with zeal and vehemence against qualifications, preparations, and requisites to fit us for the grace and favor of Christ? Did the heavenly Father send the ring and the best robe to his wicked son, whilst he was content with his harlots, his husks, and his swine? Was his eye of goodness turned towards him, till he saw him upon the road, a sorrowful seeker of his father, with penitential works, and full change of life?

Now if Christ in his parable hath set forth a sinner come to his right senses, how can you more show, that you have lost yours, than by cautioning sinners against qualifications, penitential requisites and preparations to be received by Christ? What is the whole gospel, but one continual doctrine of all that is to be done, denied, renounced, and suffered, in order to have any interest in God’s free gift of Christ, as a savior of the world? Hear what the savior, who came to save all men, saith to those who forgot, that repentance and good works were the qualifications, and requisites to have any share of salvation, “I know ye not, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.” Is this a savior, that calls for no salvation-works, but will himself, be our whole savior, or none at all?

Had Christ begun his gospel, with saying, I am come to save you all, without putting you to any pains or labor to be saved; I bring no terms with me, nor have any demands upon you; I look for no requisites, no preparatory, no repentance, and self-denying works; I and all my riches are freely yours; inward, inborn goodness cannot belong to you, but ye shall be the children of God, not because ye are led by the Spirit of God, but because my righteousness shall be outwardly imputed to you; had this been the gospel of Christ, your preachers of no requisites, no qualifications to have interest in Christ, might well be received as faithful apostles.

You all complain that Christianity is become a mere outward profession, without the inward spirit of the gospel. This just and true complaint, how vain is it in your mouths? For how can your Christianity in its best state, be anything else but bare outward profession, if Christians neither have nor can have any righteousness, but that which is outwardly imputed to them? Can you complain, or accuse them of not being inwardly of the spirit and life of the gospel, if gospel-goodness cannot be a birth within them, but only the goodness of another, that is to be accounted as theirs? Either therefore, give up your outwardly imputed righteousness, or complain no more that Christians are mere formalists; for both you and all your preachers, however awakened, can only be formalists yourselves, and can awaken nothing but formality in others, unless the righteous Spirit of Christ hath its fullness of a birth in the inmost spirit, both of preachers and hearers.

St. Paul saith, "Circumcision is not that which is outward, but of the heart." Is it not as necessary to say of righteousness, that it cannot be an outwardly imputed thing, but must be the righteousness of the heart? Had Paul told them, that the circumcision of the heart could only be outwardly imputed to the circumcisers of the flesh, he had preached the Law, as you do the gospel. Again, "He is not a Jew," saith he, "that is one outwardly." How unlike is this to your doctrine, which will not allow the Christian to be one inwardly, but solely by that which is outwardly imputed to him? Again, "the Spirit," saith he, "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." But how could this be, but because the spirit that is within us, is a birth of that Holy Spirit, whose witness agreeth with it? For suppose no birth of the Spirit within us, and then we have only that

“natural old man, that knoweth not the things of the Spirit, because they are foolishness to him.”

**Methodist.** Let me before we part, only ask you these two questions. Would you be glad to see Christianity continued in its present, poor, blind, and apostate state from the truth and life of the gospel? Or can you show me, how it can return to its first purity and perfection of godliness, unless preachers go forth in such a spirit of zeal, calling the world to Christ, as ours do?

**Churchman.** Take this for a full answer to every question of this kind.

There are but two spirits that govern every rational and intelligent life. The one is the Spirit of God, the other is that spirit that is fallen from God, and works contrary to him. Nothing is good in any creature, but because the good Spirit of God is the doer of it; nothing is evil, but that which is done by the spirit of the creature fallen off from God, and working in self-will. Here you have the infallible touchstone for the trial of all spirits, which never can deceive you. Every spirit that calls you to be delivered from anything, but the evil that is in your own spirit, or that turns you to anything, as a deliverance from it, but to the Spirit and power of God within you, is not of God, but is an agent under that spirit, that is fallen off from God.

The Christian religion has no ground, or foundation, but because the spirit of man has lost its first state of union with God, and is unable of itself to recover it. Hence it is, that Christ, God and man united, is the one only possible restorer of man's first union with God. Therefore the whole of our redemption consists in our being made one with Christ, essentially born of him, that having his whole redeeming nature come to life in us, we may be in him, as he is in God, one spirit, one life to all eternity. “God was in Christ Jesus,” saith Paul, “reconciling the world to himself.” But Christ was the reconciler between God and man, only and solely by that which he was, did, suffered, and obtained by and through his whole process. This is his mediation-work. Are you in this process, you are in the arms of your mediator; his mediation-work is like a new creation within you, and what God saw in his beloved Son, that he sees in you; and you must belong to God, as he does, because his nature, life, and Spirit, are in you. Therefore, is anyone reconciled to God, it is because Christ is born

in him; but the seed of Christ, which is in every son of Adam, never comes to the fullness of the birth of the new creature, but through the process of Christ. This is the one strait gate, and narrow way, out of which, there is nothing but sin, death, and hell, to every man. Without Christ, we are without God; but who is without Christ, is told you in the following words, “Unless a man deny himself, take up his cross,” etc., “and follow me, he cannot be my disciple.” This is the one term of union with Christ.

Suppose now a preacher comes to you from Rome, with his invented doctrines about saints, images, sacraments, and transubstantiation, etc., threatening certain damnation to all that do not receive them; suppose another coming from Geneva, as full of damnation for all those, who will not receive his invented doctrines of saving faith without works; of the righteousness of Christ, not inwardly born, but only outwardly imputed to you; of a salvation and damnation, equally the one sole work or gift of God, neither of which you can any more help, or hinder, than you can help or hinder the duration of the world, or add one cubit to your own stature; what gospel-eyes must he have, who did not see as many marks of the beast, the whore, and the false prophet in one of these preachers, as in the other? Or can you think, if St. Paul was again in the world, he would give a heartier God-speed to the one, than to the other? Had the apostle been a preacher of your imputation-doctrine, he would never have said, “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” as knowing that this was the very fellowship which Christ had with the sons of fallen Adam; his righteousness being only outwardly imputed to their unrighteousness. And how could he have cried out, as of an impossible thing, “What communion hath light with darkness, or what concord hath Christ with Belial?” For had your imputation-doctrine been his, he would have known, that if light was but outwardly imputed to darkness, then the darkness would be in communion with light; and if Christ’s righteousness was but outwardly imputed to the sons of Belial, then there would be concord between Christ and Belial. This is the blasphemous absurdity of your imputation-doctrine; for unless the whole fallen nature of man be born again from above, the righteousness of Christ outwardly imputed to it, is but like the same imputed to the unchanged sons of Belial.

“Without me,” saith Christ, “ye can do nothing,” that is, all is in vain without my process; for Christ is that, which his process is. St. Paul saith,

“No one can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” In these two short texts, you have the whole nature and substance of Christian redemption, namely, that it all consists in the process of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Ghost. Christ’s process in the flesh, is the only way of dying to all that fleshly evil, that Adam brought to life in us; Christ came in the Spirit, is the one only quickening of that divine life, to which Adam died. Trust to anything else, seek to anything else, but this process of Christ, and this power of the Holy Ghost, and then all your leaning upon the gospel, will be no better than leaning upon a broken reed. These two fundamental truths plainly show, why the first preaching of the gospel began, and must ever go on, saying nothing but what is implied in these words, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.” “Repent,” shows the necessity of making Christ’s process the one way to the kingdom of God; for repentance-works are in his process, and nowhere else. “For the kingdom of God is at hand,” shows that Christ’s coming in the Spirit, is the one thing sought for by his process; for the kingdom of God come amongst men, is nothing else but Christ come in the power of the Spirit; and where this power is not come in the likeness of a kingdom, wherever plenty there may be of preachers, the kingdom of God is yet afar off.

The Law ended with Christ come in the flesh; his process was the fulfilling of all its types, figures, and sacrifices.

The coming of Christ in the Spirit, is just the same one only fulfilling of all the gospel-dispensation. And as the Law would have been all in vain, without Christ’s coming in the flesh; so would the gospel also, without Christ’s coming in the Spirit. And the Jew with his Old Testament, rejecting Christ come in the flesh, is just as true to the Law, as the Christian is to the gospel, who does not own Christ as come in the Spirit, to be the one only fulfilling of all its doctrines. For as all the types, figures, and sacrifices of the Law, were in themselves but empty shadows, without Christ being the life of them, so all things written in the gospel, are but dead letters, till Christ coming in the Spirit quickens a new creature, to be the reader, the rememberer, and doer of them. Therefore, where the Holy Spirit is not sought after, trusted to, and rested in, as the end, the substance, and living power of the whole gospel, it is no marvel, that Christians, high or low, learned or unlearned, Churchman or dissenter, should have no more of gospel-virtues, than the Jews have of patriarchal

holiness; or that the same lusts, vices, and worldly craft, which prosper among apostate Jews, should break forth with as much strength in a fallen Christendom.

See here then your work, ye awakened preachers, if God has sent you forth, you can have no other errand but that, on which Christ sent his apostles. Do you preach anything but the process of Christ, as the way to the kingdom of God, or call men to any power of walking in it, but that of the Holy Spirit, you are strangers to, or deserters from the truth, as it is in Jesus, for neither Christ, nor his apostles, ever taught anything else but this. The old man must die, or the new man can never be made alive in Christ. But nothing brings death upon the old man, but that one self-denying process of Christ; nothing gives life to the new man, but the one Spirit of Christ born in it. This is the gospel-language from the beginning to the end.

With this language in your mouths, the whole gospel is with you, you may cry aloud and spare not; be as zealous here as you will or can; go out into the streets and lanes, the highways and hedges; compel hypocrites, sensualists, worldlings, and hardened sinners to tremble at their ways, to dread everything that is contrary to Christ's salvation-process; preach certain damnation to every sinful lust of the flesh, and no possible power to be delivered from it, but by Christ coming in the Spirit, to set up his own kingdom of God within you; and then, everyone who has the least spark of goodness living in his soul, will call you the sent of God, will wish prosperity to all your labors of love; and no one will be against you, but he that is not with Christ.

But if you come forth with the new-fangled ungospel doctrines of a Calvin, a Zinzendorf, etc., be your zeal as great as it will, it only unites you with the brick and mortar-builders of that anti-Christian Babel, which the prince of the power of the air has set up, in full opposition to that rock, on which Christ has built his one, catholic, universal salvation-church.

And now, my dear friend, wishing you, from the bottom of my heart, all that blessing which Christ bestowed upon his apostles when he said, "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," I bid you farewell.

**FINIS**

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