

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, June 21. 1692.

Quest. 1. **W**Hether Mr. Williams, in his Book called Gospel Truth stated, do's not set up works in Concurrence with Christs Righteousness in Justification?

Ans. The Question hath a double meaning: It may intend a Work as a requisite means or condition of our being justified for Christs Righteousness; or else that Works are meritorious of Justification, as the Righteousness for which we are justified. If the Querist intend the first, we answer,

1. Mr. W. doth with all sound Protestants affirm, That men must repent and believe, or they cannot be justified; and its by Gods Ordination, that Repentance and Faith must thus concur with Christs Righteousness. This he proves Ch. 8. 10, 12. in opposition to Dr. Crisp's unscriptural conceits, that God hath no more to lay to the Charge of an Elect person when most wicked, than to a Saint in Glory, and that the Elect are as much justified in the Womb as ever. If our Judgment be of weight with the Proposer of these Questions, he may find it in our Mercury Decemb. 26. 1691. wherein, as we assert, the imputation of Christs Righteousness, so we affirm, that by the Law of Faith, or the Gospel, Faith is a required means of our Justification, and this Law of Faith is opposed to the rigid moral Law, a sincere Obedience being accepted by the Gospel, whereas the legal dispensation required that which was perfect, &c. and that God accepted Faith instead of a perfect Righteousness or Obedience, and that Faith includes Obedience, and that good Works are of the Essence and Perfection of Faith, and that we are to obtain a share in Christs Righteousness by those means before prescribed, viz. Faith and Obedience.

2. If the Sence of the Question be, Whether Mr. W. asserts that the Works of men do concur with the Righteousness of Christ, as any way meritorious, or as the Righteousness for which we are justified: We answer, that Mr. W. doth in the plainest words deny it, and so very frequently affirms the contrary, as if he would shame the most Ignorant out of this Asperion. See his own words p. 102. Note 1. There is a Righteousness for which a Man is justified, This is only Christs Righteousness: This is the Foundation of the promise, and the merit of the Blessing promised: Nothing can add to it, or mingle with it, it is sufficient, and alone sufficient to satisfy Justice, atone for guilt, and merit acceptance and life. 2. There is to be considered, what the Condition of the Person is to whom this mercy (viz. Justification) is promised. He is one that hath the Grace of true Faith, and exerts it into Act. This Grace is also required and commanded as indispensibly necessary to forgiveness, Christs Righteousness shall not be imputed unless we believe, and nothing shall hinder our Title to this benefit, if we do believe in Christ, for the Promise is inviolable. And this Faith being a conformity to the Rule of the Promise, some call it a subordinate Righteousness, not meaning any Righteousness for which Sin is forgiven, for it is Christs Righteousness alone for which God justifies us; but its our answering that rule by which Christ applyeth his Righteousness for our remission, and a right to Life, and his promise is the ground of our Title, p. 104. If Christs Righteousness could be applied for pardon to the vilest Sinner before he believes, it would justify him, but God hath declared it shall not be applied to Unbelievers.

Quest. 2. Whether Mr. W. doth not oppose the received Opinion of Protestants of Justification by Christs imputed righteousness, when he affirms in his Preface, that the Righteousness of God, Phil. 3. 9. principally intends the Gospel holiness of a person justified by Christs Righteousness?

Ans. Mr. W. is as express for Justification by Christs imputed Righteousness as any solid Protestant. It's a strange question from any Man that reads but this paragraph, whence the Objection is raised. After Mr. W. had

declared the necessity of Faith to Justification, and of sincere holiness to Salvation, by the sanction of the Gospel; He adds, Still remembering that the merits of Christ are the Cause of this Gospel Ordination, his Righteousness imputed is the cause for which we are justified and saved, when we do answer the Gospel Rule: And I exclude not this Righteousness, when I affirm, that the Righteousness of God principally intends the Gospel holiness of a person justified by Christs Righteousness, both which by Faith in Christ all his Members shall be perfect in. Is not imputed Righteousness owned by him, yea, doth not he attest this to be the cause of Justification, when Faith is no more than a conformity to the Gospel rule of its application? He hath set this Truth in a full light, p. 39, 42, 43, 104. P. 39. he saith, That besides these effects (viz. Pardon and a right to Life) being made ours, the very Righteousness of Christ is imputed to true Believers, as what was always undertaken and designed for their Salvation, and is now effectual to their actual pardon and acceptance to life; yea, is pleadable by them as their security, and is as useful to their happiness, as if themselves had done and suffered what Christ did. But the Querist may think that Mr. W. contradicts this in what he saith of Phil. 3. 9. This jealousy is over, if we consider his words—for he saying its the Gospel Holiness of a person justified by Christs Righteousness, plainly supposeth the person justified; and that by Christs Righteousness, and not by this holiness, which predicates of the former as its subject. So that instead of saying we are justified by this Gospel holiness, and not by imputed Righteousness, he saith the contrary, and that this holiness refers not to Justification, but to the Person justified.

Quest. 3. Whether Mr. W. hath not in ravishing this Text from a proof of it, robbed the People of God of one of the fairest Jewels in the Crown of Christ, by denying the Righteousness of God by Faith there, to be the Righteousness of Christ imputed to the Elect?

Ans. We have seen already that Mr. W. doth not rob Believers of the imputed Righteousness of Christ, yea, tho he justly denies it is imputed to the Elect whilst they are Unbelievers, yet he oft affirms that God hath decreed, and Christ hath undertaken, that all the Elect shall believe and so obtain Justification by Christ. The severe Charge in the Question is reduced to this, that he hath ravished this Text from being a proof for imputed Righteousness to Justification. But consider Mr. W's words, and its plain he doth not so much as this, yea he argues it a *majori*. He saith, I do not exclude this Righteousness, when &c. yea he plainly includes it, for he saith it is the holiness of a person justified by Christs Righteousness, and this he intends not only but principally. Its true, he makes the Righteousness which is of God to be more than the Righteousness of Christ as imputed to Justification, but he doth not make it speak against that: And so he adds a considerable Jewel, for he represents Paul to speak thus; I disdain all my Pharisaical Righteousness, and desire not to have my Glorious State contributed to by one jot thereof. I would be always, especially at Judgment, and in the Heavens, found in Christ a living Member justified by his Righteousness, and perfected in Gospel holiness by his influence, which perfect holiness, as well as Justification, is a Righteousness which is of God by Faith; and I had obtained neither in my unconverted State, but both are merited by Christ, and contriv'd, bestowed, and effected by the Grace of God, and so makes up in all respects that Righteousness which is of him by Faith. If any will confine the Text to Justification only, as Zanchy and many former Authors do, Mr. W. leaves it in its full force, though he thinks St. Paul would be found in Christ, having perfect Sanctification as well as Justification: Nay, he adds to the force of the Text, for if all our Holiness be the Righteousness which is of God by Faith, and not by the Law, much more is our Justification so. We need not

inform the Learned, that many Protestants of great Name deny that this Text speaks at all of Christs imputed righteousness.

It is justice to Mr. W. and a Plea for our Refusal to Answer any future Questions concerning his Book, to give a Specimen of his Proof of his Interpretation of this Text, which we find *ch. 19.* D. Crisp had affirmed that the Faith, Love, and sincere Holiness of Believers are not only imperfect, but are really dung, filthiness, rottenness, mortal Poison, and what not? from *Phil. 3. 8.* Mr. W. allows, that compared with Christs Righteousness they should be esteemed as Dung: But justly denies that the Graces and sincere Holiness of Believers are included in those things which the Apostle counted Dung, but that they were his Jewish Privileges, Pharisaical Righteousness, and Secular Advantages, and these he opposed to that Righteousness which is of God by Faith. Among many Arguments which his Paraphrase on the Chapter contains, take these: The Apostle would not renounce as dung that Gospel-Holiness which in *v. 3.* he opposeth to his Jewish Attainments, which he counted Loss for Christ, *v. 7.* The righteousness which is of the Law, which he refuseth, *v. 9.* must be the same as that in *v. 6.* of which he saith, *Touching the Righteousness which is in the Law,* blameless; on this Mr. W. declares, it could not be sinless Obedience or Innocency, implying that then Christ would have been needless to him; neither could it be sincere Obedience which Paul intended, implying, that it was impossible Paul in his Judaism was a *Nathaniel*, or an upright Person, who by the Covenant of Grace, as exhibited to the Jews before the Coming of the Messias, was in a State of Life and Holiness, as all sincere Israelites must be; whereas Paul was in an Unconverted prophane State, or he had not Blasphemed and Persecuted Christ; he was not a godly Man, tho' he answered the Jewish false Notion of Righteousness; and this being his own Righteousness by the Law, in *v. 6.* it cannot in *v. 9.* include sincere Holiness as the Righteousness by the Law, which he would not have. He adds, that Gospel-Holiness is not a Righteousness of the Law, nor could the Law effect it, but it's from God by Faith: Our Hearts are purified by Faith, in Christ we are Created to good Works, &c. and therefore cannot be opposed to that Righteousness which is of God by Faith. Again, the Apostle desires and strives to have this Gospel-Holiness perfected, *v. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.* yea, his Desires after Holiness are expressed by Terms noting the utmost Importunity; as *If by any means, I follow after, reaching forth, I press towards:* Are not these things very unsuitable towards a Righteousness which he would not have? and agreeable to that Righteousness he would have? Nay, the Apostle bewails the present imperfection of Gospel-holiness, saying, *Not as tho' I had already attained, or were already perfect, &c.* if this were the Righteousness, he would not be found in Christ to have, his Complaints were needless, that he had so little of it; yea, were it only Justification by Christs imputed Righteousness which he desired to have, he that was already justified thereby, could not say, *Not as tho' I had already attained, either were already perfect, I count not my self to have apprehended, &c.* From many other such Considerations, Mr. W. might infer, without a Rape on the Text, that this Righteousness which is of God by Faith, includes the perfect Conformity to Christ in Holiness of a Person justified by Christs Righteousness; without this a Saint is not perfect, this is designed for all the Persevering Members of Christ; and as Christianity inspired the Apostle with these Desires, so it was apt and effectual to his obtaining thereof.

Quest. 4. Whether Mr. W. doth not make the Apostle contradict himself, in saying he desired to be found in his Gospel-Holiness, but not in his own Righteousness?

Ans. The Apostle by Mr. W's Sentiments agrees with himself, tho' the Question agrees not with the Text: The Apostle doth say, *I desire to be found in Christ,* which is not the same with being found in Holiness: The Text saith, *Not having my own Righteousness which is of the Law:* This which is of the Law, opposeth it to that Holiness which is of God through Faith. The Righteousness which is of the Law was his own, as opposed to the Grace of God, the Gospel-Holiness was to be his own, by the Grace of God; so that the Apostle is very consistent with himself, while he is put to say, *I desire to be found in Christ my Head, not having that Pharisaical Righteousness of mine, which is so opposite to Christ,*

but having that perfect Holiness which is of God the Author of it, and which will render all the Justified compleatly happy. Can the Querist doubt, that Paul had an inherent Righteousness whereby he was holy, as well as an imputed one whereby he was justified? or will he doubt but the Apostle would be found in Christ, having this inherent righteousness? tho' he would not have his Jewish Righteousness to hinder his being found in Christ, yea, to render him void of Gospel-Holiness also. Sure it's no Contradiction to say, *I would not be a Carnal Jew, but I would be a justified and perfectly sanctified Christian.*

Quest. 5. Whether Mr. W. by what he says of *Phil. 3. 9.* does not fall in with the Quakers, who hold a Christian's Light within to be his Christ? and doth not he affront the Righteousness of God?

Ans. Had Mr. W. said the Holiness of Saints is an increased Holiness, he had talked as a Familist or Quaker; but it's beyond our Skill to discern, that because he affirms that the Gospel-holiness of a justified Person is a righteousness which is of God, as the contriver, purchaser, giver and worker, that therefore that Holiness is God himself, or the Person of Christ. The Querist will be guilty of this Charge, if he thinks the essential righteousness of God is that which is imparted to Men in Justification; and it's little below the same Charge, to say, that the Mediatorial Righteousness is subjectively in Believers, because it is Imputed so as to produce saving Advantages. It's true, they are Justified for Christs Righteousness, but they are denominated just from their own Holiness, which is merited and given by Christ. They are never esteemed by God to do and suffer what Christ did, tho' God appointed Christ to do and suffer for them, that they might be pardoned and saved thereby. As Mr. W. is far from Quakerism, so his affront to God's Righteousness remains invisible, tho' he saith, that perfected Gospel-holiness is included in that Righteousness which is of God. Is not Gospel-holiness oft called Righteousness? is it not that which is of God? who merited it, but Christ? who bestows it, besides God? who works it, but the Holy Spirit? and the general parts of it are called the *Fruit of the Spirit*, with respect to which, and the Conformity of it to the Nature of God, it's called his Holiness, *Heb. 12. 10.* the *Divine Nature*, the *Life of Christ*; yea, do not we read that every one that doth righteousness is *Born of God*? and the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God? On several such Considerations Mr. W. honours the Righteousness of God, when he ascribes Gospel-holiness thereto, and allows room in the Apostles desires for it, as well as for impunity, and sure it's pleasing to God, when by Faith in Christ we are earnest for that time, when *Eph. 5.* *We shall be presented by him a glorious Church, without any spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish;* which refers to our sanctification.

Quest. 6. Whether Mr. W. dealt fairly or worthily with several eminent Divines, in causing their Hands given him for justifying of his Book, to be prefixt before his Preface, when they never saw the said Preface, and will not say with Mr. W. that the Righteousness of God by Faith, which the Apostle desired to be found in, was his Gospel-Holiness?

Ans. Mr. W. doth not say the Apostle desired to be found in his Gospel-holiness, but to be found in Christ, having Gospel-Holiness; and as to Justification, he would be found in Christ justified for his imputed Righteousness, and so comprehends the full Effects of Union with Christ, and the perfected benefits of his Mediation. Nor doth it appear he dealt unfairly with the Divines, in setting their Names before his Preface, for their Testimony is to the Truth and Errors stated as such in the Treatise; and had it not been so, he might be induced thereto by the Book he Confuteth, where he saw the Names of Divines set in the Front of Dr. Crisp's Works who only witnessed to the Honesty of his Son in Publishing a new Sermons in the end of that Book. To add no more, most of these Eminent Divines, (yea, all whole Thoughts have been enquired) do agree to the Preface of Mr. W's Book, now that they have read it; and how little doth this one objected Clause affect the Preface or Book, tho' it seems to be the design of the Querist to blot the repute and use of the whole, by Questions concerning a Clause that comes in but occasionally and remotely.

Quest. 7. In brief, I desire your Impartial Thoughts of the fore-mentioned Book of Mr. Williams?

Ans. We have receiv'd several Questions (some of which are here Answered) about this Book, which handles the best and worst of Arguments that can be, therefore we shall fairly represent the Book and our Opinion to the Question. Whosoever has the curiosity to be informed of the ground of Errors, Blasphemies, the Doctrine of Devils, the excluding Faith, Repentance, Prayers, as necessary to the turning the Grace of God into a Liberty of sinning, by delivering Doctrines and Scriptures in such an Unsound form of words, that it would almost deceive the Elect, and thereby advances sinning beyond any Doctrine of Mr. Hobbs, &c. let them read the Arguments of one of the Antagonists: The Book is worth perusal of all Persons of the Antidote which is annexed to each Argument, and we must deliver our Opinions that Mr. Williams has without Passion, plainness, learnedly and solidly, established the Truth, with incomparable brevity and Criticism, upon many Texts.

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