

A  
SELECTION  
OF  
THE MOST CELEBRATED  
SERMONS  
OF  
M. LUTHER AND J. CALVIN,  
EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, AND PRINCIPAL LEADERS IN  
THE  
PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

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(NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES.)

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TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,  
A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY  
OF  
*THEIR LIVES.*

NEW-YORK:  
COMPILED AND PUBLISHED BY R. BENTLEY.  
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1829.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

IN offering this selection of Sermons to the publick, the publisher has not been governed by Sectarian principles, but has selected Sermons upon various subjects, that the reader may understand the general doctrine held forth by those eminent divines. When we consider the mental darkness which enveloped the world in the days of Luther and Calvin, under Popish superstition and idolatry, and that theirs were some of the first attempts to emancipate the human intellect from more than “Egyptian darkness,” the reader will undoubtedly censure lightly any defects that may appear in their discourses; considering their great object to have been, the removal of that servile yoke of papistry under which *nations* were groaning, and of bringing mankind into the liberty of the gospel.

Calvin’s Sermons were translated and published in England, about the year 1580; since which date we have no account of an edition having been published. Luther’s Sermons, after having been translated, were published in the year 1581, and re-published in 1649. In consequence of the imperfection of the English Language when these Sermons were formerly published, it was found necessary to revise them, and correct the language; but in so doing, particular care has been taken to preserve precisely the original meaning.

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*Southern District of New-York, ss.*

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the seventeenth day of July, A. D. 1829, in the fifty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, R. Bentley, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:— “A selection of the most celebrated Sermons of M. Luther and J. Calvin, eminent ministers of the gospel, and principal leaders in the Protestant Reformation. (Never before published in the United States.) To which is prefixed, a biographical history of their lives.”

In conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, entitled, “an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned.” And also to an act, entitled, “an act, supplementary to an act entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

FRED. J. BETTS,

*Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.  
Ludwig & Tolefree, Printers, No. 71, Vesey-street.*

# LUTHER'S SERMONS.

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## SERMON I.

GAL. IV. *from the first to the seventh verse, inclusive.*

1. Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;
2. But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.
3. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:
4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
5. To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
7. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

THIS text touches the very pith of Paul's chief doctrine; the cause why it is well understood but by few, is, not that it is so obscure and hard, but because there is so little knowledge of faith left in the world, with which it cannot be that one rightly understands Paul, who every where treats of faith with such force of spirit. I must therefore speak in such a manner, that this text will appear plain; and that I may more conveniently illustrate it, I will speak a few words by way of preface.

First, therefore, we must understand the treatise in which good works are set forth, far different from that which treats of justification; as there is a great difference between the substance and the working; between a man and his work. Justification is of man, and not of works; for man is either justified and saved, or judged and condemned, and not works. Neither is it a controversy among the godly, that man is not justified by work, but righteousness must come from some other source than from his own works: for Moses, writing of Abel, says, "The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering." First he had respect to Abel himself, then to his offering; because Abel was first counted righteous and acceptable to God, and then for his sake his offering was accepted also, and not he because of his offering. Again, God had no respect to Cain, and therefore neither to his offering: therefore thou seest that regard is had first to the worker, then to the work.

From this it is plainly gathered, that no work can be acceptable to God, unless he which worketh it was first accepted by him: and again, that no work is disallowed of him, unless the author thereof be disallowed before. I think

these remarks will be sufficient concerning this matter at present, of which it is easy to understand that there are two sorts of works; those before justification, and those after it; and that these last are good works indeed, but the former only appear to be good. Hereof cometh such disagreement between God and those counterfeit holy ones; for this cause *nature* and *reason* rise and rage against the Holy Ghost; this is that of which almost the whole scripture treats. The Lord in his word defines all works that go before justification to be evil, and of no importance, and requires that man before all things be justified. Again, he pronounces all men which are unregenerate, and have that nature which they received of their parents unchanged, to be unrighteous and wicked, according to that saying, Ps. 116. "All men are liars," that is, unable to perform their duty, and to do those things which they ought to do; and Gen. 6. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually;" whereby he is able to do nothing that is good, for the fountain of his actions, which is his heart, is corrupted. If he do works which outwardly seem good, they are no better than the offering of Cain.

Here again comes forth *reason*, our reverend mistress, seeming to be marvellously wise; but who indeed is unwise and blind, gainsaying her God, and reproving him of lying; being furnished with her follies and feeble armour, to wit, the light of nature, free will, the strength of nature, also with the books of the heathen and the doctrines of men; contending that the works of a man not justified, are good works, and not like those of Cain; yea, and so good, that he that worketh them is justified by them; that God will have respect first to the works, then to the worker. Such doctrine now bears the sway every where in schools, colleges, and monasteries, wherein no other saints than *Cain* was, have rule and authority. Now from this error comes another; they which attribute so much to works, and do not accordingly esteem the worker, and sound justification, go so far, that they ascribe all merit and righteousness to works done before justification; making no account of faith, alleging that which James saith, that without works faith is dead. This sentence of the apostle they do not rightly understand; making but little account of faith, they always stick to works, whereby they think to merit exceedingly, and are persuaded that for their work's sake they shall obtain the favour of God: by this means they continually disagree with God, showing themselves to be the posterity of *Cain*. God hath respect unto man, these to the works of man; God alloweth the work for the sake of him that worketh, these require that for the work's sake the worker may be crowned.

But here, perhaps, thou wilt say, what is needful to be done? by what means shall I become righteous and acceptable to God? how shall I attain to this perfect justification? The gospel answers, teaching that it is necessary that thou hear Christ, and repose thyself wholly on him, denying thyself and distrusting thine own strength; by this means thou shalt be changed from

*Cain to Abel*, and being thyself acceptable, shalt offer acceptable gifts to the Lord. It is faith that justifieth thee: thou being endued therewith, the Lord remitteth all thy sins by the mediation of Christ his Son; in whom this faith believeth and trusteth. Moreover, he giveth unto such a faith his spirit, which changes the man and makes him anew, giving him another reason and another will. Such a one worketh nothing but good works. Wherefore nothing is required unto justification, but to hear Jesus Christ our Saviour, and to believe in him. Howbeit these are not the works of nature, but of grace.

He, therefore, that endeavours to attain these things by works, shutteth the way to the gospel, to faith, grace, Christ, God, and all things that help unto salvation. Again, nothing is necessary in order to accomplish good works but justification; and he that hath attained it performs good works, and not any other. Hereof it sufficiently appears that the beginning, the things following, and the order of man's salvation are after this sort; first of all it is required that thou hear the word of God, next that thou believe, then that thou work, and so at last become saved and happy. He that changes this order, without doubt is not of God. Paul also describes this, saying, Rom. x. "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

Christ teaches us to pray the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into his harvest; that is, sincere preachers. When we hear these preach the true word of God, we may believe; which faith justifies a man, and makes him godly indeed, so that he now calls upon God in the spirit of holiness, and works nothing but that which is good, and thus becomes a man saved. Thus he that believeth shall be saved; but he that worketh without faith is condemned; as Christ saith, he that doth not believe shall be condemned, from which no works shall deliver him. Some say, I will now endeavour to become honest; it is meet surely that we study to lead an honest life, and to do good works. But if one ask them how we may apply ourselves unto honesty, and by what means we may attain it, they answer, that we must fast, pray, frequent temples, avoid sins, &c. Whereby one becomes a Chatterhouse Monk, another chooses some other order of Monks, and another is consecrated a priest: some torment their flesh by wearing hair cloth, others scourge their bodies with whips, others afflict themselves in a different manner; but these are of *Cain's* progeny, and their works are no better than his: for they continue the same that they were before, ungodly, and without justification; there is a change made of outward works only, of apparel, of place, &c.

They scarce think of faith, they presume only on such works as seem good to themselves, thinking by them to get to heaven. But Christ said, enter in at the straight gate, for I say unto you, many seek to enter in and cannot.

Why is this? because they know not what this narrow gate is: for it is faith, which altogether annihilates or makes a man appear as nothing in his own eyes, and requires him not to trust in his own works, but to depend upon the grace of God, and be prepared to leave and suffer all things. Those holy ones of Cain's progeny, think their good works are the narrow gate; and are not, therefore, extenuated or made less, whereby they might enter.

When we begin to preach of faith, to those that believe altogether in works, they laugh and hiss at us, and say, dost thou count us as Turks and Heathens, whom it behoves now first to learn faith? is there such a company of priests, monks, and nuns, and is not faith known? who knoweth not what he ought to believe? even sinners know that. Being after this sort animated and stirred up, they think themselves abundantly endued with faith, and that the rest is now to be finished and made perfect by works. They make so small and slender account of faith, because they are ignorant what faith is, and that it alone doth justify. They call it faith, believing those things which they have heard of Christ: this kind of faith the devils also have, and yet they are not justified. But this ought rather to be called an opinion of men. To believe those things to be true which are preached of Christ, is not sufficient to constitute thee a Christian, but thou must not doubt that thou art of the number of them unto whom all the benefits of Christ are given and exhibited; which he that believes must plainly confess, that he is holy, godly, righteous, the son of God, and certain of salvation; and that by no merit of his own, but by the mere mercy of God poured forth upon him for Christ's sake: which he believes to be so rich and plentiful, as indeed it is, that although he be as it were drowned in sin, he is notwithstanding made holy, and become the son of God.

Wherefore take heed that thou nothing doubt, that thou art the son of God, and therefore made righteous by his grace; let all fear and care be done away. However thou must fear and tremble that thou mayest persevere in this way unto the end; but thou must not do this as though it consisted in thy own strength, for righteousness and salvation are of grace, whereunto only thou must trust. But when thou knowest that it is of grace alone, and that thy faith also is the gift of God, thou shalt have cause to fear, lest some temptation violently move thee from this faith.

Every one by faith is certain of this salvation: but we ought to have care and fear that we stand and persevere, trusting in the Lord, and not in our own strength. When those of the race of Cain hear faith treated of in this manner, they marvel at our madness as it seems to them. God turn us from this way, say they; that we should affirm ourselves holy and godly, far be this arrogance and rashness from us: we are miserable sinners, we should be mad, if we should arrogate holiness to ourselves. Thus they mock at true faith, and count such doctrine as this execrable error; and thus try to extinguish the

gospel. These are they that deny the faith of Christ, and persecute it throughout the whole world; of whom Paul speaks, 1 Tim. iv. "In the latter times many shall depart from the faith," &c. for we see by these means that true faith lies every where oppressed; it is not preached, but commonly disallowed and condemned.

The pope, bishops, colleges, monasteries, and universities, have more than five hundred years persecuted it with one mind and consent most obstinately; which has been the means of driving many to hell. If any object against the admiration, or rather the mad senselessness of these men, if we count ourselves even holy, trusting the goodness of God to justify us, or as David prayed, "Preserve thou me, O Lord, for I am holy," Ps. 86. or as Paul saith, "The spirit of God beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;" they answer, that the *prophet* and *apostle* would not teach us in these words, or give us an example which we should follow, but that they being particularly and specially enlightened, received such revelation of themselves. In this way they misrepresent the scripture, which affirms that they are holy, saying, that such doctrine is not written for us, but that it is rather peculiar miracles, which do not belong to all. This forged imagination we account of, as having come from their sickly brain. Again, they believe that they shall be made righteous and holy by their own works, and that because of them God will give them salvation and eternal blessedness.

In the opinion of these men it is a Christian duty to think that we shall be righteous and saved because of our works; but to believe that these things are given by the grace of God, they condemn as heretical; attributing that to their own works, which they do not attribute to the grace of God. They that are endued with true faith, and rest upon the grace of the Lord, rejoice with holy joy, and apply themselves with pleasure to good works, not such as those of Cain's progeny do, as feigned prayers, fasting, base and filthy apparel, and such like trifles, but to true and good works whereby their neighbours are profited.

Perhaps some godly man may think, if the matter be so, and our works do not save us, to what end are so many precepts given us, and why doth God require that they be obeyed? The present text of the apostle will give a solution of this question, and upon this occasion we will give an exposition thereof. The Galatians being taught of Paul the faith of Christ, but afterwards seduced by false apostles, thought that our salvation must be finished and made perfect by the works of the law; and that faith alone doth not suffice. These Paul calls back again from works unto faith with great diligence; plainly proving that the works of the law which go before faith, make us only servants, and are of no importance toward godliness and salvation; but that faith makes us the sons of God, and from thence good works without constraint forthwith plentifully flow.

But here we must observe the words of the apostle; he calls him a servant that is occupied in works without faith, of which we have already treated at large: but he calls him a son which is righteous by faith alone. The reason is this, although the servant apply himself to good works, yet he does it not with the same mind as doth the son; that is, with a mind free, willing, and certain that the inheritance and all the good things of the Father are his; but does it as he that is hired in another man's house, who hopes not that the inheritance shall come to him. The works indeed of the son and the servant are alike; and almost the same in outward appearance; but their minds differ exceedingly: as Christ saith, "The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the son abideth ever." John viii.

Those of Cain's progeny want the faith of sons, which they confess themselves; for they think it most absurd, and wicked arrogancy, to affirm themselves to be the sons of God, and holy; therefore as they believe, even so are they counted before God; they neither become holy or the sons of God, nevertheless they are exercised with the works of the law, wherefore they are and remain servants forever. They receive no reward except temporal things; such as quietness of life, abundance of goods, dignity, honour, &c. which we see to be common among the followers of *popish* religion. But this is their reward, for they are servants, and not sons; wherefore in death they shall be separated from all good things, neither shall any portion of the eternal inheritance be theirs who in this life would believe nothing thereof. We perceive, therefore, that servants and sons are not unlike in works, but in mind and faith they have no resemblance.

The apostle endeavours here to prove that the law with all the works thereof makes us but mere servants, if we have not faith in Christ; for this alone makes us sons of God. It is the word of grace followed by the Holy Ghost, as it is showed in many places, especially in *Acts* x. where we read of the Holy Ghost falling on Cornelius and his family, while hearing the preaching of Peter. Paul teaches, *Rom.* iii. 7. that no man is justified before God by the works of the law; for sin only cometh by the law. He that trusts in works, condemns faith as the most pernicious arrogancy and error of all others. Here thou seest plainly that such a man is not righteous, being destitute of that faith and belief which is necessary to make him acceptable before God and his Son; yea, he is an enemy to this faith, and therefore to righteousness also. Thus it is easy to understand that which Paul saith, that no man is justified before God by the works of the law.

The *worker* must be justified before God, before he can work any good thing. Men judge the worker by the works; God judges the works by the worker. The first precept requires us to acknowledge and worship one God, that is, to trust in him alone, which is the true faith whereby we become the sons of God. Thou canst not be delivered from the evil of infidelity by thy



own power, nor by the power of the law; wherefore all thy works which thou doth to satisfy the law, can be nothing but works of the law; of far less importance than to be able to justify thee before God; who counteth them righteous only, which truly believe in him; for they that acknowledge him the true God, are his sons, and do truly fulfil the law. If thou shouldst even kill thyself by working, thy heart cannot obtain this faith thereby, for thy works are even a hindrance to it, and cause thee to persecute it.

He that studieth to fulfil the law without faith, is afflicted for the devil's sake; and continues a persecutor both of faith and the law, until he come to himself, and cease to trust in his own works; he then gives glory to God who justifies the ungodly, and acknowledges himself to be nothing, and sighs for the grace of God, of which he knows that he has need. Faith and grace now fill his empty mind, and satisfy his hunger; then follow works which are truly good; neither are they works of the law, but of the spirit, of faith and grace: they are called in the scripture, the works of God which he worketh in us.

Whatsoever we do of our own power and strength, that is not wrought in us by his grace, without doubt is a work of the law, and avails nothing toward justification; but is displeasing to God, because of the infidelity wherein it is done. He that trusts in works does nothing freely and with a willing mind; he would do no good work at all if he were not compelled by the fear of hell, or allured by the hope of present good, Whereby it is plainly seen that they strive only for gain, or are moved with fear, showing that they rather hate the law from their hearts, and had rather there were no law at all: an evil heart can do nothing that is good. This evil propensity of the heart, and unwillingness to do good, the law betrays, when it teaches that God does not esteem the works of the hand, but those of the heart.

Thus sin is known by the law, as Paul teaches; for we learn thereby that our affections are not placed on that which is good; this ought to teach us not to trust in ourselves, but to long after the grace of God, whereby the evil of the heart may be taken away, and we become ready to do good works, and love the law voluntarily; not for fear of any punishment, but for the love of righteousness. By this means is one made of a servant, a son; of a slave, an heir.