

A DIALOGUE OR COMMUNICATION  
TO BE HAD AT TABLE  
BETWEEN TWO CHILDREN

Gathered out of the Holy Scriptures  
for his Two Young Sons, Johan and Paul.



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# **A Dialogue or Communication to be Had at a Table Between Two Children,**

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The 130th Psalm of David, called De Profundis.

From faith of soul, and hearts rejoyce, I call to thee, Lord, hear my  
voice. Thine ears, good Lord, inclined be, Unto the poor complaint of  
me. If thou shouldest weigh our wickedness, Who can abide thy  
righteousness? Because I find all health in thee, I doubt no fierce  
extremity. In my Lord God is all my trust, To walk as his word hath  
discussed. The Church for her continuance, Trusts in the Lord's good  
governance. For in the Lord great mercy is, And full redemption after  
this. He will redeem all Israel, From devil and death, from sin and  
hell.

Johan Bale.

Anno M.D.XLIII.

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**Paulus Junior Filius:**

For so much as God hath constituted me a creature reasonable, and endued me with an understanding, I am naturally desirous to know to what end I am created.

**Johannes Senior Filius:**

Then will it be necessary for you to have faith. For he that shall have to do with God or with godliness must first of all believe after the sacred scriptures.

**Paulus:**

Then tell me what faith is, by those same sacred scriptures.

**Johannes:**

After the saying of St. Paul, it is a certain assurance of godly things, which we trust unto, and a grounded evidence in the spirit of heavenly causes that never are seen with the eye.

**Paulus:**

What suppose you most fit to direct me in this faith?

**Johannes:**

The eternal Testament or Gospel of Jesus Christ, for that is the power of the Lord unto salvation to all them that believe.

**Paulus:**

What shall I esteem the traditions of men besides that Gospel?

**Johannes:**

The leaven of Pharisees, chaff, cockle, tares, stubble, swill, swine's draff, idleness, idolatry, whoredom of the spirit, filthiness, false worshipping, the call of strangers, the fearful curse of God, and abomination standing in the holy place.

**Paulus:**

When was this Gospel first taught?

**Johannes:**

Soon after the world's beginning, when Adam had once offended, lest he should have fallen into utter despair and so have been lost forever.

**Paulus:**

And hath the Gospel continued ever since to the comfort of man?

**Johannes:**

Yea, truly hath it, and often since that time been confirmed by more earnest promises from age to age, till that meek lamb came, which took away the sins of the world through the shedding of his most innocent blood. For the scripture saith, that his mercy was plenteous, from kindred to kindred to them that feared the Lord.

**Paulus:**

Hath all men been called to grace by that Gospel of salvation?

**Johannes:**

Yea, doubtless have they, yet have they not all thankfully received it. So well was it taught of our first father Adam to Cain, as to Abel. So well to the fleshly children of men as to the ghostly children of God. So well did Noah preach it unto Ham, as unto Shem and Japheth. So well did Abraham show it to Ishmael, as to Isaac. So well Moses to Pharaoh, as to the people of Israel. David to Amnon and Absalom, as to Solomon and Nathan. Elijah to Ahab and Jezebel, as to the most faithful believers. No less did Christ open thereof to Judas, than to Peter, John, and James. And so forth the Apostles with other true preachers to this present day, so that none is without excuse.

**Paulus:**

How cometh it then to pass that so many are lost, and still yet do daily perish through their lewd conversation and licentious living?

**Johannes:**

No fault can be ascribed to the Gospel, but to their unthankful receiving of the fruits thereof, so freely offered them, as I said afore. The disdainful spurning aside or throwing at their tails of that necessary health in Christ is the cause of their decay, and not the set ordinance of God, which willeth all men to be saved.

**Paulus:**

If Adam thus received this gospel, and so taught it unto his posterity, it hath continued much longer than I supposed.

**Johannes:**

The gospel is as the Lord is, everlasting. For as witnesseth the Apostle Saint John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was that Word."

**Paulus:**

Then was not Matthew the first writer thereof with the other Evangelists, as the popish church hath taught us?

**Johannes:**

No, God wrote it first in the natural heart of man, and so it remained there still till Moses and the prophets did leave it in outward writing to the people's further erudition. For as Saint Paul doth witness, all they did eat from the first beginning of one spiritual meat and drank of one spiritual drink, that hard rock following them, which was Jesus Christ. And this is a clear token that one gospel hath reigned in the people of God since the world's beginning.

**Paulus:**

Young infants departing hence in their childhood should seem to be no partners thereof.

**Johannes:**

How so, I pray you? What is your reason?

**Paulus:**

For they never have it taught them. And if they had, yet should it little profit them having so small understanding.

**Johannes:**

God never distributeth his gifts to the measure of age and discretion, for then had Annas been more faithful than Peter, and Caiaphas more godly than John. For they were both elder and wiser. As faith is an unknown gift of God, so is it of him secretly ministered. We know not from whence it cometh when men are born of the spirit. John the Baptist knew Christ in his mother's womb, and yet had he neither age nor understanding that was seen. God is their secret instructor and preacher, which taught it first without voice and wrote it without

pen in the hidden heart of man. As the spirit of prophecy did happen unto men by the free gift of God without age, so doth faith to the infants. As he gave that benefit of his grace to the babe Jeremiah, so doth he secretly minister unto them that necessary health of salvation. He alone made the child Daniel rightly to judge the ungodly. The Apostles spoke not of themselves, but out of the abundance of his eternal spirit also. The aged are left to the outward gospel, the children are reserved to God's secret working. And therefore Christ said unto his Apostles: "Suffer the children to come unto me, for to them belongeth the kingdom of heaven." Their angels are evermore beholding the face of my Father which is in heaven. Such secret doubts ought not to be moved. For nothing pertains unto us which is above our compass.

**Paulus:**

For the nature, time, and passage of this gospel, I am well satisfied. But now tell me what shall hereafter become of them which have not of all this long season in the true fear of God regarded the sweet promises thereof?

**Johannes:**

As they have in their unfaithfulness here been left to themselves to work all ungodliness, and so departed hence with a desperate conscience, so shall they at the latter day be condemned to eternal fire with the devil and his angels.

**Paulus:**

Our merciful redeemer defend us from that malediction. But what shall most speedily bring me to that gospel of health?

**Johannes:**

The meek knowledge of thyself, that thou art of nature the sinful son of Adam, justly condemned in his transgression besides thine own



wicked doings, and so lost forever were it not for that recovery which thou hast in Christ Jesus.

**Paulus:**

Show me by what means I may come to that knowledge.

**Johannes:**

Seek first unto the law, which the Lord taught by Moses, and that shall declare thee a sinner.

**Paulus:**

Will the law do nothing else but manifest my sin?

**Johannes:**

Yes, it will show thee also thy condemnation.

**Paulus:**

If these be the only fruits of the law, I will not once behold it, lest I by the search thereof do fall into despair.

**Johannes:**

Then shalt thou not do wisely. For if thou know not thy sore, thou shalt not be occasioned to seek the remedy. When thou hast therefore in the law as in a clear mirror beheld thy manifold mischiefs and considered the deep dangers of them, thou shalt of necessity be moved to seek unto Christ as unto an only relief, health, comfort, peace, atonement, grace, righteousness, wisdom, and redemption.

**Paulus:**

Why, is there none other salvation but that which is in Christ?

**Johannes:**

No, surely friend, he alone is the lamb which taketh away the sins of

the world.

**Paulus:**

What shall we then call our spiritual sacrificers, which say they deliver us from sin with their masses, absolutions, blessings, unctions, and holy water?

**Johannes:**

Not savers but deceivers, like as Christ of them hath prophesied. Many seducers (saith he) shall come in my name and say: Here is Christ, and there is thy maker. But beware they deceive you not.

**Paulus:**

Where shall I then seek to open unto him my grief, and so to have remedy for my soul's disease?

**Johannes:**

Not out of thyself, to thy soul's behoove. For thy faithful heart is the temple of God, or that holy habitation that Christ hath promised to dwell in. The false worshippers seek him in outward things, and never find him. But seek thou him in spirit and truth, and thou shalt have him present.

**Paulus:**

Then is he not under the deliverance of men, nor yet bound to their dispensation?

**Johannes:**

No truly is he not, no more than are the other gifts of God, as wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, science, piety, and the just fear of God. For as testifieth Saint James, every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down unto us from the Father of light immediately.

**Paulus:**

By this your whole protestation it should seem then unto me, that I am ordained of God to this end. First to acknowledge myself a wicked sinner, then to arise from it through true repentance, and so to lead a new life after the gospel, till such time as my eternal Father shall vouchsafe to call me from this corruptible mansion, this foreign land, this vale of misery, this castle of sin, and this habitation of death, into the eternal heritage of his son Jesus Christ. To whom with the Holy Ghost be everlasting praise, honour and glory world without end.

Amen.

**A Confession of the Sinner after the Sacred Scriptures,**

Collected by Johan Bale, at the Request of a Faithful Friend of His.

I acknowledge unto my eternal and everlasting God, that of mine own nature I am none other but a carnal thing and the miserable child of Adam, justly exiled with him in his transgression. I feel also that of myself I have neither power, understanding, wisdom, knowledge, strength, grace, virtue, nor godliness, and that I cannot do so much as once think a good thought. Here have I wandered in the region of dissimilitude, all contrary to his prescript rules and admonishments. I have followed the filthy concupiscence of a heart all earthly minded, the wanton desires of eyes replete with all vanities, and the vain glory of this world comprehending all inordinate vices to the utter damnation of my soul. Satan hath suggested unto me the love of things corruptible, the desire of fleshly pleasures, the appetite of voluptuous feedings, the delight of lascivious fables, the coveting of idle slothfulness, the affections of

riches, honour, beauty, wantonness, and other execrable fantasies without number. And unto all these have I consented, nor regarding the godly warnings of scripture to the contrary. So that I am now become through mine own wickedness, a captive prisoner under the law, the world, the flesh, death, sin, hell, and the devil, all cruel and fierce adversaries unto me. When I have respect unto mine own nature, I find it all sinful in Adam, feeble, weak, and wretched. When I look towards Moses, I find all too heavy for me. He burdeneth me with grievous yokes, he feareth my conscience with threatenings, and utterly damneth me with curses for disobedience. I hear the law and read the commandments, but when I confer them with my flesh, and assay to do them in effect, I find it far unable to fulfil them. Whereupon I despair in myself as one ready to fall into the most deep bottom of hell. Then consider I again by the light of the Lord's calling, and by the opening of his grace, his comfortable promises in the prophets, and the glad tidings of salvation in the gospel. These do raise me up again, they comfort me greatly. They witness unto me of Christ. They lead me unto him, thoroughly assuring me that he is wholly mine own if I truly repent from the heart. Thus after the heavenly Father hath shown unto me the just cause of his indignation, and utterly dejected me for sin, he calleth unto mind his eternal mercy. He remembereth I am but flesh. He considereth that I am but dust. No loving father can be more merciful to the fruit of his own body, nor yet natural mother more pitiful to her child, than he is unto me his wretched creature. Though I have most righteously abused the gifts of nature, fortune, and grace, yet calleth he home again to repentance. And so causeth me to remember that I have sinned against heaven, that I have in his sight done filthiness, and that I am not worthy from henceforth to bear the name of his son. When he beholdeth my wretched nakedness without good works or deservings, he bringeth forth the best garment, which is the righteousness of Christ. He putteth it upon me, and so hideth my sin.

He setteth a ring on my finger, so espousing me to immortality, in case I persevere in faith to the end. He putteth shoes upon my feet, so sequestering my carnal affections and so preparing my pathways into the gospel of peace. Christ resorteth unto me of love. He describeth himself before me in the gospel. He telleth me, his office is only to save. He calleth me unto him to refresh me. He receiveth me to ease me of my burden. He comforteth me with promises of everlasting life. He knitteth me unto his own mystical body, making me a member thereof. He declareth unto me all other offices of comfort heavenly. As that he is my only wisdom, health, righteousness, and redemption. And that if I believe in him, I shall not come into judgment, but pass through from death unto the life everlasting. Thus being a fleshly thing of nature, and thrown down by the law, I am raised up again by the gospel, and so saved, no sin past being imputed unto me from henceforth for Jesus Christ's sake. To whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost world without end. Amen.

Psalm viii.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou made perfect thy praises.

FINIS.

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