

## 1770 Doctrinal Minutes

Q. 77. We said in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." Wherein?

(1.) With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord him-self taught us to use the expression : Therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert upon his authority, that if a man is not "faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches."

(2.) With regard to "working for life," which our Lord expressly commands us to do. "Labour," *εργαζεσθε*, literally, "*work*, for the meat that endureth to everlasting life." And in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well as *from* life.

(3.) We have received it as a maxim, that "a man is to do nothing in order to justification." Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should "cease from evil, and learn to do well." So God himself teaches by the Prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents, should "do works meet for repentance." And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?

Once more review the whole affair :

(1.) Who of us is now accepted of God?

He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.

(2.) But who among those that never heard of Christ?

He that, according to the light he has, "feareth God and worketh righteousness."

(3.) Is this the same with "he that is sincere?"

Nearly, if not quite.

(4.) Is not this salvation by works?

Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition.

(5.) What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years?

I am afraid about words, namely, in some of the foregoing instances.

(6.) As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid : We are rewarded according to our works, yea, because of our works. How does this differ from, "for the sake of our works?" And how differs this from *secundum merita operum* ? which is no more than, "as our works deserve." Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.

(7.) The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who, by their own confession, neither "feared God" nor "wrought righteousness." Is this an exception to the general rule?

It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own thinking so is no proof. For we know how all that are convinced of sin under-value themselves in every respect.

(8.) Does not talking, without proper caution, of a justified or sanctified state, tend to mislead men; almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works; according to the whole of our present inward tempers and outward behaviour.