

The Law and the Gospel

John Colquhoun (1815)

Chapter 12-Part 3 (Lesson 20)

The Nature, Necessity, and Desert of Good Works

We have been reminded of what good works are not necessary for and what they are necessary for. Now to close this book we are reminded of the merit our good works achieve.

Let's first think about what the "good works" of unbeliever's merit

- _____ -because technically speaking they can do nothing that is truly good in the eyes of God

"With respect to the works of unregenerate persons, they are destitute of everything that can render an action good and acceptable in the sight of God."

"For although many of them (the good works of unbelievers) may be materially good, yet all of them are formally evil, and therefore are an abomination to Him."

The unsaved person who rests in their good works doubly _____ themselves (thinking they can do a good work and then also thinking that God will accept them and reward them with eternal life). Not only are they doubly deceived but in trusting on their works they heap up greater condemnation upon themselves.

Now let's think about what the "good works" of the saint's merit

- _____ -if our works earn us merit with God than salvation and His favor is earned and is no longer of grace

"As for the good works of regenerate men, these also cannot merit from the high and holy One the smallest blessing, much less eternal life. So far as they are spiritually good, they do not, indeed, like the works of the unregenerate, deserve the wrath of God; but they still do not merit the smallest favor at His hand."

Believers cannot do anything good unless God's grace _____ be at work in us. Also, the saints are obligated to obey His law and even the best of our "good works" is riddled with impurity.

All favor and blessings of God come to us _____ through Jesus Christ.

"It is only the surety-righteousness of Jesus Christ, imputed to them and received by faith alone, that merits and so procures for them a complete title to the beginning, progress, and perfection of eternal life."

Closing thoughts

1. Good works flow from _____ with Christ

“Where vital union with Christ is, good actions, by persons capable of them, will be the certain consequence; and where it is not, such actions cannot be performed...All the performances of believers that are spiritually good flow from Christ dwelling in their hearts by His Spirit.”

“No works are good and acceptable to God but those that have the Spirit of Christ for their main principle and the glory of God for their chief end.”

If we would desire to help others advance in good works merely performing or teaching about good works will _____ be enough, but we must strive to help to lead others to Christ so that they might see and know Him.

2. Good works flow from a _____ person

“To pretend to sanctification and then to rely on it for justification is to derive the fountain from the stream, the cause from the effect, and so to invert the order of the blessings of salvation...It is the distinguishing property of all good works that they are performed from and not for justification.”

Salvation is a reward of grace not a reward of _____.

3. Good works are _____ in the life of the saint

4. _____ in Christ at all times for all of the blessings you have from your Father and pray that the Lord may help you grow in your knowledge and love of Him.

“You can do nothing that is spiritually good except you trust and pray daily for grace to enable you.”

Just looking at the law will never do. Holiness of life is not just about seeing what God commands and trying to do that thing. But true holiness of life will only come as you grow in the grace of Jesus Christ. The more a person comes to know and love Christ, the more they will grow in their desire to be like Him, therefore, walking in _____ to the commands of God.

“They (growing Christians) not only look to the law as a rule for authority to oblige them to the practice of good works, as well as for direction in performing them, but they look also to the gospel and to the Savior offered in it for strength to perform them, for merit to render them acceptable to God, and for a reward of grace to crown them.”