

Archive document number 8014 on <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/presbyterians-opc>

To: <presbyterians-opc@yahoogroups.com>

Subject: [presbyterians-opc] justification

As I finished my e-mail of 12/24/01 I promised to address next Good Works and the Day of Judgement. In the meantime I have noted a lot of other discussion on the forum. Please read my comments on Good Works and the Day of Judgement contained in this e-mail in the light of my earlier e-mails to this forum on this subject sent on 12/14/01, 12/18/01, 12/19/01 to Terry Gray, and 12/24/01.

One thing I would address before I proceed. There seems to be an assumption by some parties that if something is conditional for soteric deliverance it must be meritorious. That just doesn't fly by any rule of logic. Look at Chapter XV of the WCF for an example of this. In paragraph 3 you will note that one absolute and totally necessary condition for soteric deliverance is repentance. And yet repentance is not to be rested in as any satisfaction for sin or any cause for the pardon thereof because pardon is an act of God's free grace. Were repentance a work of merit, it would place God under obligation to pardon. That however, is not the case. Here is an example of a condition required for soteric deliverance that contributes nothing to soteric deliverance. What God requires, He provides by grace. It is an evangelical grace. It is good news that God supplies the required repentance. This is not faith plus works, it is grace.

Further, it seems to be alleged in certain circles that the Westminster creedal system is a faith-alone system. I judge it to be the very opposite. Our system is based around the concept that Faith is God's only instrument used by Him to apply to us the salvation accomplished by Christ. Further, it is based on the concept that the faith which God provides is never alone but is always accompanied by all other required soteric graces.

Now as to Works and Judgement. The good works of a Christian are in fact good. That is not to say that they are not tainted with sin. It is to say they are the work of God's Holy Spirit in us and they are thereby good. They merit nothing. They are but our duty. We who rest in faith in Christ

are the beneficiaries of His grace whereby He again supplies that which he requires for our salvation. We are God's workmanship, created to do the good works which He has before ordained that we should do. By these good works we glorify God, something the Old Testament Jews did not do. They claimed before the world to be God's people, but they disobeyed God just

like those around them who had no part in the covenant. They brought dishonor to God's name. But God said, no more. I will cause my people to glorify my name by giving them the Holy Spirit in their hearts causing them to walk in righteousness obeying the law of God which I will write in their hearts. Read about it in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. That's the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the mediator in this day and age - as opposed to those who

teach that these promises are for , or mostly for, a future messianic golden age. They are for us, now and here. Read of it in Hebrews 8 through 10, noting especially 8:6 through 8:13.

God has provided

not only justification from the guilt of sin, he has also, for all those begotten from above by the seed of God, provided that holiness without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14.

These good works are a required condition if we would stand in the Day of Judgement and they are supplied by God to all His people.

Every description of the Judgement events speak of these good works. Without them, no one will see God. Our God is not unjust. His judgements are always righteous and in accordance with the facts of the case. On the past two Lord's Days I shared over 25 texts and passages of Scripture with my Sunday School class on just these two concepts. They were about evenly divided between the concept that our God's judgements are always righteous and in accord with the facts of the case and the concept that the final judgement will be in accord with what we have done in this life. And I only scratched the surface. Just to look at one Scriptural description of the Judgement Day events, turn to Romans 2:1-16. Paul begins the book of Romans speaking to a general audience of believers. Note 1:7. Then he changes his subject matter and begins to address a more specific audience, you, meaning the Jews, in 2:1. Note also 2:17. Verses 2:1 through 2:16 are bracketed by the salutation to the Jews in 2:1 and the declaration in 2:16 that everything in verses 1-16 is according to the Gospel that Paul preaches. In other words, the Day of Judgement and the events of That Day are good news - good news to those who are on That Day found to be in Christ Jesus. Not so good news for others. The Gospel declares that there will be a Day of Judgement and That Day, and its events, will be as described in verses 1-16. The basic premise is that God is fair and judges impartially. vs. 5, 6, and 11. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. v.7. That's our good old point five - perseverance of the saints. But to those who are self-seeking He will give wrath and anger -that, my brother, is hell. v.8. This judgement to heaven or hell will be in accordance with what you have done in this life. v.6. Check out the WCFXXXIII.1 also where it declares that the judgement will be according to what they have done in the body. And that the judgement is unto life or death, heaven or hell, we see from WCF XXXIII.2 That's the Word of God - don't fight it. It's good news. There will be glory, honor, and peace on the Day of Judgement for everyone who does good. v.10. Who are these people who thus benefit - who stand on the Day of Judgement? They are those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. V.13. When God declares them righteous that is a forensic declaration of righteousness. In fact it is hard to find a significant translation of Scripture, other than the NIV, that doesn't here translate, shall be justified. This is a judicial scene, the Day of Judgement. It is an act of God sitting as Judge. It is justification - a forensic act of God whereby he declares a person righteous. God is able to make this declaration on That Day because it is a truth. Something has happened to change those who were once sinful. What is it? Our confession, which so many of my readers profess, says that we who are in Christ Jesus, are sanctified really and personally by the Spirit and Word of Christ to the practice, in this life, of true holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. WCF XIII.1. This paragraph of our confession, which we confess to be according to

the system of doctrine taught in the Scripture, says this happens to all who are effectually called and regenerated by a process described here as having a new heart and a new spirit created in them. Those are the words and the promise of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. This promise is for all those who are effectually called, not just for some who happen to live in some future golden age, This is part of what we believe. Part of what we trust God to do for us. We accept, receive, and rest upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life. WCF XIV.2 And now we return to the question, who are these people who thus benefit, who stand on the Day of Judgement? Paul says, vs. 14 and 15, these are those who by nature, a new nature, do the things required by the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. You will notice that Paul only speaks good news of Gentile believers in verses 14 and 15. They of whom he speaks have received the promise. He returns to the Jewish situation in verse 17 and in an effort to call them to repentance that they might join the regenerate Gentiles of verses 14 and 15, he rebukes them severally in verses 17 through 23. Then he summarizes in verse 24, God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. This is a direct quote from Ezekiel 36:22. Paul definitely has Ezekiel 36 in mind as he writes Romans 2. The Gentiles have received that which was promised to the Jews because of the unrepentant and hardened heart of the Jews.

Please read Chapters XVI, XVII, and XXXIII of our Confession. This is not a faith-alone confession. This is a Confession which professes that Faith is God's alone instrument of salvation and it is a faith that is never alone but is always accompanied by all necessary and required saving graces. To God be the Glory;

I hope I have convinced you. If not, the fault lies in my inability to convince. No one shares that blame but myself. There really isn't a whole lot more to say. Have a great year and let's pray that this might be the year when Christ returns to judge the quick and the dead and to establish his eternal kingdom with no further delay. You will notice, I trust, that WCF XXXIII.2 teaches that upon the return of Christ we have the Day of Judgement from which the quick and the dead go immediately to their eternal destiny. Be ready, it's coming.

John O. Kinnaird