

They are equally opposed to fanatical fervour on the one hand and to lukewarmness on the other. They authorize the sincere believer to trust with unshaken confidence in the mercy and goodness of His Heavenly Father, while striving to walk in the path of his commandments; but at the same time powerfully rebuke the presumption of those who count upon His blessing while negligent of its conditions. Whoever really embraces them will be seen not only watching carefully against sin, but also active and zealous in well doing, that he may make his calling and election sure; and valuing the testimony of a good conscience above every earthly blessing. He will never rest satisfied with such a degree of virtue as may merely carry him decently and respectably through this present world, but will labour earnestly to approve himself to God who seeth the heart as well as the outward conduct—nor will he ever be content with any degree of proficiency to which he may already have attained, but strive continually to grow in grace, and be making steady progressive improvement.

If this doctrine differ in any respect from what is taught elsewhere, and what some among ourselves consider as the true doctrine of the scriptures, we cannot help it. We are bound to deliver what we ourselves believe to be the truth, let others teach as they may. By whatever instruction men are led to love and fear God, and to abhor and forsake unrighteousness, we are bound to rejoice at the effect. But the principles of which we are conscientiously persuaded, none will expect us to contradict or to betray. We shall of course assert and maintain them firmly, but with temper and charity towards those who differ from us—however willing we may be, within proper bounds, to become all things to all men, that we may by all means save some: nor shall we give offence by so doing to pious and reasonable persons, whatever their opinions may be.

And what is it we expect from those who hear us? Nothing but what I am sure is just and reasonable—only an attentive and candid hearing. We would as freely caution you against too much deference for the authority of your teachers, as against too little respect for them and their ministry. With respect to the doctrine of any of us, I would exhort you to prove all things, and then hold fast what is good. Examine our doctrine as closely as you will by the light of scripture and primitive antiquity, and if it prove not to be the faith once delivered to the saints, and constantly held in the best and purest times, I admit that we have no right to complain if you reject it. We have no authority to dictate to you in matters of faith. The legitimate influence of every particular teacher depends upon his speaking as the oracles

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