

“Of Good Works,” excerpts
1689 London Baptist Confession, Ch. 16

1. Good works are only such as God has commanded in his Holy Word, (Mic. 6:8; Heb. 13:21) and not such as without its warrant are devised by men out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intentions (Mt. 15:9; Isa. 29:13).

2. These good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith (Jas. 2:18, 22)...

3. Their ability to do good works is not all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ (Jn. 15:4-5); and that they may be enabled thereto, besides the graces they have already received, there is necessary an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure (2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13); yet they are not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them (Phil. 2:12; Heb. 6:11-12; Isa. 64:7).

6. Yet notwithstanding the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him (Eph. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:5); not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unprovable in God’s sight, but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections (Mt. 25:21,23; Heb. 6:10).

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