

## CONFESSION OF FAITH.

### CHAPTER 16.-Of Good Works.

II. These good works, done in obedience to Gods Commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith<sup>1</sup>: and, by them, Beleevers manifest their thankfullnesse<sup>2</sup>, strengthen their assurance<sup>3</sup>, edifie their brethren<sup>4</sup>, adorn the profession of the Gospel<sup>5</sup>, stop the mouths of the adversaries<sup>6</sup>, and glorifie God<sup>7</sup>, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto<sup>8</sup>; that, having their fruit unto holinesse, they may have the end, eternall life<sup>9</sup>.

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Question 1.—*Are the good works done in obedience to God's commandments, the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Jas. 2:18,22. Thus the Antinomians and Libertines err, denying that believers ought to make evident to themselves and others, the truth of their justification by good works as fruits of a true and lively faith, *contra* Rom. 12:1. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because Christ says, By their fruits ye shall know them, Matt. 7:16-18. A good tree is necessary for bringing forth good fruits, therefore good fruit argues a good tree, Matt. 12:33. 2.) Because we are commanded, to make sure our calling and election by good works, 2 Pet. 1:5,6,10,11. It is the outward sign of the seal of God's elect that they depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. 2:19. 3.) Because in Scripture there are delivered many undoubted and sure marks of regeneration, taken from the fruits of faith and good works, 1 John 1:6,7; 2:3; 3:9,10,14.

Question 2.—*Are good works suitable manifestations of thankfulness to God?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Ps. 116:12,13; 1 Pet. 2:9. None can render any proper recompense to God for his inestimable blessings; but all Christians are indispensably bound to glorify him by a universal and cheerful obedience to his commandments; and their good works are, as it were, a thank offering to God for his benefits bestowed upon them, 1 Cor. 6:20. They express the gratitude of the believer, and manifest the grace of God in him, and so adorn the profession of the gospel, *cf.* Acts 9:36, 39. "Faith worketh by love," Gal. 5:6. Christ says that we are to express our love for him by keeping his commandments, John 14:15,23. As they are the fruits of the Spirit, they render manifest the excellent working of the Spirit, 1 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 2:10. These are the very works unto which the elect have been created, Eph. 2:10; by them, the elect of God demonstrate that holy zeal which is created in them by the effectual working of the Spirit, giving thanks to God, Tit. 2:14.

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<sup>1</sup>Jas. 2:18,22.

<sup>2</sup>Ps. 116:12,13; 1 Pet. 2:9.

<sup>3</sup>1 John 2:3,5; 2 Pet. 1:5-10.

<sup>4</sup>2 Cor. 9:2; Matt. 5:16.

<sup>5</sup>Tit. 2:5,9-12; 1 Tim. 6:1.

<sup>6</sup>1 Pet. 2:15.

<sup>7</sup>1 Pet. 2:12; Phil. 1:11; John 15:8.

<sup>8</sup>Eph. 2:10.

<sup>9</sup>Rom. 6:22.

Question 3.—*Do good works strengthen a believer's assurance?*

*Answer.*—Yes. 2 Pet. 1:5-10. They both confirm their assurance of faith, and increase their assurance of personal interest in Christ and his great salvation, 1 John 2:3,5. Thus, good works contain an evidence discernable to believers which holds forth a sensible assurance of salvation through Christ, John 15:5.

Question 4.—*Do the good works of Christians edify their fellow believers and adorn the profession of the Gospel?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Matt. 5:16. Those who are careful to maintain good works become patterns to others, and stir them up to holy emulation, 2 Cor. 9:2. Good works edify others, both as confirmatory evidence of the truth of Christianity and the power of divine grace, and by the force of example inducing men to practice the same, 1 Thess. 1:7; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Pet. 5:3. Likewise, practical godliness is the brightest ornament of the Christian religion. Hence Christians are exhorted to the faithful discharge of their duties in accordance with their station and relation, Tit. 2:5,9-12; 1 Tim. 6:1.

Question 5.—*Do these good works stop the mouths of adversaries?*

*Answer.*—Yes. For the same reasons as above, good works disprove the cavils and render nugatory the opposition of wicked men, 1 Pet. 2:12. When professing Christians have a "conversation becoming the gospel," they recommend religion to others, silence the adversaries of the truth, and convince them of the injustice of those reproaches which have been cast upon the gospel, 1 Pet. 2:15; 1 Tim. 6:1.

Question 6.—*Do such good works glorify God?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Phil. 1:11. Since God is their author, Eph. 2:10, they manifest the excellency of his grace, and excite all who behold them to appreciate and proclaim his glory, Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 2:12. The more fruitful believers are in good works, the more God is glorified, John 15:8.

Question 7.—*Are good works essentially prerequisite to an admission into heaven?*

*Answer.*—Yes. Though they do not *merit* everlasting life, yet they are indispensably necessary in all who are "heirs of the grace of life," Rom. 6:22. They are necessary to the attainment of salvation, not in any sense as a prerequisite to justification, nor in any stage of the believer's progress meriting the divine favor, but as essential elements of that salvation, the consubstantial fruits and means of sanctification and glorification, Ps. 37:37, 38; Matt. 25:46. A saved soul is a holy soul, and a holy soul is one whose faculties are all engaged in works of loving obedience, Matt. 13:43. Grace in the heart cannot exist without good works as their consequent, 1 Thess. 1:3. Good works cannot exist without the increase of the graces which are exercised in them, 1 Pet. 1:8. Heaven could not exist except as a society of holy souls mutually obeying the law of love in all the good works that law requires, Eph. 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 4:6,7; Rev. 21:27.