

Of Good Works, Part 1 (Ephesians 2:10)

Baptist Confession of Faith (1689) Chapter 16, Paragraphs 1

Doctrine: The Doctrine of Good Works

The Context of Good Works

- Those whom God has elected for salvation, he effectually calls, freely justifies through faith, grants repentance unto life, **sanctifies**, perseveres and will also glorify.
- The doctrine of **Good Works** is contained within the repentance, sanctification and perseverance of the Christian experience (Heb 13:21).
- There is **no** good work which man may perform of himself to achieve justification or the favour of God (Isa 64:6; Gal 2:16).

The Defining of Good Works

- Good works are only such as God hath **commanded** in His Holy Word (Micah 6:7-8).
- The Christian's good works are his **obedience** to the Word of God.
- Biblical Ethics begins with the confession that:
 - i. God, as the One and True God, alone has **authority**.
 - ii. God alone is just and able to establish the **standard** of righteousness.
 - iii. God is good and just in establishing His moral **law**, as prescribed specifically in His Word, as well as generally by the light of nature.
 - iv. God rightly **demand**s obedience of His commandments from all creatures, and particularly of His Covenant People.
 - v. Obedience to the commands of God are not only right because it is submission to God, but **good** for the flourishing of mankind.
- **Good works** are obedience to the commands of God: that is, obedience carried out as the right thing (action), done in the right way (attitude), at the right time (propriety), for the right reason (motive).

- Good works may not be without the warrant of **Scripture**, such as the devices of man from blind zeal or upon any pretense of good intentions (Isa 29:13).
- What good works are not:
 - i. 'The **ends** justify the means' (Dt 11:1).
 - ii. 'Whatever **feels** right' (Jer 17:9).
 - iii. 'This is what we have **always** done' (Mt 15:9).
 - iv. 'It is the **heart** that counts; we had good intentions' (Ex 20:25).
 - v. 'As long as one is **sincere**' (Mt 7:21-22).
- It is a sobering truth of Scripture: not all who claim to be obeying God are **actually** obeying Him; not all who claim to be worshipping God are worshipping Him; and not all who claim to know God know Him.

The Joy and Freedom of Biblical Understanding of Good Works

- To be obedient to God's Word is to demonstrate our **love** for God (Jn 14:15).
- To do good works is to be conformed to the **will** of God (1 Thes 4:3).
- To be obedient to God's Word is to experience the true **freedom** of God's covenant of grace (Gal 5:1).
- To do good works is to be what God has **made** us in Christ.
- The Doctrine of Good Works is, at its heart, about the display of God's immeasurable **glory** and **grace**.

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 33, Question 91: *But what are good works?* Those only which are done from true faith, according to the law of God, for His glory; and not such as rest upon our own opinion, or the commandments of men.

Application

- 1) Careful **Study** God's Word
- 2) Humble **Submission** to God's Word
- 3) Right **Application** of God's Word