

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 16.-Of Good Works.

III. Their ability to do good works, is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ¹. And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure²: yet are they 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 them³.

Question 1.—*Is our ability to do good works, wholly from the Spirit of Christ, and not at all from ourselves?*

Answer.—Yes. Ezek. 36:26,27. And that we may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Phil. 2:13; 4:13. So then, Pelagians err, maintaining that good works done by the strength of our free-will are conformed to the law of God and worthy of the kingdom of heaven. Likewise, the Papists err, maintaining that good works may be done by a mere general and common influence from God. Lastly, the Arminians err, maintaining that good works flow only from God as a moral cause. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because Christ says, Ye can do nothing without me, John 15:4,5. 2.) Because of ourselves we are not able to think a good thought, 2 Cor. 3:5. 3.) Because it is God that works in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, Phil. 2:13.

Question 2.—*Are they who are regenerated, to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless by special motion of the Spirit?*

Answer.—No. Rather they ought to stir up diligently the grace of God which is in them, Heb. 6:11,12; 2 Pet. 1:3,5,10,11; 2 Tim. 1:6. Thus, the Quakers, Familists, and other heretics err, maintaining that believers ought not to perform any duty in religion, unless the Spirit within move and excite them to those duties; and that we ought to forbear when this is lacking. They are confuted because: 1.) The Holy Ghost forbids us to be slow in performing such duties; nay, commands us to stir up the gift which is in us, and use all diligence to perform duties commanded by himself, Phil. 2:12; Jude 20,21. 2.) The prophet confesses that as the great sin of the Lord's people, that there is none that calls upon his name, that stirs up himself to take hold of him, Isa. 64:7. 3.) Because to neglect the worshipping of God, is an evident sign and token of an atheist, Ps. 14:4; 53:4. 4.) Because the Lord has threatened to pour out his fury on the heathen that know him not and upon the families that do not call on his name, Jer. 10:25. 5.) Because the twelve tribes which hoped to come to the promise made to the fathers served God day and night, Acts 26:6,7. And the apostles gave themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word, Acts 6:4. 6.) Because Christ himself who had always the Spirit, was very

¹John 15:4,5; Ezek. 36:26,27.

²Phil. 2:13; 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:5.

³Phil. 2:12; Heb. 6:11,12; 2 Pet. 1:3,5,10,11; Isa. 64:7; 2 Tim. 1:6; Acts 26:6,7; Jude 20,21.

frequently engaged in those exercises and duties, as all the gospels testify, Luke 5:16. He was forward to stir up his disciples through prayer, Luke 9:28. Out of prayer, he went forth to teach, having stirred himself to this, his prayer even moving others to receive his teaching, Luke 11:1. 7.) Because Christ will have the gospel preached to every creature, Mark 16:15. And has commanded the administration of the Lord's supper, even to his second coming, 1 Cor. 11:26. And will have the work of the ministry to continue in the church, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith, Eph. 4:11-13. 8.) Because we are commanded to pray without ceasing, 1 Thess. 5:17. This is upon all opportunities and in all our necessities, Eph. 6:18. 9.) Because we are commanded to trust in him at all times, Ps. 62:8. 10.) If we forbear outward duties, as prayer and such like, then we ought to forbear inward exercises, as acts of faith, love and fear, till we are moved thereunto, which is most absurd, for we are commanded, as was cited, to trust in him always, Prov. 3:5. 11.) What assurance can men have, the next hour or tomorrow, more than in the present time of the Spirit's motion on their souls; or that they shall be thus at a greater advantage by putting off the duty, till they have some inward motion and impulse thereunto, than by waiting on the ordinary call of the word or of providence? *cf.* Ps. 56:3, 4.