

## Second London Baptist Confession Chapter 16: Good Works

### I. They Rule of Good Works (Par. 1)

-Positively: *“Good works are only those works that God has commanded in His holy Word.”*

-Negatively: *“Works that do not have this warrant are invented by people out of blind zeal or on a pretense of good intentions and are not truly good.”* (2 Tim. 3:16, 17)

### II. The Role of Good Works (Par. 2)

-Stated: *“These good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruit and evidence of a true and living faith.”* (James 2:18)

-Elaborated: *“Through good works believers express their thankfulness (Ps. 116:12), strengthen their assurance (Rom. 5:4; 1 John 2:3), build up their brothers and sisters (Rom. 15:2), adorn the profession of the gospel (Titus 2:9, 10), stop the mouths of opponents (Titus 2:7, 8), and glorify God (Matt. 5:16).*

-Summarized: *Believers are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, so that they bear fruit leading to holiness and have the outcome, eternal life.”* (Eph. 2:8-10)

### III. The Cause of Good Works (Par. 3)

-Stated: Negatively (*“Their ability to do good works does not arise at all from themselves.”*); Positively (*“...but entirely from the Spirit of Christ.”*) (John 15:4, 5)

-Expanded: *“Yet this is no reason for them to grow negligent, as if they were not required to perform any duty without a special motion of the Spirit. Instead, they should be diligent to stir up the grace of God that is in them.”* (Phil. 2:12, 13)

### IV. Two Abuses of the Doctrine of Good Works (Pars. 4, 5)

-Supererogation (voluntary works over and above what God requires earn extra merit before God): (Par. 4) (Luke 17:10; 1 John 1:8)

-Merit by Good Works (Par. 5): ●Denied (*“We cannot, even by our best works, merit pardon of sin or eternal life from God’s hand...By these works we can neither benefit God nor satisfy Him for the debt of our former sins.”* See Rom. 3:20) ●Demonstrated (*“...due to the huge disproportion between our works and the glory to come, and the infinite distance between us and God...When we have done all we can, we have only done our duty and are unprofitable servants. Since our good works are good, they must proceed from His Spirit; and since they are performed by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot withstand the severity of God’s punishment.”* See Is. 64:6)

### V. The Acceptance of Good Works (Pars. 6, 7)

-Of Believers (Par. 6): see Matt. 25:21, 23; Heb. 6:10.

-Of Unbelievers (Par. 7): see Matt. 6:2, 5, 17; 1 Cor. 13:3; Heb. 11:6

## Conclusion

1) Our best actions and activities can never earn any favor from God (Gal. 2:21).

2) As the people of God, we must abound in good works (Titus 2:14).