

Belgic Confession of Faith (1561)

Article XXIV (part 2)

Man's Sanctification and Good Works

Leader: Therefore we do good works, but not to merit by them (for what can we merit?); nay, we are indebted to God for the good works we do, and not He to us, since it is He who *worketh in us both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.*¹ Let us therefore attend to what is written: *When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.*² In the meantime we do not deny that God rewards good works, but it is through His grace that He crowns His gifts.³

People: **Moreover, though we do good works, we do not found our salvation upon them;**⁴ **for we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh,**⁵ **and also punishable; and although we could perform such works, still the remembrance of one sin is sufficient to make God reject them. Thus, then, we would always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be continually vexed if they relied not on the merits of the suffering and death of our Savior.**⁶

¹ Phil. 2:13

² Luke 17:10

³ Matt. 10:42; 25:34-35; Rev. 3:12, 21; 2 John 8

⁴ Eph. 2:8-10

⁵ Isa. 64:6; James 2:10; 1 John 1:8-10; Eccl. 7:20

⁶ Rom. 10:11; Heb. 10:22; 1 Pet. 3:15-16, 21