

Titus 3:1 Commentary

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ADORNING THE DOCTRINE OF GOD
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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
See [Summary Chart by Charles Swindoll](#)
Chart below from [Michael J. Penfold](#)

Focus	Appoint Elders		Set Things in Order	
Divisions	Ordain Qualified Elders Titus 1:1-9+	Rebuke False Teachers Titus 1:10-16+	Speak Sound Doctrine Titus 2:1-15+	Maintain Good Works Titus 3:1-15+
Topics	Protection of Sound Doctrine		Practice of Sound Doctrine	
Topics	Organization	Offenders	Operation	Obedience
Place	Probably Written from either Corinth or Nicopolis (cf. Titus 3:12).			
Time	Circa 63 AD			
Modified from Talk Thru the Bible				

Titus 3:1 **Remind** them to be **subject** to **rulers**, to **authorities**, to be **obedient**, to be **ready** for **every good deed** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [Hupomimneske \(2SPAM\)](#) autous [archais](#) exousiais [hupotassesthai](#). (PPN) [peitharchein](#). (PAN) [pros pan ergon agathon hetoimous einai](#). (PAN)

Amplified: REMIND PEOPLE to be submissive to [their] magistrates and authorities, to be obedient, to be prepared and willing to do any upright and honorable work, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every

good work,

NLT: Remind your people to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Remind your people to recognize the power of those who rule and bear authority. They must obey the laws of the state and be prepared to render whatever good service they can. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Be constantly reminding them to put themselves in subjection with implicit obedience to rulers who have been delegated their authority, to be obedient, to be ready to every good work, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

Young's Literal: Remind them to be subject to principalities and authorities, to obey rule, unto every good work to be ready,

REMIND THEM: Hupomimneske (2SPAM) autous:

- Isa 43:26; 1Ti 4:6; 2Ti 1:6; 2Pe 1:12; 3:1,2; Jude 1:5
- Titus 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WE ARE PRONE TO WANDER AND CONTINUALLY IN NEED OF REMINDERS

John MacArthur has some thought provoking comments as background to this section --This is a crucial section of instruction for today. The United States essentially is now a pagan nation. After being blessed with some 150 years of strong Christian, biblical influence, our country has been rapidly declining, especially during the last half of the twentieth century. Millions of Americans still attend church regularly, and many more consider themselves to be Christians. According to polls, most Americans claim to believe in God. But practical atheism and moral relativism have dominated our society for many decades. For the most part, the few vestiges of Christianity still reflected in our culture are weak and compromising. A growing number of those vestiges have become apostate or cultic... The many biblical tenets and standards that once were part of the fabric of our country, and that provided the undeniable cultural benefits of morality, are now gone. Whatever its form or practical benefits may have been, cultural Christianity is dead. Self-expression, moral freedom, materialism, and hedonism are the prevailing gods." ([MacArthur. Titus: Moody Press](#)) (Ed: Sounds very much like ancient Crete!)

Why does Titus need to continually (present tense) remind the saints to walk worthy of their high calling in Christ? Clearly, one reason is because of the propensity of our fallen flesh, the fallen world and the fallen angel to draw our hearts from thoughts about God's ways and works and into the miry clay of forgetfulness. Over and over the Old Testament echoes the warning to God's chosen people not to forget His ways and His works (read and weep and be warned! 1 Cor 10:6, 11 = Dt 4:9, 23, 31, 6:12, 8:11, 14, 19, 9:7, 25:19, 26:13, 32:18, Jdg 3:7, 1Sa 12:9, 2 Ki 17:38, Ps 9:17, 78:7, 11, 103:2, 106:13, 21, Isaiah 17:10, 51:13, Jeremiah 2:32, 3:21, 13:25, 18:15, 23:27, 50:6). And given that Israel in the OT is but a picture of our fallen flesh, we can see the great necessity to continually be reminded to yield self to Savior and walk by His Spirit. There is simply no other way to live the "victorious Christian life" -- **stop trying and start dying daily** (Mark 8:34-36, John 12:24, et al - SEE CAVEAT BELOW) allowing the Spirit of Christ to live out His life through you (Galatians 2:20). **God grant us the desire and power to be like the psalmist in Psalm 119 who repeatedly declared he would not forget God's Words** (Psa 119:16, 61, 83, 93, 119:109, 139, 119:141, 153,176). Indeed, enabled by His Spirit and for His glory may we cry out from our hearts...

Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget none of His benefits.
(Psalm 103:2)

CAVEAT - "Stop trying, start dying" **DOES NOT** mean that we are to "[Let God and Let God](#)" which is a false teaching (probably originating from the [Keswick Movement](#)! It sounds good, but is not Biblical! The phrase "**stop trying**" means stop trying to live the supernatural life in your natural strength, but in dependence on the Spirit. So does this signify you will do nothing? Does this signify you are a "passive participant" in your [progressive sanctification](#)? Of course not! Paul was very clear that while believers are **totally dependent** on the Spirit of Christ to live a supernatural life, we are also **totally responsible** to work out our salvation -- "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** (command in the [present imperative](#) - but even obeying this necessitates the Spirit's enablement described in the next verse) your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for (strategic "[term of explanation](#)") it is God who is at work in you, both to will (desire) and to work *power) for His good

pleasure. (Php 2:12[±], Php 2:13NLT[±]).

Remind (5279) (**hupomimnesko** from **hupó** = under + **mimnesko** = to remind) means to put another in mind of something, to cause one to remember, bring to one's mind, **remind** (remind suggests a jogging of one's memory by an association or similarity).

Hupomimnesko is used 7x in NT, once in each of the following: Lk. 22:61; Jn. 14:26; 2Ti 2:14; Tit. 3:1; 2Pe 1:12; 3 Jn. 1:10; Jude 1:5

Paul like a commanding officer to the junior officer, commands (**imperative mood**) Titus to continually (**present tense**) (**present imperative**) put in the Cretan Christian's mind and bring to their remembrance the importance of subjecting themselves to authority (note the reminder applies all of the admonitions in this passage). The present tense gives this verb the additional connotations of continuity and persistence.

Wuest says it this way - Be constantly reminding them to put themselves in subjection with implicit obedience to rulers... [Wuest](#)

As God's man in Crete who was responsible to protect and lead the flock of God, Titus (as well as all church leaders and teachers of the Word) frequently need to unapologetically **remind** believers of God's truth. The Bible Knowledge Commentary aptly notes that

A large part of any pastor's public ministry is **reminding** people of **what they already know**.

The Cretans were notoriously and naturally intractable, so Paul warns Titus to be careful to insist that those who have been saved obey the properly constituted civil authorities (1Pe 2:13, 14, 15, 16-see notes V13; 14; 15; 16; 17).

The verb **remind** implies that the Cretan saints already knew these duties but as with all "non-glorified" saints, were in continual need of a fresh reminder. Like the hymn writer plainly confessed

[Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it](#)

[Prone to leave the God I love](#)

Reminding the Cretan Christians of these truths should keep them from feeling hostile toward or superior to those who were not yet converted. The opposition of Christianity to heathenism, and the natural disposition to rebellion of the Jews under the Roman empire (of whom many lived in Crete), might lead many to forget practically what was a recognized Christian principle in theory, submission to the powers that be. Christians were often looked on with suspicion in the Roman Empire because their conduct was so different and they met in private meetings for worship (see 1Pe 2:11-25; 3:13-4:5).

O thou, my soul, forget no more

The Friend Who all thy misery bore;
Let every idol be forgot,
But, O my soul, forget Him not.

Jesus for thou a body takes,
Thy guilt assumes, thy fetters breaks,
Discharging all thy dreadful debt;
And canst thou e'er such love forget?

Renounce thy works and ways, with grief,
And fly to this most sure relief;
Nor Him forget, who left His throne,
And for thy life gave up His own.

Infinite truth and mercy shine,
In Him, and He Himself is thine:
And canst thou, then, with sin beset,
Such charms, such matchless charms, forget?

[\(Hymn\)](#)

Other uses of hupomimnesko

Luke

the Lord turned and looked at Peter (Jesus made eye contact with Peter - the verb suggests an intent, fixed look which must have magnified his shame and stirred his memory). And Peter **remembered** (hupomimnesko) the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a cock crows today, you will deny Me three times. (Luke 22:61+)

Peter

Therefore (read the immediate preceding context 2Pe 1:1-11 to see what it's "there for"), I shall always be ready to **remind** (hupomimnesko) you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. And I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of **reminder** (hupomnesis - related noun form)." (2 Pe 2:12, 13+)

Later in the same letter Peter states one of his main purposes --

This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of **reminder** (hupomnesis)" (2Pe 3:1+)

John uses this verb recording Jesus' promise to His disciples that

the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and **bring to your remembrance** all that I said to you." (Jn 14:26).

Paul commanded Timothy that he was to

Remind (present imperative = continually remind) them of these things (**What things?** see 2 Ti 2:1-13, especially the life and death issues in 2 Ti 2:11, 12, 13+) and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers." (2 Ti 2:14+).

Wuest makes an excellent point that Timothy was to continually remind them because "there is no such prophylactic (preventative) against striving (wrangling) about words as a serious endeavor to realize the relative importance of time and eternity." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

After exposing the fact that false teachers had already crept into the church, Jude then reminded his readers of God's attitude toward the first of three well known acts of apostasy from the OT:

"Now I desire to **remind** you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt (read Nu 13:1-33, Nu 14:1-45, 1 Cor 10:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10), subsequently destroyed those who did not believe." (Jude 1:5+)

Similarly Paul reminded the Corinthians that "these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved" and "these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1Cor 10:6,11)

Them refers to all the Christ followers or disciples of Christ on Crete. Paul is introducing another section giving specific instructions on how God's saints (set apart ones) empowered by "the grace of God" (Titus 2:11+) are to "live sensibly, righteously and godly" (Titus 2:12+) as citizens "in the midst of crooked and perverse generation among whom you appear as lights in the world" (Php 2:15+). The first order of business for us is to be reminded lest we forget!

If I forget Him and wander away,
Still He doth love me wherever I stray;
Back to His dear loving arms would I flee,
When I remember that Jesus loves me.

[-Philip P Bliss](#)

Spurgeon - "You see, they were a rough, wild, rebellious people in Crete, and Christianity comes to civilize, to sober, to sanctify, to save."

In the preceding instructions Paul had dealt primarily with how the believer was to interact in relation to fellow Christians. He now informs them that the obligations to the Gospel are also operative in a believer's relation to government and pagan society (cf "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." - Titus 1:12-note) The truth of the Gospel is that it does not relieve saints of their civic duties but in fact enforces them. In sum, Christianity makes people better citizens in a society.

Jesus' "Beatitude Instruction" is applicable to saved saints living in the midst of Sodom-like societies --

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. "Let your light shine before men in such a way that

they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Mt 5:13, 14, 15, 16-see **notes Mt 5:13; 14; 15; 16**).

Too much salt ruins the taste. Too much light blinds the eyes. How are you doing?

Illustration - Finally, it's easy to tell who the Christians are. They're the ones sporting a witness on their T-shirts or caps, wearing W.W.J.D bracelets, with crosses around their necks. Making a visible statement of belief has come a long way since the days of the "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper stickers. Is there anything wrong with wearing a witness for Christ? Of course not--as long as our behavior lives up to its "advertising." No wardrobe accessory can take the place of a Spirit-empowered daily life of humility and obedience that wears well in any situation. Practical is an overworked term to describe certain sections of the Bible--and probably misleading, since it implies that some parts of the Word are impractical. But having said that, Titus 3 is about as down-to-earth as it gets in helping us understand how to "work out [our] salvation" (Php 2:12-note). Verses 2-3 remind us that we're to be like Jesus for the best reason of all: because He reached down in mercy to save us from a life of sin. And He did it not by reforming us, but by regenerating us, making us alive again. We were dead in sin, not just slightly ill.

If God had done nothing for us except give us eternal life through Christ, we would be eternally grateful. But our loving Father did so much more. After He had rescued us from sin and washed us clean in Christ's blood, God brought us into His house and made us His heirs. This means all that God has, we now have. Therefore, living to please Him through our obedience to Him and to the human authorities He has established, and through lives of good works and humility, is nothing more than our reasonable service. Anything less would be an insult to the God who appeared in flesh to save us when we were His enemies. And what about those who are looking to cause trouble and sow discord in the body of Christ? We need to reach out to them in peace. But if they refuse to repent of their sin, we can't afford to let them drain the life from the church.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY -Actually, the idea of putting on our witness is not new at all. The Bible tells us to put on a number of things that will protect us against sin and help us live the godly lives God expects of His heirs. For example, we are told to put on the armor God has given us (Ro 13:12-note; Eph. 6:11-note) and to put on "the new self," which is more like God (Eph 4:24-note). How complete is your "witness wardrobe" today? ([Copyright Moody Bible Institute. Used by permission. All rights reserved](#))

TO BE SUBJECT TO RULERS, TO AUTHORITIES: archais exousiais hupotassethai (PMN):

- Dt 17:12; Eccl 8:2, 3, 4, 5; 10:4; Jer 27:17; Mt 22:21; 23:2,3; Ro 13:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; 1Ti 2:2; 1 Pe 2:13, 14, 15, 16, 17
- Titus 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SUBMISSION IS A DISCIPLE'S LIFESTYLE

- "to put themselves in subjection with implicit obedience" ([Wuest](#))

What does obedience to this exhortation entail? While "be subject" is not a command, it is in the present tense which calls for subjection to be our lifestyle, our continual practice in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. How is this humanly possible? It's not of course! It is only possible to submit to men in authority by daily submitting to the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, choosing to die to self (Mk 8:34, Gal 2:20+), gratefully presenting ourselves as living sacrifices to God (Ro 12:1+) and yielding to the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Eph 5:18+, Gal 5:16+) Who will give us the desire and the power (Php 2:13NLT+) to supernaturally work out our salvation in fear and trembling. If you are finding it difficult to submit to those God's Word says we should submit, it is likely that you have not subjected yourself to Him as Lord of EVERY area of your life. The victorious Christian life calls for "no holds barred," or better "no doors barred" to rooms in our heart that He cannot access. (See "[My Heart Christ's Home](#)" by Robert Boyd Munger). See some Scriptural examples of exceptions to submission [below](#). We should give God the same place in our hearts that he holds in the universe.

To be subject (5293) (**hupotasso** from **hupó** = under + **tasso** = arrange in orderly manner) means literally to place under in an orderly fashion. In the active voice **hupotasso** means to subject, bring under firm control, subordinate as used in (Ro 8:20-note)

Hupotasso-38x in 31v -

Lk. 2:51; 10:17, 20; Ro 8:7-note, Ro 8:20-note; Ro 10:3-note; Ro 13:1-note, Ro 13:5-note; 1Co 14:32, 34; 15:27, 28; 16:16; Ep 1:22-note; Ep 5:21-note, Ep 5:24-note; Php 3:21-note; Col 3:18-note; Titus 2:5-note, Titus 2:9-note; Titus 3:1-note; Heb 2:5-note, He 2:8-note; He 12:9-note; Jas 4:7; 1Pe 2:13-note, 1Pe 2:18-note; 1Pe

3:1-note, 1Pe 3:5-note, 1Pe 5:5-note **NAS-** put in subjection, 5; subject, 16; subjected, 7; subjecting, 1; subjection, 4; submissive, 3; submit, 2.

Hupotasso - 18v in the non-apocryphal Septuagint -

1 Kgs 10:15; 1 Chr 22:18; 29:24; 2 Chr 9:14; Esth 3:13; 8:12; Ps 8:7; 17:48; 36:7; 46:4; 59:10; 61:2, 6; 107:10; 143:2; Hag 2:18; Dan 7:27; 11:37. For example...

Psalm 8:6-[note](#) You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put (Heb shith = put, set; Lxx = hupotasso) all things under his feet,

Psalm 18:47-[note](#) The God who executes vengeance for me, And subdues (Heb = davar/dabar - subdue, a homonym of davar/dabar = to speak; Lxx = hupotasso) peoples under me.

Psalm 37:7-[note](#) **Rest** (command in Hebrew - damam - be still, silent, quiet; Lxx = hupotasso) in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. (**Ed:** Interesting to see how the Lxx translates the command to rest or be still in His presence by the verb to be subject to - aorist imperative)

Psalm 62:1-[note](#) For the choir director; according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David. My soul *waits* in silence (Heb = dumiyah - a silence; a quiet waiting, a repose; Lxx = hupotasso - "Shall not my soul be subjected to God?") for God only; From Him is my salvation.

Hupotasso means to submit (to yield to governance or authority), to place in subjection. It is important to note that many of the NT uses are in the **passive voice with a middle sense** which signifies the **voluntary subjection** of oneself to the will of another. Husbands and wives both need to understand the **voluntary** nature of the submission called for in the marital relationship lest it be misapplied (discussed in more detail below).

Hupotasso was a military term meaning to draw up in order of battle, to form, array, marshal, both troops or ships.

Hupotasso meant that troop divisions were to be arranged in a military fashion under the command of the leader. In this state of subordination they were now subject to the orders of their commander. Thus, it speaks of the subjection of one individual under or to another. **Hupotasso** was also used to describe the arrangement of military implements on a battlefield in order that one might carry out effective warfare!

In non-military use, **hupotasso** described a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, or carrying a burden.

Spicq has some excellent, insightful comments noting that **hupotasso** is

a major virtue in the Christian pastoral writings, expressing the relations of subordination in the cosmic and religious order. God has placed everything in submission to Christ, to whom the angels are subordinate (Heb 2:5; 1Pet 3:22); the church is in submission to the Lord (Eph 5:24); Christians submit to God, to his law and his training, but also to one another to cooperate (1Cor 16:16) in the fear of God (Eph 5:21; cf. Ro 13:8). Woman is subordinate to man, the wife to the husband, the children to the parents (1Ti 3:4; cf. Marcus Aurelius 1.17.3), the young to the old, slaves and servants to their master (Ep 6:5, Titus 2:9; 1Pet 2:18), subjects (cf. Ep. Arist. 205, 207, 265; Josephus, War 2.140; Polybius 21.43, hoi hypotattomenoi) to their sovereign; and finally the Christian must submit to every human creature. We may conclude that the baptized (**Ed:** I would qualify that only one who is born by the Spirit, Jn 3:3, 5, independent of water baptism if that is what Spicq is alluding to here. cp baptizo conveying the sense of identification with Christ's death - Ro 6:3.) person is a "son of obedience" (1Pet 1:2, 22) in all the larger or smaller human communities in which he is placed (1Pe 2:13-3:12), contributing to the maintenance of the order fixed by the plan of providence whereby all creatures are ordered in a hierarchy (Wis 11:21).

It is clear that **hupotasso** does not have the same range in these differing communal relationships; but it is always reverent submission, seen as a **self-offering** (cf. Titus 3:1, 2). It means first of all accepting the exact place God has assigned, keeping to one's rank in this or that society, accepting a dependent status, especially toward God (Jas 4:7), like children who are submissive to a father's discipline (Heb 12:9), after the fashion of the child Jesus. **This religious subjection is made up of an obedient spirit, humaneness of heart (Ep. Arist. 257), respect, and willingness to serve.** To submit is to accept directives that are given, to honor conditions that are imposed, to please one's superior (Titus 2:9) or honor him by the homage that is obedience (cf. Ep 6:1), to repudiate egotism and aloofness. It is to spontaneously position oneself as a servant toward one's neighbor in the hierarchy of love. (Spicq, C., & Ernest, J. D. (1994). Theological lexicon of the New

Submission focuses not on personality but **position**. We need to see authority over us not acting on their own, but as instruments in the hand of a **sovereign** God. If we look at people as acting on their own we will eventually become **bitter**, but if we can see them as acting as God allows, we will become **holy**. A beautiful example of this is found in the life of **Joseph**. His brothers consistently mistreated him and it would have been very easy for him to become **bitter** at them. Yet he had a divine perspective on the whole situation and it helped him become a holy man of God.

And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. (Ge 50:20).

To be subject as used here in Titus 3:1 is in the present tense (continual action called for) and the middle voice (reflexive) which calls for the subject to initiate and then participate in the action of putting one's self in subjection to or under the authority of another. In this context the middle voice stresses the voluntary or willing nature of their submission.

In other words, the Cretan Christians were to **continually voluntarily place themselves in under** the authority of the government. They were to submit not necessarily because these individuals are personally worthy of our submission necessarily, but because by submitting to them they were honoring God by obeying His Word.

Early Christian preaching was not limited to the way of salvation but included instructions concerning the practical implications of that salvation for daily living. Paul ever desired that the lives of believers should produce a favorable impression on the non-Christian world. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Paul is saying that the Cretan believers can obey this instruction because God is **sovereign** and all government is of God. Note that Paul does not make any exceptions to the form of government, which implies that this command applies to monarchies, republics, oligarchies, etc, for all have in them the ordination and power of God for the welfare of society. Society needs to be governed for lawlessness always ends in anarchy, misery, and desolation.

Regarding **subjection to the rulers and authorities** it is notable that

restraint is better than the liberty of licentiousness. Compare a river that keeps its bounds to one that overflows its banks. Men... must not forget that all well-ordered societies exist only by subjection... Every community, to be kept in order, must have a recognized head — one who shall be allowed to rule, either by his own will or the organized will of the whole. Hence man, in his most savage state, has some recognized chief. (Pulpit Commentary)

This duty pertains to our attitude and conduct in regard to secular government. It is important to note that Paul specifies no particular kind or level of government or any particular kind or level of government official and thus by his "silence" he allows for no exceptions or qualifications. The Roman government under which the early church lived not only was thoroughly pagan and morally debauched but also was despotic, oppressive, unjust, and brutal. Paul makes clear that the Christian's obligation to respect and obey human government does not rest on its being democratic or just but solely on its being the God-ordained means by which human society is regulated.

The Lord is King! Who then shall dare
Resist his will, distrust his care,
Or murmur at his wise decrees,
Or doubt his royal promises?
Josiah Conder

On the other hand if subjecting ourselves results in performing some action which contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture (tantamount to the will of God), we are to obey God.

EXAMPLES OF EXCEPTIONS

To Titus 3:1 To Be Subject to Authorities

In Acts we see an illustration of the "exception to the rule" -- Peter and the apostles are confronted by the Jewish leaders who declared

"We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with

your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us".

To this Peter and the apostles replied

"We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:28, 29)

Daniel 3+ records a well-known example of an exception of the command to obey governing authorities. King Nebuchadnezzar's decree was

"at the moment you hear the sound ... you are to fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up" (Da 3:5+) and "whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire." (Da 3:6)

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, choose to obey their God rather than the king, declaring

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." (Da 3:16, 17, 18+)

Note that although they did not die, they clearly were willing to die before they disobeyed their Lord. As William Bridge said "If you lay yourself at Christ's feet he will take you into his arms." Indeed...

He who abandons himself to God
will never be abandoned by God.

When all that you are is available to all that God is, then all that God is is available to all that you are. - Ian Thomas

OTHER USES OF HUPOTASSO

In a parallel passage in Romans 13, Paul commands that

every person (literally = every soul = a Hebraism for "every man") **be** in **subjection** (present tense, middle voice = voluntarily and habitually) to the governing authorities (literally "authorities which have themselves over" = authorities who are over the citizen) (Ro 13:1-note)

This verse more literally reads

Let every soul voluntarily place himself habitually in subjection to the higher powers.

Paul emphasizes that

"those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are **refusing to obey God**, and punishment will follow" for "the authorities are sent by God to help you. But if you are doing something wrong, of course you should be afraid, for you will be punished. The authorities are established by God for that very purpose, to punish those who do wrong. So you must obey the government for two reasons: to keep from being punished and to keep a clear conscience." (Ro 13:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) (See **notes** Romans 13:1; 13:2; 13:3; 13:4; 13:5; 13:6; 13:5)

Therefore, the person who resists and opposes human government, resists and opposes God!

In another parallel passage, Peter writes to the his believing audience to

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

Peter goes on to explain the worthy goal attained by godly submission writing that

such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. (1Pe 2:15-note)

The first NT use of **hupotasso** Luke describes provides an example for all believers, recording that as a 12 year old boy, Jesus

went down with (His parents) and came to Nazareth, and He continued in **subjection** (present tense = denoting habitual, continuous subjection) to them and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. (Lk 2:51+)

His relationship with His Heavenly Father did not override or nullify His duty to His earthly parents. Though Jesus was the Creator of the universe, He took His place as an obedient Child in this humble Jewish family.

Luke records that

the seventy (additional disciples Jesus had appointed) returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are (present tense = continually) **subject** to us in Your name. (Lk 10:17+, cf Lk 9:1+)

In the third NT use of **hupotasso**, Paul describing those who are according to the flesh writes that

"the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not (present tense = habitually does not = continued insubordination) **subject** (hupotasso - **middle voice** = the voluntary subjection of oneself to the will of another) itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so" (Ro 8:6, 7+)

Wuest comments that "Such a mind is not marshaled (like troops not placed in proper rank or position) under the command of God, but of Satan. Consequently, those who are within the sphere of the evil nature, are not able to please God. These are, of course, the unsaved. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

John MacArthur adds that "Even the **good deeds** unbelievers perform are not truly a fulfillment of God's law, because they are produced by the flesh, for selfish reasons, and from a heart that is in rebellion. ([The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

In Romans Paul records that the Jews in

seeking (continually) to **establish** (to set up or erect a righteousness of their own as a monument to their own glory and not to God's) their **own** (righteousness - their own means of salvation)... did not **subject** (hupotasso) themselves to the righteousness of God. (Ro 10:3+)

Wuest says that **hupotasso** means "to arrange under, to subordinate," as soldiers in a battalion under a commanding officer" or "to put one's self under orders, to obey." He goes on to help us understand the meaning of **hupotasso** commenting that what Paul is saying here is that the "Appropriation by faith of God's righteousness involves not only the discarding of all dependence upon self and self-effort for salvation, but also **the heart's submission or capitulation** to Jesus as Saviour and Lord. This the Jews did not want to do. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#)) (Bolding added)

Paul writes that God the Father

put all things in **subjection** (hupotasso) under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. (Ep 1:22, 23+)

Comment - Ep 1:22 is a quote from Ps 8:6 indicating that God has exalted Christ and granted Him universal dominion, over His body the church, over men and angels and over all the rest of His creation, animate and inanimate. Christ is clearly the authoritative Head because all things have been placed under His feet.

How is it possible to submit or surrender one's rights to another whether they are rulers as specified here in Titus 3:1 or others? Paul gives us the answer In Ephesians writing that believers should

not get drunk ([present imperative with a negative](#)) with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be** (passive voice, [present imperative](#) - continually) filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Ep 5:18+).

Spirit controlled husbands and wives are then called first to

be subject to (try this in reliance on your [flesh!](#) - hupotasso - present tense = our habit, as our lifestyle, continually to) **one another** (What should motivate this mutual submission?) in the fear (reverential awe) of Christ (Ep 5:21+)

Henry Alford says:

As we are otherwise to be filled, otherwise to sing and rejoice, so also we are otherwise to behave—not blustering nor letting our voices rise in selfish vaunting, as such men do,—but **subject to one another**. (Alford's Greek Testament)

Subjecting one's self to another is **the opposite of self assertion**, the **opposite of an independent, autocratic spirit**. It is the desire to get along with one another, being satisfied with less than one's due, a sweet reasonableness of attitude.

Paul then goes on to give instructions that

Wives, [*be subject*] (not in the Greek but implied by the context) to your **own** (one's own private, peculiar,

unique possession) husbands, **as** (hōs = adverb of comparison = even as, in the same manner as, like as) to the Lord (to Christ; not to the husband as lord and master = the obedience she has to render to her husband is as an obedience rendered to Christ). (Ep 5:22+).

The **Greek** is literally "The wives to their own husbands as to the Lord."

Then Paul adds "as the church is **subject** (hupotasso) to Christ, so also the wives [ought to] (not in the Greek but added by translators) be to their husbands in everything. (Ep 5:24+) (For more in depth discussion of this topic click Wayne Barber's messages on "Spirit-Filled Families")

Wayne Barber notes that in the context of marriage **hupotássō**

does not mean that (the wife) is commanded to obey her husband as a child would obey his parents or a slave would obey his master. A lot of men treat their wife as if they were a door mat. They "walk all over them" acting as if the wife had no ability or were their inferior. That is not what **hupotasso** means."

Dr. Barber goes on to explain that

hupotasso, the word used for wives to husbands, is the word that talks about two people who are equal in God's eyes, totally equal. There is no inferiority of one to the other. Instead the wife makes a choice to place herself as an equal in God's estimate under another equal, her husband, so that there might be order and function in the family. The whole purpose (of a wife submitting to her husband) is to accommodate the **design** which God has ordered...

Husbands, does this mean that your wife is your slave who is called to obey your every command? Does it mean that you treat her like a child? No! If there is a man who thinks that he is superior to his wife in God's eyes, he is gravely mistaken as God's Word teaches (Ga 3:28). However, for His design as the husband to be functional... God says, "Wives, you make it and you choose to put yourself underneath the headship of your husband" in order that the design can be what God says it ought to be. The meaning of it has nothing to do with an inferior submitting to superior. It takes nothing from the dignity of a woman for her to submit, but rather it enhances it. It takes great integrity for a person to do what God says should be done. (excerpt from "Spirit-Filled Families")

In Ephesians 5 (Ep 5:21, 22, 24), submission represents an **act of faith**. The submitting party in effect is placing their trust in God, for there is an inherent danger in submitting to others. What is it? That the other party might take advantage of our submission to them. But if we genuinely trust God and specifically that He is sovereign in this relationship with our mate, we will be willing to submit. A person who is truly yielded to (subjected to) God, and who wants to serve his fellow Christian, would not even think of taking advantage of someone else, saved or unsaved. The husband who **demand**s his wife's submission but does not recognize **his own obligation to submit to her** (Ep 5:21+) and thus distorts God's standard for the marital relationship and cannot function optimally as a Christ-like, godly husband (see Christ's ultimate example of submitting to His Father [although the verb hupotasso is absent, the principle is present] - Php 2:5, 6, 7+, Php 2:8+). Similarly, parents who demand obedience from their children not recognizing their own obligation to submit in loving sacrifice to meet their children's needs are themselves disobedient to their heavenly Father and cannot function optimally as godly parents. To reiterate, biblical submission is only possible in those who are filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit (Ep 5:18).

Ray Stedman comments that "submit" has become the focus of the feminist movement and is probably one of the most hated words among women today. The meaning has been grossly distorted. Many wrongs things have been done in the name of submission. Perhaps the first thing that needs to be said about submission is that it does not cancel out equality. Although it is addressed here to wives, it is not a female word in the Bible but is addressed to men as well. Thus it is not a sexist word. Everyone must submit to other people. In Ephesians 5:21 (note), Paul says Christians are to submit "one to another." The outstanding manifestation of true submission, of course, is seen in our Lord's submitting of Himself to the Father (and as [noted above](#) as a young boy to His parents!). No one would ever conceive of the idea that Jesus found it a reproach to submit to the Father. He delighted in it. It was voluntary on his part. In no way did he regard it as a threat to the equality which he knew existed between himself and the Father. Therefore, to submit to someone does not mean you are not equal. This is the confusing meaning which the world has poured into this word. Submission does not mean inequality. Literally, it means "**put yourself under, arrange yourself under someone, for a good and proper purpose.**" **It is a totally voluntary action.**" ([See complete sermon on Col 3:18-4:6 "Living Christianly"](#))

In the context of the truth that God is opposed to the proud, James gives us a great conditional promise which demonstrates the value of submission...

Submit (hupotasso - **orist imperative** = In context this comes like a military command = Line up under God! Do it now! The orist imperative can even convey a sense of urgency) therefore to God. **Resist** (**orist**

imperative = stand against! Do it now! It's urgent!) the devil and he will flee from you. (Jas 4:7)

Comment: From the context we note that the person who obeys these commands is one who has an attitude of humility (Jas 4:6, cp the same dynamic in 1Pe 5:5-note). In other words, James states that since God sets himself in array against the proud, chose to array yourselves under God, that you might withstand your intractable adversary, the devil. It is worth noting as an aside that one does not need a huge book on "How to Conduct Spiritual Warfare" or a week long course on "How to Confront Demons". Simple, **humble** (Jas 4:6) obedience to God's commands in James 4:7 "activates" God's promise and the enemy must pull back, at least for that moment. However we are not ignorant of his schemes (2Co 2:11) but are aware that he [actually his demonic henchmen as few saints will ever have a direct encounter with Satan for he is not omnipresent] will continually to prowl to and fro looking for an opportune time to attack us again (That was his tact with our Lord - Lk 4:13, cp Mk 14:15). Maintain a humble mindset. Submit to God. Resist the devil. This is the path to victory in "spiritual warfare 101". It has to do with your willingness to obey and submit.

Hupotasso is used 15x in the Septuagint (LXX) (Greek of OT Hebrew)

1Ki 10:15; 1Chr. 22:18; 29:24; 2Chr 9:14; Esther 3:13; 8:12; Ps 8:6; 18:47; 37:7; 47:3; 60:8; 62:1, 5; 108:9; 144:2; Da 6:13; 7:27; 11:37, 39; Hag. 2:18), for example David records that

Thou dost make him to rule over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast **put** (LXX - hupotasso = **subjected**) all things under his feet. (Ps 8:6) ([See Spurgeon's comment](#))

Illustration - The eleventh-century German monarch Henry III became tired of his responsibilities and the worldliness of court life and decided to become a monk. When he went to the monastery and explained his intent, the prior warned him that the course he had chosen would be a difficult one. "Your Majesty," Prior Richard explained, "do you understand that the pledge here is one of obedience? That will be hard because you have been a king." King Henry was undaunted and replied, "I understand. The rest of my life I will be obedient to you, as Christ leads you." "Then I will tell you what to do," Prior Richard said. "Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has placed you." Henry did as he was told. After he died, he was given this epitaph: "The King learned to rule by being obedient." The same might also be said of us. Submission is an important component of the life of obedience to Christ. Not only are we told to submit to Christ, but we also have an obligation to submit to the human authorities that God has placed over us.

Some years ago, pop singer **Bob Dylan** penned a song that declared, "**You gotta serve somebody.**" ([Play song](#)) Have you ever calculated how many people are in authority over you? Try naming as many as you can. Whether it is to a parent, an employer, or the officer who directs traffic on the corner, everyone has somebody to whom they are expected to submit. To whom do you find it most difficult to submit and why? Remember that, like King Henry, Christians also "learn to rule by being obedient." (Today in the Word)

TO RULERS [AND] TO AUTHORITIES: **archais exousiais hupotassesthai peitharchein:**

- Titus 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

In modern vernacular, these two terms would refer to everything from the president down to the city government and local police.

Rulers (746) (**arche**) refers to the commencement of something as an action, process, or state of being. Here **arché** refers to first in relation to **time** (priority in time, the beginning of anything, the origin and by far the most common use in the NT) Arche has three main nuances - (1) beginning, origin Mt 19:4; 24:8; Mk 1:1; 13:8; Lk 1:2; Jm 1:1 ; 15:27; Acts 11:15. Heb 2:3. (2). ruler, authority, official Lk 12:11; 20:20; Titus 3:1. Of angels and demons Ro 8:38; 1 Cor 15:24; Col 2:10, 15.(3) Rule, domain, sphere of influence Jude 1:6.

Arché refers to what is first or has primacy (the state of being first). **Arché** refers to one with whom a process begins, beginning (Col 1:18-note). **Arché** refers the first cause, the beginning (Rev 3:14-note) **Arché** can refer to the first in a series of things or persons. When applied to an individual, **arché** refers to one who is first in order of importance or power.

Arche speaks of those first in order of rulership in a community, "the first ones" in the town. He is an authority figure who initiates activity or process. Here in Titus 3:1 **arché** speaks of the persons first in order of

rulership in a community, "the first ones" in the town.

Arché is used of a corner of a sheet (from the idea that the corners are the beginnings of the sheet) so in Acts 11:5 Luke records "a certain object coming down like great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky... "

Vincent says **arché** refers to beginning and so is that which begins, in this case the leader or the principality. (KJV translates **arché** as **principalities** in Titus 3:1, principality being a powerful ruler, or the rule of someone in authority)

Arché speaks of the sphere of one's official activity, authority or rule.

In Jude 1:6 we read of

angels who did not keep their own **domain** (arché), but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day."

In this use **arché** speaks of the exalted position of angels in heaven, in contradistinction to the lower place occupied by the earth dwellers. This high position and condition, these angels left, which means that they descended to a lower position and condition. In doing that they sinned.

Wuest comments that means **arché** "first of all" and that "The angels left their first or original status as angels, their original position, to violate the laws of God which kept them separate from the human race, members of which latter race occupy a different category among the created intelligences than that of angels." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

Arché speaks of the elementary and preliminary aspects defining the nature of something. For example in Hebrews we read "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the **elementary** (arché) principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food." (He 5:12+)

Arché is used 55 times in the NT (note which NT writer has most uses beginning, 38; corners, 2; domain, 1; elementary, 1; first, 1; first preaching, 1; principalities, 1; rule, 4; rulers, 6. -Matt. 19:4, 8; 24:8, 21; Mk. 1:1; 10:6; 13:8, 19; Lk. 1:2; 12:11; 20:20; Jn. 1:1, 2; 2:11; 6:64; 8:25, 44; 15:27; 16:4; Acts 10:11; 11:5, 15; 26:4; Ro 8:38; 1 Co. 15:24; Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Phil. 4:15; Col. 1:16, 18; 2:10, 15; Titus 3:1; Heb. 1:10; 2:3; 3:14; 5:12; 6:1; 7:3; 2 Pet. 3:4; 1 Jn. 1:1; 2:7, 13, 14, 24; 3:8, 11; 2 Jn. 1:5, 6; Jude 1:6; Rev. 3:14; 21:6; 22:13

The Septuagint (LXX) uses **arche** 162 times - translated: Gen. 1:1, 16; 2:10; 10:10; 13:4; 40:13, 20f; 41:13, 21; 43:18, 20; 49:3; Exod. 6:25; 12:2; 34:22; 39:16; Num. 1:2; 4:22; 24:20; 26:2; Deut. 11:12; 17:18, 20; 21:17; 33:15, 27; Jos. 24:2; Jdg. 7:11, 16f, 19f; 9:34, 37, 43f; 20:18; Ruth 1:22; 1 Sam. 11:11; 13:17f; 2 Sam. 7:10; 14:26; 17:9; 21:9f; 1 Ki. 7:35; 21:9, 12; 2 Ki. 17:25; 1 Chr. 12:32; 16:7; 17:9; 26:10; 29:12; 2 Chr. 13:12; 23:8; Ezr. 4:6; 8:18; 9:2; Neh. 9:17; 12:46; Est. 4:17; 8:12; Job 37:3; 40:19; Ps. 74:2; 77:11; 78:2; 102:25; 110:3; 111:10; 119:152, 160; 137:6; 139:17; Prov. 1:7; 8:22f; 9:10; 15:33; 16:7, 12; 17:14; Eccl. 3:11; 7:8; 10:13; Song 4:8; Isa. 1:26; 2:6; 9:6f, 15; 10:10; 19:11, 15; 22:11; 23:7; 40:21; 41:4, 26f; 42:9f; 43:9, 13; 44:8; 45:21; 48:8, 16; 51:9; 63:16, 19; Jer. 2:3; 13:21; 22:6; 25:20; 26:1; 34:1; 49:2, 35; 51:58; Lam. 2:19; 4:1; Ezek. 10:11; 16:25, 31, 55; 21:19, 21; 29:14f; 31:3, 10, 14; 36:11; 42:10, 12; 43:14; 48:1; Dan. 2:37; 6:26; 7:12, 14, 26f; 8:1; 9:21, 23; 11:41; Hos. 1:2, 11; Amos 6:1, 7; Obad. 1:20; Mic. 3:1; 4:8; 5:2; Nah. 1:6; 3:8, 10; Hab. 1:12; Zech. 12:7.

EXAMPLES OF USES OF ARCHE

Jesus declared that

all these things are merely the **beginning** (arché) of birth pangs." (Mt 24:8)

John writes that

In the **beginning** (arché) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

John records Jesus' words declaring that He is

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the **Beginning** (arché) of the creation of God" (Re 3:14-note)

In addressing a group of "pseudo-believing" Jews, Jesus declared to them that

You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the

beginning (arché), and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar, and the father of lies." (Jn 8:44)

In his first epistle John writes that

the one who (habitually) practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the **beginning** (arché) . The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1Jn 3:8)

In the last use in the NT Jesus declares

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the **beginning** (arché) and the end." (Re 22:13-note)

Jesus promised His disciples that

when they bring you before the synagogues and the **rulers** (arché) and the authorities (exousía), do not become anxious about how or what you should speak in your defense, or what you should say for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say." (Lk 12:11, 12)

In a reference to the hierarchy of evil supernatural beings Paul writes

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor **principalities** (arché), nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Ro 8:38, 39-note)

In a similar use Paul reminds the saints at Ephesus that Christ is now seated "far above all **rule** (arché) and authority (**exousia**) and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come." (Ep 1:21- note)

Paul reminds all believers that we need the full armor of God "for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the **rulers** (arché) against the powers (**exousia**), against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Ep 6:12-note)

Paul reminds the Colossian saints that in Christ "you have been made complete (perfect tense = permanence) and He is the head over all **rule** (arché) and authority." (Col 2:10-note)

Arché is used 158 times in the **Septuagint** (LXX = Greek of Hebrew OT), the first use referring to time, Moses recording "In the beginning (LXX = arché) God made the heaven and the earth." (Ge 1:1)

In another reference to time we read that "Naomi returned and with her Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning (LXX = arché) of barley harvest." (Ru 1:22-note)

In a reference acknowledging the preeminence and rule of Jehovah we read "Now behold, God is with us at our **Head** (LXX = arché) and His priests with the signal trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you will not succeed." (2Chr 13:12)

John MacArthur comments that "It is important to note that Paul specifies no particular kind or level of government or any particular kind or level of government official. He allows for no exceptions or qualifications." ([Ibid](#))

Authorities (1849) (**exousia** from **éxesti** = it is permitted, it is lawful) means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right. "[Authority](#) or right is the dominant meaning (of exousia) in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousía** refers to delegated [authority](#) and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone.

Exousia is an important term in the Gospels. Many conflicts in Jesus' life and ministry turn on debates about authority or the idea that Jesus taught with an unparalleled authority (Mt 7:29; 8:9; 9:6, 8; 21:23-27; 28:18; Mk 1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 11:28-33; Lk 4:32, 36; 5:24; 7:8; 20:2-8).

Exousia summarized (Gingrich) —

1. freedom of choice, right to act, decide, etc. Jn 10:18; Acts 5:4; Ro 9:21; 1 Cor 9:4ff, 12; 2 Th 3:9; Heb 13:10; Rev 13:5; 22:14.
2. ability, capability, might, power Mt 9:8; Mk 1:22, 27; Lk 10:19; Acts 8:19; Rev 9:19 ; 20:6.
3. authority, absolute power Mt 21:23, 24, 27; 28:18; Mk 2:10; Acts 26:12.
4. power or authority exercised by rulers, etc., by virtue of their office

a. ruling power, official power Lk 7:8; 20:20;17:12f.

b. domain, jurisdiction Lk 4:6; 23:7; Eph 2:2; Col 1:13.

c. bearers of authority in the state, authorities, officials, government Lk 12:11; Ro 13:1, 2, 3; cosmic powers above and beyond the human sphere but not unrelated to it 1 Cor 15:24; Eph 1:21; 3:10; Col 2:15.

5. means of exercising power, probably a veil 1 Cor 11:10 (BORROW [Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

Friberg's summary of **exousia** -

(1) as denoting the power of decision making, especially as the unlimited possibility of action proper to God authority, power (Acts 1.7);

(2) as denoting God's power displayed through the sphere of nature power, authority (Rev 9.10, 19);

(3) as denoting limited authority to act, given to Satan in his sphere of dominion power, sphere of power, dominion (AC 26.18);

(4) as Jesus' divinely given and unrestricted exercise of freedom to act power, authority (Jn 10.18);

(5) as authority imparted to a community to act in ordering relationships within it right, control, authority (2 Co 13.10);

(6) as those in whom authority for ruling rests, both supernatural and human, especially in the plural officials, authorities, dignitaries, (the) government (Col 1.16);

(7) 1 Co 11.10 variously interpreted, including

(a) a woman ought to have authority over her own head (to unveil) and

(b) a woman ought to have (a sign or symbol of) authority on her head (a head-covering, pointing to the authority of her husband) (BORROW [Analytical Lexicon page 156](#))

W E Vine explains that **exousía** evolved "from the meaning of "leave or permission" or "liberty of doing as one pleases" and passed to that of "the ability or strength with which one is endued," then to that of the "power of authority," the right to exercise power or "the power of rule or government," the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Wuest writes that **exousía** means literally "to be out and was used of that authority which a person has which is delegated to him from someone else. The person delegating the authority is in a sense out of himself and acting in the person to whom he has delegated the authority. Thus, the word means "delegated authority." The word means also "the power of authority and of right." It was used in legal practice of delegated authority. Here it is used of our Lord as having that authority in Himself, not derived from others. The rabbis quoted from other rabbis and felt themselves to be expounders of tradition. The Messiah struck a new note here, and the people were quick to recognize it. They saw that here was a Teacher who spoke on His own **authority**." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

Here in Titus **exousía** speaks of delegated authority and qualifies the civil rulers as those having duly constituted authority.

Exousía -102x - [See all uses below](#). **NAS** - authorities, 7; authority, 65; charge, 1; control, 1; domain, 2; dominion, 1; jurisdiction, 1; liberty, 1; power, 11; powers, 1; right, 11.

When a person delegates someone to do something for him and in his name, he is in a sense in that person, doing that very thing which he asked the other one to do. For example, the Son of Man on earth had the delegated authority, as the Son of God, from God the Father, to forgive sins, Mark recording that

But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has **authority** (exousía) on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home. (Mk 2:10, 11).

To further illustrate the meaning we read that Jesus

summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs; and He was giving them authority over the unclean spirits." (Mk 6:7)

Comment: This power over the demons would authenticate their preaching

The first use of **exousía** in the NT is by Matthew (and Mark) who records

that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching for He was teaching them as one having **authority** (exousía), and not as their scribes. (Mt 7:28, 29-notes)

A T Robertson commenting on the meaning of **exousía** in Mt 7:29 adds that Jesus "struck a note not found by the rabbi. They quoted other rabbis and felt their function to be expounders of the traditions which they made a millstone around the necks of the people. By so doing they set aside the word and will of God by their traditions and petty legalism (Mk 7:9,13). They were casuists and made false interpretations to prove their punctilious points of external etiquette to the utter neglect of the spiritual reality. The people noticed at once that here was a personality who got his **power (authority)** direct from God, not from the current scribes." ([Titus 3 Word Studies](#))

Paul explained to the Ephesians that prior to their new birth, they had "walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the **power** (exousía) (here synonymous with evil spirits or demons whose realm was the atmosphere) of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience." (Ep 2:2-note)

Exousía is used as a reference to demon powers also in Ep 1:21 (note) and Ep 6:12 (note).

Paul uses **exousía** in his let to the Colossians reminding them that God has "delivered us from the **domain** (exousia) of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Col 1:13, 14-notes)

Wuest comments that the in Titus 3:1 "**exousia** properly signifies liberty of action, and thus, like the corresponding English word license, involves secondary ideas, of which either may be so prominent as to eclipse the other; (1) **authority, delegated power** or (2) **tyranny**, lawlessness, unrestrained or arbitrary power... this latter idea of **acapricious unruly rule** is prominent here (Col 1:13, 14-notes). The expression '**the power of darkness**' occurs also in Lk 22:53 (Jesus declared "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the **power** (exousía) **of darkness** are yours."), where again the idea of disorder is involved. The transference from darkness to light is here represented as a transference from an arbitrary tyranny, an exousia, to a well-ordered sovereignty, a kingdom." The phrase refers to the tyrannical rule of Satan and his demons over the unsaved. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

God Himself "removes kings and establishes kings" (Da 2:21) Jesus speaking to Pilate reminded even this corrupt ruler that

"You would have no **authority** (exousia) over Me, unless it had been given you from above." (Jn 19:11).

God is the sovereign authority and He is in control.

Exousía is used 24 times in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (LXX) -

2Ki 20:13; Esther 3:13; 4:17; 8:12; Ps 114:2; 136:8 9; Pr 17:14; Eccl 8:8; Da 3:2, 3, 30; 4:1, 3, 17, 26, 27, 31, 34; 5:4, 7, 16, 29; 6:3; 7:6, 12, 14, 26, 27; 11:5;

The psalmist writes that we should give thanks to God who made

The sun to **rule** (LXX = exousia) by day, for His lovingkindness is everlasting, the moon and stars to **rule** (LXX = exousia) by night, for His lovingkindness is everlasting." (Ps 136:8, 9)

The heavenly bodies received their "authority to rule" from Jehovah God. In an passage prophesying the reign of Messiah Daniel records that

to Him was given the **dominion** (LXX = exousia), and the honour, and the kingdom; and all nations, tribes, and languages, shall serve him: his **dominion** (LXX = exousia) is an everlasting **dominion** (LXX = exousia), which shall not pass away, and his kingdom shall not be destroyed." (Da 7:14-note)

In this same section, Daniel predicts the judgment on the "rather small horn" (the Antichrist of Re 13:2-note) where

And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great **authority**." Antichrist's power delegated by Satan) when "the court will sit for judgment and his **dominion** (LXX = exousia) will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever." (Da 7:26-note)

Daniel then records that "we the people" receive this exousia, writing that

Then the sovereignty, the **dominion** (LXX = exousia), and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the **dominions** (LXX = exousia) will serve and obey Him." (Da 7:27-note)

Sam Hamstra, Jr has a detailed discussion of **authority**

The concept of authority seldom appears in the Old Testament. It is used predominantly in the New

Testament, where the word *exousia* functions in at least four ways.

First, authority is the freedom to decide or a right to act without hindrance.All such authority begins with God, for there is no authority except from God (Romans 13:1). God has the right to mold the clay as he wishes (Romans 9:21) and to set times and dates (Acts 1:7). God gave Paul the right to preach the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:18). Believers have the right to become children of God (John 1:12), and they have freedom with respect to the law (1 Corinthians 8:9). While authority is valueless without the power to make it effective, we can make a fine distinction between the two concepts. This first understanding of authority, then, is distinct from power and refers primarily to a prerogative.

Second, the concept of authority refers to the power, ability, or capability to complete an action.Jesus was given the authority to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6-8) and to drive out spirits (Mark 6:7). Jesus gave seventy-two disciples the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions (Luke 10:19). Simon sought power to grant the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:19). Satan has authority to function within the parameters established by God (Acts 26:18).

Third, the word "authority" is used with reference to delegated authority in the form of a warrant, license, or authorization to perform. Jesus was asked by whose authorization he taught (Matthew 21:23). He was granted authority for his ministry from God the Father (John 10:18). Saul was sent to Damascus to persecute Christians by warrant of the priests (Acts 26:12). God gave the apostles license to build up the church (2 Corinthians 10:8).

Fourth, by a natural extension of meaning, *exousia* [Luke 20:20). When Pilate learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction or authority, the governor sent him to Herod (Luke 23:7). Rulers and kings have their spheres of influence (Romans 13:1), as does Satan (Colossians 1:13), but Christ has been placed above all realms of authority (Ephesians 1:21). More often *exousia* [Titus 3:1). This use of authority indicates a social relation between at least two individuals where one is the ruler. The subordinate in the relationship accepts the ruler's orders, not by external constraint but out of the conviction that the ruler is entitled to give orders and that it is the duty of the subject to obey and recognize the authenticity of the ruler's position and orders.

From a theological perspective the fourth use of authority is most significant. The question of authority is a fundamental issue facing every person, especially the believer. Its significance cannot be overestimated. Every person has an authority in life that he or she submits to as a subordinate, not by constraint but by conviction. Furthermore, God has created human beings to live under his authority. When they choose to live under a different rule, that of self or an idol, they sin. This is, in a simple summary, the teaching of Genesis 1-3. That portion of Scripture illustrates the human tendency, moved by pride, to seek independence from external authority and to establish self as the final authority in life. ([Click for the entire article](#))

Related Resources

- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Authority](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Authority](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Authority](#)
- Hasting Dictionary of the NT [Authority](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Authority](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Authority in Religion](#), [Authority in General](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Authority](#)

TO BE OBEDIENT: *peitharchein* (PAN):

- Titus 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

To be obedient ([3980](#)) (*peitharcho* from *peitho* = persuade, obey + *archo* = ruler) which literally means to be persuaded by a ruler and then to obey and submit to the authority of rulers or magistrates.

This rare verb form is almost a reiteration of the preceding section.

Cretans were naturally intractable, and so Paul tells Titus to continually remind the Christians to **obey** (**present tense** = continual action called for) **the civil authorities**, some of whom were undoubtedly "liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." (Titus 1:12-note) In such a difficult environment, the old flesh nature can be easily provoked to less than godly words and actions. Therefore the only way

believers can successfully heed these instructions is by continual dependence on the "grace of God" (Titus 2:11-note) instructing us to deny ungodliness.

The mention of **obedience**

states the result and visible demonstration of their attitude of submission. ([Ibid](#))

Polybius wrote that the Cretans were notorious for a rebellious spirit and were constantly involved in insurrections, murders and internecine wars.

TO BE READY FOR EVERY GOOD DEED: *pros pan ergon agathon hetoimos einai*, (PAN):

- Titus 3:8,14; 2:14; 1Cor 15:58; Gal 6:9,10; Ep 2:10; Php 1:11; Col 1:10; 1Ti 5:10; 2Ti 2:21; Heb 13:21
- Titus 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Ready (2092) (**hetoimos** from an old noun **heteos** = fitness) means ready, prepared, in a state of readiness.

TDNT - The clear meaning of this word group is preparation both in the active sense of "making ready" and in the passive of "readiness," "ability" or "resolution." ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Eerdmans](#))

Hetoimos is used 17x in the NASB (Matt. 22:4, 8; 24:44; 25:10; Mk. 14:15; Lk. 12:40; 14:17; 22:33; Jn. 7:6; Acts 23:15, 21; 2 Co. 9:5; 10:6, 16; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:5; 3:15) and is translated: accomplished, 1; opportune, 1; ready, 15.

We get a good sense of the meaning of **hetoimos** in Jesus instruction to His disciples that

For this reason (in light of alertness necessary to catch a thief at night) you be (continually, habitually, as your lifestyle) **ready** (**hetoimos**) too for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will." ([Mt 24:44](#))

Jesus is saying that His people should be on the tiptoes of expectancy. (Mt 25:20 = similar warning)

In another NT use Peter exhorts suffering saints that instead of fearing intimidation and being agitated, saints are to "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always (all times, all places, no exceptions) [being] **ready** (**hetoimos**) to make a defense (an apologetic) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1Pe 3:15-note)

Peter is insisting that the believer must understand what he believes and why one is a Christian, and then BE READY and BE ABLE to articulate one's beliefs humbly, thoughtfully, reasonably, and biblically. Are you "**ready**"?

Hetoimos - 35x in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint** - Ex 15:17; 19:11, 15; 34:2; Lev. 16:21; Nu 16:16; Deut. 32:35; Jos. 4:3; 8:4; 1 Sam. 13:21; 26:4; 2Sa 23:5; 1Ki. 2:45; 8:39, 43, 49; 2Chr. 6:2, 30, 33, 39; Esther 1:1; 3:14; 8:13; Ps. 17:12; 33:14; 38:17; 57:7; 93:2; 108:1; 112:7; Ezek. 21:10, 11; Hos. 6:3; Mic 4:1; 6:8).

In a verse that Jonathan Edwards took as his text for famous sermon, ['Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God'](#), Moses records God's declaration that

Vengeance is Mine, and retribution. In due time their foot will slip; for the day of their calamity is near and **the impending things are hastening upon** (LXX = hetoimos = in a state of readiness) them." (Dt 32:35)

In the Psalms (Ps 57:7), **hetoimos** is used to describe the psalmist's heart as in a state of preparedness or readiness. In a well known verse **Micah** declares

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly (LXX = hetoimos = to be ready to walk) with your God? (Micah 6:8)

Here in Titus 3, Paul says that Titus is to continually remind the Cretan Christians to continually be ("be" is in the present tense = this is to be their habitual practice, their very lifestyle) in a state of readiness, fitness and preparedness (**hetoimos**) as good Christian citizens to carry out good deeds.

As good citizens, believers must also "be **ready** to do whatever is good"--prepared and willing to participate in activities that promote the welfare of the community. They must not stand coldly aloof from praiseworthy enterprises of government but show good public spirit, thus proving that Christianity is a constructive force in

society. ([Ibid](#))

Why are believers to be "**ready**", "ripe", "primed " or "prepared", able to respond without delay or hesitation? In short this attitude equips us for every **good deed**. But there is another aspect to the readiness and that is that we be "confessed up" and "repented up" walking in light, walking in holiness, abiding in the Vine (John 15:5), cleansed so we might be "vessels of honor, set apart and useful for every good work." (2Ti 2:21) As stated below we need to **BE** good (abiding in the Vine) before we can **DO** good! Practically speaking, this means we must continually be filled with the Holy Spirit of Jesus Who continually "energizes" in us the desire and the power to DO good deeds which are pleasing to the Father. (Eph 5:18+, Php 2:13NLT+)

Paul will elaborate on what is meant by "**every good deed**" in the verses that follow.

Good deed or "**good work**" (**ergon** = work + **agathon** = good) is a frequent Pauline phrase used 6x in the short letter to Titus (Titus 1:16, 2:7, 14, 3:1, 8, 14-see **notes** Ti 1:16; 2:7; 14; 3:1; 8; 14). See [summary of Good Works](#) in the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith

Good works that will abide forever, are works with an "o" knocked out!

"GOD WORKS"

Here are all the NT uses of the phrase **good work(s)** or **good deed(s)** (Note some of these uses use **kalos** for **good** rather than **agathos**)...

Matthew 5:16-note Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your **good works**, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Comment: The difficult portion of this verse is "in such a way" (e.g., see 1Co 4:5 - even our "motives" will be assayed by our Righteous Refiner! Woe!)

Mt 26:10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you bother the woman? For she has done **agood deed** to Me.

Mark 14:6+ But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her? She has done a **good deed** to Me.

John 10:32-33 Jesus answered them, "I showed you many **good works** from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" 33 The Jews answered Him, "For a **good work** we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

2Co 5:10+ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his **deeds** in the body, according to what he has done, whether **good** or bad

Comment: bad is not kakos or evil as the Textus Receptus has it but phaulos = worthlessness. Phaulos signifies the impossibility of any true gain ever coming forth from the action being judged.

2Co 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every **good deed**;

Comment: This verse emphasizes that good deeds are grace deeds and as such are in no way natural deeds but supernatural deeds.

Ephesians 2:10+ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Philippians 1:6+ - For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began **agood work** in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:10+ - so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every **good work** and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Comment: Here we see good works can be discerned by bearing spiritual fruit and we observe from this prayer beginning in Col 1:9-note that the person who does good deeds is filled with a knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. In other words they are not filled up with themselves and their desire for men's adulation.

2Th 2:17 - comfort and strengthen your hearts in every **good work** and word.

Comment: Paul explains the role of prayer in good deeds.

1Ti 2:10 but rather by means of **good works**, as befits women making a claim to godliness.

1Ti 5:10 - having a reputation for **good works**; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every **good work**.

1Ti 5:25 Likewise also, **deeds** that are **good** are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

1Ti 6:18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in **good works**, to be generous and ready to share, 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Comment: Note the eternal aspect of good deeds done in this present age!

2 Timothy 2:21+ - Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every **good work**.

Comment: Note our part in making ourselves holy vessels which God would use to carry out His holy deeds.

2 Timothy 3:17+ - so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every **good work**.

Comment: Observe the vital role of the "all Scripture" in equipping the man or woman of God for good deeds! What is the implication if a person is continually practicing "good deeds" but is virtually never taking in the pure milk of the Word?

Titus 1:16+ They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any **good deed**.

Comment: Possessors of Christ's Spirit, not professors of such, are the only ones who can perform good God glorifying deeds.

Titus 2:7+ in all things show yourself to be an example of **good deeds**, with purity in doctrine, dignified,

Titus 2:14+ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for **good deeds**.

Comment: Realization of the truth that we are His precious possession, motivates to be "boiling" or "on fire" for good deeds.

Titus 3:1+ Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every **good deed**,

Comment: Being ready or prepared for "God deeds" necessitates that we walk in communion with Christ so that we might see with eyes of faith those deeds which were prepared beforehand.

Titus 3:8+ This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in **good deeds**. These things are good and profitable for men.

Titus 3:14+ And let our people also learn to engage in **good deeds** to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

Hebrews 10:24+ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and **good deeds**,

Comment: We need to provoke one another to carry out good deeds.

1Peter 2:12+ Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your **good deeds**, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Comment: The purpose of good deeds is similar to that explained by Jesus in Mt 5:16-note

C H Spurgeon on good works

- Our best performances are so stained with sin, that it is hard to know whether they are good works or bad works.
- Believing right doctrine will no more save you, than doing good works will save you.
- The child of God knows his good works do not make him acceptable to God, for he was acceptable to God by Jesus Christ long before he had any good works.

- I am throwing all my good works overboard, and lashing myself to the plank of free grace; for I hope to swim to glory on it.
- Morality is a neat cover for foul venom, but it does not alter the fact that the heart is vile, and the man himself is under damnation. Men will be damned with good works as well as without them, if they make them their confidence (rather than Jesus Christ).
- Faith has a saving connection with Christ. Christ is on the shore, so to speak, holding the rope, and as we lay hold of it with the hand of our confidence, He pulls us to shore; but all good works having no connection with Christ are drifted along down the gulf of fell despair.
- One might better try to sail the Atlantic in a paper boat, than try to get to heaven on good works.
- Abhor all idea of being saved by good works, but O, be as full of good works as if you were to be saved by them!

Good deeds are **God deeds**, deeds prepared by, initiated by and empowered by God's Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, Who lives in us and as such are deeds which are designed to glorify our Father (Mt 5:16-note). **Good deeds** are not natural deeds but supernatural deeds, as is clearly shown by the foundation of such deeds which Paul explained to the saints in Ephesus writing that...

we (saints by grace through faith) are His workmanship (**poiema** = His work of art, His masterpieces!), created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:10-note)

When is **beforehand**? I believe these works were prepared even before we were born again and in fact even before the foundation of the world. I would submit when He ordained that we would be His children, choosing us to be in Christ **before the foundation of the world**. (Eph 1:14-note)

John Morley helps us understand the "good" in "good deeds" writing that "It is not enough to do good. One must do it in the right way."

Chester A. Pennington also adds the qualifier that "No amount of **good deeds** can make us good persons. We must **be** good before we can **do** good."

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917) - The expression of Christian character is not **good doing**, but God-likeness.

See related resource by **A W Pink** - [The Scriptures and Good Works](#)

Paul emphasized the principle that **good deeds** flow from "**ready**" vessels, writing that

if a man cleanses himself from these things (Amplified - "from what is ignoble and unclean, who separates himself from contact with contaminating and corrupting influences"), he will be a vessel (instrument) for honor, sanctified, useful (beneficial for honorable and noble purposes) to the Master, **prepared** (ready, ripe, primed) for every **good work** (ergon agathon)." (2Ti 2:21-note)

In other words, you get up, go to work, and immediately God gives you an opportunity to perform **agood work**. Are you ready?

Every morning is a new day of opportunity and we need to arise and "present (our) bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God" (Ro 12:1-note), redeem (buy up) "the time (opportunities), because the days are evil" (Eph 5:16-note), disciplining ourselves for godliness which is "profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." (1Ti 4:7, 8-see notes 4:7; 4:8)

R. L. Dabney adds that...

The gospel teaches us that while believers are not rewarded on account of their works, they are rewarded according to their works... While our works are naught as a ground of merit for justification, they are all-important as evidences that we are justified.

Spurgeon put it this way...

I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. Lamps do not talk, but they do shine.

Don't let the opportunities slip by. Be "confessed up", "repented up" and "filled up" with the Holy Spirit and you will be ready to recognize the opportunities God graciously gives. And remember that although we are to be seen doing good works, we must not do good works in order to be seen!

Peter explained the vital importance of **good deeds** in a godless society exhorting us to

Keep (our) behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander (us) as evildoers, they may because of (our) **good deeds**, as they observe (behold with their own eyes like a spectator or

overseer) them, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1Pe 2:12-note)

In light of the importance of **good deeds**, the writer of Hebrews encourages saints to

consider how to stimulate one another to love and **good deeds**. (He 10:24-note)

Your **good works** will validate your **good words** (works are fruit but words are leaves) which is in stark contrast to the false teachers who

profess to know God, but by their **deeds** they (continually) deny Him, being detestable (root word = "to stink") and disobedient and worthless for any **good deed**" (Titus 1:16-note).

Good deeds are not the **root** of salvation, but they are the **fruit** of genuine salvation (cf Mt 3:8; Ep 2:10[[note](#)]). We are saved by God's work, not by good works. See devotional "[Good Deeds or the Cross?](#)"

Tears unavailing, no merit had I;
Mercy had saved me, or else I must die;
Sin had alarmed me, fearing God's face—
But now I'm a sinner saved by grace.
—Gray

The lives of believers should continually demonstrate the reality of the spiritual regeneration and supernatural transformation they have received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Believers who have been **redeemed... from every lawless deed** and now belong to Christ (as His personal possession), are to be **zealous** (afire, ardent, fervent, eager, enthusiastic) **for good deeds**. (Titus 2:14-note) See devotional "[Our Way of Life](#)."

Thomas Adams phrased it this way...

Good deeds are such things that no man is saved for them nor without them.

John Calvin rightly reminds us (for a man is tested by the praise accorded him - Pr 27:21)...

In our good works nothing is our own.

Oswald Chambers alluded to the supernatural aspect of good deeds when he exhorted us to...

Do good until it is an unconscious habit of life and you do not know you are doing it.

Martin Luther in his preface to his comments on Romans wrote...

Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith; and so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises; it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them. He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works, and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words, about faith and good works.

HIS WORKS/MY WORKS - If God did not bless, not one hair, not a solitary wisp of straw, would grow; but there would be an end of everything. **At the same time God wants me to take this stance:** I would have nothing whatever if I did not plow and sow. God does not want to have success come without work, and yet I am not to achieve it by my work. He does not want me to sit at home, to loaf, to commit matters to God, and to wait till a fried chicken flies into my mouth. That would be tempting God.;

Two Ropes - During his days as guest lecturer at Calvin Seminary, R. B. Kuiper once used the following illustration of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. "I liken them to two ropes going through two holes in the ceiling and over a pulley above. If I wish to support myself by them, I must cling to them both. If I cling only to one and not the other, I go down. "I read the many teachings of the Bible regarding God's election, predestination, his chosen, and so on. I read also the many teachings regarding '*whosoever will may come*' and urging people to exercise their responsibility as human beings. These seeming contradictions cannot be reconciled by the puny human mind. With childlike faith, I cling to both ropes, fully confident that in eternity I will see that both strands of truth are, after all, of one piece." (John Morren)

Related Resource:

- [Divine Sovereignty vs. Human Responsibility](#) - Ken Boa
-

Spurgeon wrote the following regarding works and our Salvation. - William Wickham being appointed by King Edward to build a stately church, wrote in the windows, "This work made William Wickham." When charged by the king for assuming the honour of that work to himself as the author, whereas he was only the overseer, he answered that he meant not that he made the work, but that the work made him, having before been very poor, and then in great credit. Lord, when we read in thy Word that we must **work out** our own salvation ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), thy meaning is not that our salvation (Php 2:12+) should be the effect of our work, but our faith — Feathers for Arrows (See Ep 2:10+ for a faith that works!)

As alluded to in some of the preceding quotes, we must be careful to notice that the phrase is **good deeds** which differs from **your deeds**. Let me explain. Paul is calling for **good (agathos = good** in its character or constitution, beneficial in its effect) **deeds**, and the only "**good**" **deeds** are those borne by believers (like "branches bearing fruit") who are abiding in Christ ("the Vine" Jn 15:5). **Good deeds** reflect Christ's life (THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST) flowing through us, initiating in us the desire to do the good work and also supernaturally energizing or enabling us to accomplish the good deed. When people see such "supernatural deeds" they are forced to acknowledge that there must be a supernatural Source and thereby they have a proper opinion of the Father. In other words the visible supernatural gives a clear picture of the invisible Supernatural God, our Father. (Mt 5:16-note).

As Paul reminds us in (Php 2:13+)

it is God Who is at **work** in you, both to will and to **work** for His good pleasure.

Or in the New Living Translation

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. (Php 2:13NLT+)

Jesus stated the basic principle of **good deeds** when He declared

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for **apart from Me you can do nothing** (absolutely, totally nothing!)... By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit (good deeds = good fruit) and so prove to be My disciples... You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain... " (John 15:5,8,16)

Paul reminded the Corinthian church of this same foundational principle regarding **good deeds**, explaining that

God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for **every good deed** (2Cor 9:8).

Paul acknowledged that the key to his **good works** was the grace of God (a key word in the following passage and a key word in any life that manifests "good works")

But by the **grace** of God I am what I am, and His **grace** toward me did not prove vain; but I **labored** even more than all of them, **yet not I, but the grace of God with** ("WITH" IS NOT [META](#) BUT SYN = INTIMATELY WITH) **me**. (1Cor 15:10+).

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul emphasized that

no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ ("the Vine"). Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each **man's work**. If any **man's work** which he has built upon it **remains**, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire. (1Cor 3:11, 12, 13, 14, 15+)

One day in the future the Lord Jesus will even

disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. (1Cor 4:5+)

Note: Each man will receive praise! Amazing grace! Praise the Lord!

In sum, Paul is referring to a genuine, sincere, loving, Spirit empowered, God glorifying eagerness to serve others. No matter how hostile the society around us may be, we are to be good to the people in it whose lives intersect with ours. Paul reminded the Galatian believers that "While we have opportunity, [we are to] **do good (agathos)** to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal. 6:10). Believers are to be known for what might be described as **consistent aggressive goodness**, done however not simply out of a sense of obligation or duty but out of an unselfish love for our Lord and for other people,

for (we) have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for (us), leaving (us) an example... to

follow in His steps... entrusting Himself to Him Who judges righteously. (1Pe 2:21, 22, 23+)

We do not witness only with our lips; we must back up our "talk" with our "walk." There should be nothing in our conduct that will give the unsaved world ammunition to attack Christ and the Gospel. Our **good works** must back up our **good words**. Jesus said this in Matthew 5:16+ ("*Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*"), and the entire Bible echoes this truth. The powerful impact Christians can make on the lost when they combine a godly life with a loving witness is well known to most believers. We all know of instances of some wonderful conversions simply because dedicated Christians let their lights shine. On the other hand, we can recall with grief some lost persons who rejected the Word because of the inconsistent lives of "professed" believers.

In the summer of 1805, a number of Indian chiefs and warriors met in council at Buffalo Creek, New York to hear a presentation of the Christian message by a Mr. Cram from the Boston Missionary Society. After the sermon, a response was given by Red Jacket, one of the leading chiefs. Among other things, the chief said:

"Brother, you say that there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit. If there is but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agree, as you can all read the Book? "Brother, we are told that you have been preaching to the white people in this place. These people are our neighbors. We are acquainted with them. We will wait a little while and see what effect your preaching has upon them. If we find it does them good, makes them honest and less disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again of what you have said."

We are the Bibles the world is reading.
We are the truths the world is needing.
We may be the sermons the world is heeding.

What version of the "Bible" do you neighbors see in your life?
Is it the "living version" or the "distorted version?"

Barnes - A Christian should be always ready to do good as far as he is able (ED: AND HE IS "**ABLE**" ONLY AS HE IS FILLED WITH AND **ENABLED** BY THE HOLY SPIRIT - Eph 5:18+). He should not need to be urged, or coaxed, or persuaded (ED: BUT HE OR SHE SHOULD BE SENSITIVE TO THE "URGING" OF THE SPIRIT IN US WHO GIVES US NOT ONLY THE "DESIRE" TO DO A GOOD WORK, BUT THE POWER TO FOLLOW THROUGH! READ/MEMORIZE - Php 2:13NLT+), but should be so ready always to do good that he will count it a privilege to have the opportunity to do it.

Matthew Henry - Spiritual privileges do not make void or weaken, but confirm civil duties. Mere good words and good meanings are not enough without good works.

Thomas Adams - Good deeds are such things that no man is saved for them nor without them.

Related Resources:

- Another onsite discussion of good works
- [Spurgeon's sermon - Good Works](#)
- [Torrey's Topic - Good Works](#)
- [Greek Word Study on Poiema](#)
- Believers Are God's Masterpiece, His Poiema
- Ephesians 2:10 Commentary - Created for good works
- [Incredible example of good deed in life of William Borden \(of "Borden's milk" family\)](#)
- [Nine Messages on "Good Works"](#) - Spurgeon, Pink, Bunyan, Manton, Bonar
- [What does it mean that good works are the result of salvation?](#) - Gotquestions.org
- [What is the relationship of faith, works, and security in salvation?](#) - Gotquestions.org
- [Is salvation by faith alone, or by faith plus works?](#) - Gotquestions.org
- [How can salvation be not of works when faith is required? Isn't believing a work?](#) - Gotquestions.org
- [Why is faith without works dead?](#) - Gotquestions.org
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Works, Good](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Works, Good](#)
- Thompson Chain Reference [Works, Good](#)
- Nave Topical Bible [Works](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Work; Works](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Works](#) [Faith and Works](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Good works](#)

- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Works of the Law](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Works of God](#)- excellent summary
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Works](#)

Good Works

- from [The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith in Modern English](#)

1. Good works are only those works that God has commanded in his holy Word.¹ 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

1 Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21. 2 Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13.

2. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruit and evidence of a true and living faith.³ Through good works believers express their thankfulness,⁴ strengthen their assurance,⁵ build up their brothers and sisters, adorn the profession of the gospel,⁶ stop the mouths of opponents, and glorify God.⁷ Believers are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,⁸ so that they bear fruit leading to holiness and have the outcome, eternal life.⁹

3 James 2:18, 22. 4 Psalm 116:12, 13. 5 1 John 2:3, 5; 2 Peter 1:5–11. 6 Matthew 5:16. 7 1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philippians 1:11. 8 Ephesians 2:10. 9 Romans 6:22.

3. Their ability to do good works does not arise at all from themselves but entirely from the Spirit of Christ.¹⁰ To enable them to do good works, they need—in addition to the graces they have already received—an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do his good pleasure.¹¹ 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.¹²

10 John 15:4, 5. 11 2 Corinthians 3:5; 12 Philippians 2:13; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11, 12; Isaiah 64:7.

4. Those who attain the greatest heights of obedience possible in this life are far from being able to merit reward by going beyond duty or to do more than God requires. Instead, they fall short of much that is their duty to do.¹³

a supererogate
13 Job 9:2, 3; Galatians 5:17; Luke 17:10.

5. We cannot, even by our best works, merit pardon of sin or eternal life from God's hand, due to the huge disproportion between our works and the glory to come, and the infinite distance between us and God. By these works we can neither benefit God nor satisfy him for the debt of our former sins.¹⁴ 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;¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

14 Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:6. 15 Galatians 5:22, 23. 16 Isaiah 64:6; Psalms 143:2.

6. Nevertheless, believers are accepted through Christ, and thus their good works are also accepted in him.¹⁷ This acceptance does not mean our good works are completely blameless and irreproachable in God's sight. Instead, God views them in his Son, and so he is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, even though it is accompanied by many weaknesses and imperfections.¹⁸

17 Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5. 18 Matthew 25:21, 23; Hebrews 6:10.

7. Works done by unregenerate people may in themselves be commanded by God and useful to themselves and others.¹⁹ Yet they do not come from a heart purified by faith²⁰ and are not done in a right manner according to the Word²¹ nor with a right goal—the glory of God.²² Therefore, they are sinful and cannot please God. They cannot qualify anyone to receive grace from God,²³ and yet their neglect is even more sinful and displeasing to God.²⁴

19 2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27, 29. 20 Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4, 6. 21 1 Corinthians 13:1. 22 Matthew 6:2, 5. 23 Amos 5:21, 22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5. 24 Job 21:14, 15; Matthew 25:41–43.

have gotten more hurt by my GOOD works than my bad ones. My bad works always drove me to the Savior for mercy; my good

works often kept me from him, and I began to trust in myself. - Ralph Erskine

[Dr W H Houghton](#), pastored the Calvary Baptist Church in NYC and later served as president of Moody Bible Institute. When Dr. Houghton became pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle in Atlanta, a man in that city hired a private detective to follow Dr. Houghton and report on his conduct. After a few weeks, the detective was able to report to the man that Dr. Houghton's life matched his preaching. As a result of Houghton's faithful life, that man became a Christian.

Maclaren - One plain principle implied here (Col 1:9-10+) is that the only true fruit is goodness (**Ed: I would qualify this as anything which is initiated and empowered by the Holy Spirit and ONLY THOSE WORKS ARE LASTING WORKS**). We may be busy, as many a man in our great commercial cities is busy, from Monday morning till Saturday night for a long lifetime, and may have had to build bigger barns for our "fruits and our goods," and yet, in the high and solemn meaning of the word here, our life may be utterly empty and fruitless. Much of our work and of its results is no more fruit than the galls on the oak leaves are. They are a swelling from a puncture made by an insect, a sign of disease, not of life. The only sort of work which can be called fruit, in the highest meaning of the word, is that which corresponds to a man's whole nature and relations; and the only work which does so correspond is a life of loving service of God, which cultivates all things lovely and of good report. Goodness, therefore, alone deserves to be called fruit-as for all the rest of our busy lives, they and their toils are like the rootless, lifeless chaff that is whirled out of the threshing floor by every gust. A life which has not in it holiness and loving obedience, however richly productive it may be in lower respects, is in inmost reality blighted and barren, and is "nigh unto burning." Goodness is fruit; all else is nothing but leaves. ([Colossians 1 - The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Ray Pritchard on Matthew 5:16+ - Jesus commanded believers to

"Let your light **shine** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

The Light Of The World

But that is not the whole story. Listen to the next three verses from Matthew 5:

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven."
(Matthew 5:14-16)

What do these words mean? The dictionary defines light as "a source of illumination." That provides the key to our definition. To be the light of the world means illuminating the darkness so that others may see reality.

One of the most frightening things in the world is to be alone in the darkness. You lie in bed trying to go to sleep when suddenly you hear a creak, a little odd sound in the darkness. You strain to see through the darkness but all you can see are vague shapes. Darkness distorts reality. Everything looks different. It is only when you turn on the light that you see things as they really are.

It happened this week at the high school. One of our young men was sitting in class when his teacher called his name and said, "I see that your parents signed that ad in the paper. Why don't you tell us what your parents believe?" A lot of teenagers wouldn't know what to say but that young man said, "Sure, I'll be glad to tell you." Which is exactly what he did. That's turning on the light so people can see things as they really are.

This Little Light Of Mine

Notice the simple application in verse 16. "Let your light shine before men." The key is in the little phrase "before men." You can turn on a light in an empty room. It will dispel the darkness and no one will see it. Likewise you can live the Christian life in secret, but no one is going to be helped. If your light is going to shine, it's going to shine before men. Somebody has to see it before it will do any good.

Jesus said two things would happen when you shine your light:

1. Men will see your good deeds.

The word for "good" is kalos. It means attractive or beautiful or lovely. It is that which is pleasing to the eye. Jesus is saying that people will be attracted by the beauty of your life. Others will be drawn to you by the way you live. When you say a good word for Jesus, that is a good deed. When you stop and smile at a friend, that also is a good deed. When you bake a chocolate pie and give it to a neighbor, or when you stop by the hospital to see how a friend is getting along, or when you stop to help your supervisor get

her car started, that too is a good deed. It is beautiful, attractive, lovely. It is evangelism backed up by a winsome personality.

Men will see the quality of your life. And if the light is shining brightly they are drawn to you and to your Lord.

This is the most important thing. Jesus said, "When they see your lovely ways." He could have said, "When they hear your great preachers, or when they sit in your lovely sanctuaries, or when they hear your wonderful choirs, or when they read your Statements of Faith. He could have said that. But he didn't. He simply said, "When they see the way you live."

Perhaps you've heard this poem. It's called

"The Living Sermon."

Edgar Guest

I'd rather see a sermon
than hear one any day.
I'd rather one would walk with me
than merely tell the way.

The eye's a better pupil
and more willing than the ear.
Fine counsel is confusing
but example's always clear.

The best of all the preachers
are the men who live their creeds.
For to see good put in action
is what everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it,
if you'll let me see it done.
I can watch your hands in action,
your tongue too fast may run.

The lectures you deliver
may be very wise and true.
But I'd rather get my lessons
by observing what you do.

For I might misunderstand you
And the high advice you give.
But there's no misunderstanding
how you act and how you live.

There's a second thing that happens when you shine your light before men:

2. They give God the credit.

Verse 16 says, "They praise your Father who is in heaven." Did you notice that the word "your" is used three times in this verse? Your light ... Your good deeds ... Your Father in heaven. When you let your light shine before men, they glorify your Father in heaven. What begins on earth ends in heaven.

That's how much influence we have. We can point men to God. We can lead them out of darkness into the light.

It is wonderfully simple. We do the shining and God gets the credit. And here's why. Light does not call attention to itself. It provides illumination so that other things can be seen as they really are. When men see a beautifully lit city, they don't discuss the lights; they talk of the genius of the architect. When men gather around a Thanksgiving table, they don't praise the light by which they eat; instead, they give the credit to the one who prepared the meal.

**So it is that when our light shines to those around us,
they see the beauty of our good works,
the darkness falls away, they see spiritual reality, and
God gets the credit.**

Knocking Holes In The Darkness

When Robert Louis Stevenson was a young child, he was sick much of the time. He couldn't go out and play like the other children so he spent a lot of time watching at the window. One evening he sat and watched as the old-fashioned lamplighter came down the street lighting the lamps. His nurse said to him, "What are you doing?" To which he replied, "I'm watching the man knock holes in the darkness."

Here at Calvary, we are facing a magnificent opportunity. I spoke earlier of the moral decay going on all around us. Let no one despair. The darker the night, the brighter the light shines. It is precisely when the world is at its worst that the people of God should be at their best. We were made for days like these. And this is our calling: We have been commissioned by Jesus Christ to go throughout Oak Park and River Forest and Forest Park and Cicero and Berwyn and Elmhurst and Chicago knocking holes in the darkness." ([The Salt and Light Brigade](#))

Our Way of Life

We are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. Ephesians 2:10NRSV+

Today's Scripture & Insight: Ephesians 2:1–10

I was struck by a phrase I heard quoted from a contemporary Bible translation. When I Googled the phrase "**our way of life**" to locate the passage, many of the results focused on things people felt were threatening their expected way of living. Prominent among the perceived threats were climate change, terrorism, and government policies.

What really is **our way of life** as followers of Jesus? I wondered. Is it what makes us comfortable, secure, and happy, or is it something more?

Paul reminded the Christians in Ephesus of the remarkable way God had transformed their lives. "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved" (Eph. 2:4-5 nrsv). The result is that we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life" (Eph 2:10 nrsv).

Doing **good works**, helping others, giving, loving, and serving in Jesus's name—these are to be our way of life. They are not optional activities for believers, but the very reason God has given us life in Christ.

In a changing world, God has called and empowered us to pursue a life that reaches out to others and honors Him. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, thank You for the incredible riches of Your love and mercy. You rescued us from our dead way of living and made us alive with Christ.

Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

Joseph Stowell - GOOD WORKS AND GOD'S GRACE

FOR IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED . . . IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.—Ephesians 2:8

The great artist Michelangelo produced masterpieces that are among the best works of art in the world. His sculpture of David and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel are among the greatest creations of all time. Nearly all of his subject matter was religious, and he often worked at the bidding of the Pope. Since he was a devout man, we should not be surprised that he took appropriate pride in what he was doing for God, hoping that somehow he might obtain favor with God.

Toward the end of his life, he became intrigued with what the Reformers were teaching about making peace with God through faith apart from works. Accepting the reality that all of his good works could do nothing to remove his sin, he embraced Christ as his forgiving Savior. It changed the meaning of life for him. Michelangelo now realized that what he had supposedly done for God had actually eclipsed God in his life. In a sonnet he confessed, "Whence the loving fancy that made of art my idol and my king, I know now well that it was full of wrong. . . . Painting and sculpture shall no longer calm the soul turned to that love divine that spread its arms on the cross to take us in."

As taken as he was with Christ, he never stopped expressing himself through art. But now he did it for another reason—not for merit but for love. As one observer notes, "Michelangelo worked down to the end. . . . Nonetheless, the change was a radical one: art, which had become the primary interest, the 'idol and king' of his life, now becomes a means to serve God humbly."

His response is a lesson even for those of us who have believed with all of our hearts that our salvation is by His grace and grace alone. A lesson, because we often do good works hoping to impress and gain favor with God when He intended that all we do is an expression of gratitude for the complete favor we have received because of His grace. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Do you search for ways to do good deeds as a response to his abundant grace in your life

Joseph Stowell - SHARE THE WEALTH

DO GOOD . . . BE RICH IN GOOD DEEDS . . . BE GENEROUS AND WILLING TO SHARE. —1 Timothy 6:18

If you had a choice between contentment, character, and cash (lots of it!), what would you choose? Think carefully. Be honest. Or, to ask it another way, if you could have all three, in what order would they come? If cash rules, then character and contentment will be seriously damaged under its reign. But if character and contentment rule, we are willing to give, are not overly concerned when we lose, and are never interested in cheating on God's standards in our lives for gain. It will be obvious that character and contentment rule when we transition from greed to generosity.

God has blessed many of His people with significant amounts of wealth. The world has one basic message for people like this: Be proud! Guard what you have, grow it, spend it. But God's principle is to "store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20).

One of the ways we can do this is to change our view of riches. In God's economy, true riches are not measured in terms of cash. Riches are what we have in Him, what we do for eternity, and the good works we do on earth. Paul knew how important it was for those of us who have been given much to keep our perspectives straight. So he exhorted those who are "rich in this present world" not to become spiritually dysfunctional by becoming conceited, trusting in the uncertainty of riches and hoarding what we have. Instead, we are to be "rich in good deeds," generous, and looking for ways we can share (1 Timothy 6:17–18).

If your spiritual goal is contentment and character, then it will show in how much you are committed to contribution. God's way is for us to place our trust in Him, who "richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" and then look for ways "to be generous and willing to share" what He has given us with His cause and those in need (1 Timothy 6:17–18).

What a purifying delight it is to use our riches to bless and benefit others! [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Measure your management of wealth by the standards of 1 Timothy 6:17–19. Make adjustments where necessary.

John MacArthur "Selfishly motivated **good deeds** (Ed note: "bad" [[phaulos](#)] or worthless deeds 2Cor 5:10+ ~ "wood, hay, and stubble" 1Cor 3:12+) may be of great help to other people and may be used by God for His glory, but they will merit no reward for the doer.

MacArthur goes on to illustrate this principle

"In 1904, William Borden, a member of the Borden dairy family, finished high school in Chicago and was given a world cruise as a graduation present. Particularly while traveling through the Near East and Far East, he became heavily burdened for the lost. After returning home, he spent seven years at Princeton University, the first four in undergraduate work and the last three in seminary. While in school, he penned these words in the back of his Bible: "**No reserves.**" Although his family pleaded with him to take control of the business, which was foundering, he insisted that God's call to the mission field had priority. After disposing of his wealth, he added "**No retreat**" after "**No reserves.**" On his way to China to witness to Muslims there, he contracted cerebral meningitis in Egypt and died within a month. After his death, someone looking through his Bible discovered these final words: "**No regrets.**" He knew that the Lord does not require success, only **faithfulness... good work** that is sincerely intended but not completed through no fault of the doer will merit a sincere doer's reward, because it is the heart that God weighs. William Borden accomplished virtually none of the ministry he had envisioned, having been cut off by death even before he reached his field of service. But his final declaration of "**No regrets**" was well founded in the assurance that he had genuinely sought and faithfully obeyed the Lord's will." (bolding added)

Win Or Lose, Do Good - When the results of today's presidential election are known, US citizens will either be glad or sad, depending on their political persuasion. Those who voted for the winner are likely to accept the authority of the government he establishes. Most others will submit, though grudgingly.

Christians are to go beyond mere submission to governing authorities and follow the guidelines given in the Bible. In writing to Titus, Paul said we should also be peaceable and considerate, and we should do good without slandering anyone (Titus 3:1, 2).

Titus was working among believers in Crete, a place notorious for its unruly inhabitants. There were good reasons to say bad things about the people living and ruling there, but Paul warned Christians not to do it.

In fact, seven times in his short letter to Titus, Paul mentioned the importance of doing good: loving what is good (Titus 1:8), teaching what is good (Titus 2:3), doing what is good (Titus 2:7,14; 3:1, 2,8,14).

Paul's letter is a timely reminder that as Christians we are to do what is good for people, regardless of whether we approve of their values and agree with their policies. It may not be easy, but it's the right thing to do.— Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

From the example of Jesus,
Who went about doing good,
We are to honor our Savior
By helping wherever He would.
—Hess

Christians can be constructive if they refuse to be destructive.

Spurgeon in his writing entitled Unprofitable Servants notes that...

Our **good works** are evidences of grace within us. Our faithfulness will be the evidence of our having a loving spirit towards our Master- evidence that our heart is changed, and that we have been made to love him for whom once we had no affection.

Our **works** are the proof of our love, and hence they stand as evidence of the grace of God.

God first gives us grace, and then rewards us for it. He works in us, and then counts the fruit as our work. We work out our own salvation (Php 2:12-note), because "he works in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure (Php 2:13-note)."

If he shall ever say, "Well done" (cp Mt 25:21, 23 - **Ed note**: These two servants received the same reward, indicating that faithfulness in the use of the different abilities given to each of us is what is required. **W**hen the Master returns will He find you faithful laboring in His power for His glory?) to you and to me it will be because of His own rich grace, and not because of our merits (cp 1Co 15:10, Zech 4:6, Col 1:29-note).

Therefore, my beloved brethren, **be** (present imperative-"Keep on keeping on!") **steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.** 1Co 15:58-note

William S. Plumer (1853) writes in his chapter entitled [Why Good Works Are Necessary](#)...

So that unless men intend to abandon themselves to wickedness, despise God's authority, and fly in the face of the testimony of all true Christians, they must lead lives of holiness and obedience. Indeed the uniform teaching of Scripture is that while no man shall be saved for the merit of his works, yet men shall be judged and treated according to their works. The wicked deserve all that shall come upon them by lack of good works and their performance of evil works. The righteous do not indeed deserve any good thing, yet of his mercy and grace, God will at last reward them, as though they deserved much. Thus we read:

"The work of a man will God render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways." Job 34:11.

"You render to every man according to his work." Ps 62:12-note.

"Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done." Isa 3:10, 11.

"I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve." Jer. 17:10.

"The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Matt. 16:27.

God "will render to every man according to his deeds." Ro 2:6-note.

See also 2Co 5:10; Ga 6:7; Ep 6:8-note; 1Pe 1:17-note; Re 2:23-note, and Re 20:12-note, and Re 22:12-note.

So the doctrine is clear. He who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly, while he who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully (2Co 9:6). He, who cared comparatively little for the cause of Christ, and did but little for it, shall have a comparatively small reward, while he who gave up all and lived and died for Christ shall be very glorious.

"One star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection from the dead." (Ed: I'm not sure this can be substantiated from Scripture, but it is possible. See 1Co 3:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

To render mistake on this doctrine impossible, let it never be forgotten that the works of believers will not be the cause, but only the occasion of their many rich blessings; the measure, but not the merit of their reward. Nor is there anything in this contrary to the doctrine of gratuitous salvation; for these very works themselves are the fruit of God's mercy and love (cp Jn 15:5). He works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and then kindly takes occasion from our obedience to measure out to us, of his own love and bounty, richer and vaster blessings still.

That our works themselves are from God the Bible everywhere teaches.

"From me is your fruit found." Hos. 14:8.

"Lord, you will ordain peace for us: for you also have wrought all our works in us." Isaiah 26:12.

"God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." 2Co. 9:8.

In fact Jesus Christ "gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14-note.

"Faith if it has not works is dead, being alone." Jas 2:17-note.

And here precisely is what the apostle James meant when he said we are justified by works. His meaning is that we are justified in making our profession of faith, we establish our sincerity and consistency, we prove to all the world and to God himself that we are what we profess to be and ought to be, when our lives show forth the glory of God. (Ed: If you are confused by Paul and James on their use of the word "justified" [which each uses with a different sense!] see Jas 2:21-note and Jas 2:24-note)

Christian brethren, let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not. Let us abound unto every good word and work. How dishonorable to religion it would be—if it were otherwise. Is not all religion an entire failure, if it does not bring us into conformity to God? "Grace is an immortal seed, cast into an immortal soil, which brings forth immortal fruit." ([Why Good Works Are Necessary](#))

J C Philpot - Among the innumerable displays of the infinite wisdom of God which the gospel of his grace has revealed and brought to light, must be named the special provision which he has made—that good works should hold therein a fitting and appropriate place. One of the strongest objections which cavilers and opponents have in all ages brought against the doctrine of salvation wholly and solely by grace is, that it supersedes the necessity of good works, and thus by virtually, if not nullifying, yet reducing them to insignificance, opens a door directly or indirectly for licentiousness. Could this charge be substantiated, it would be almost fatal to the claims of free grace as a divine revelation, for a holy God could not sanction, much less devise and reveal, a scheme of salvation which, by encouraging sin, should break down the very barriers of moral rectitude. Even our natural conscience—even our dim and misty notions of right and wrong, virtue and vice, good and evil—would be shocked at, and revolt from any conclusion which would impair the holiness of God, or represent him as sanctioning or licensing sin.

In order, therefore, to secure the gospel from so fatal a charge, God has made a special provision that good works shall occupy in it a high and honorable place. That good works should save is one thing, that they should be wholly set aside is another. Not only, then, shall they, according to God's appointment, not be set aside, but they shall be raised in worth and value. They shall be made a means of glorifying God—which sets on them a higher and nobler stamp than if they merely effected or concurred in the salvation of man. They shall be done from higher, better, and purer motives—they shall be wrought by the blessed Spirit—they shall be accepted by and approved of God as fruits of righteousness, which grow upon and manifest the living branches of the only true Vine (Jn 15:5).

But let us, taking up the thread of our exposition, observe more particularly the place in which they are set by the Apostle in the chapter before us—"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ep 2:10-note) Several points, thus placed before us, demand our attentive observation. (Click [Part V](#) for the

Question: [What does it mean that good works are the result of salvation?](#)

Answer: Ephesians 2:8–9 makes it clear that we are not saved by good works. In fact, before we are saved, our works are done in the flesh and cannot please God; even our most “righteous” deeds fall far short of God’s glory (see Romans 3:20 and Isaiah 64:6). We can be saved only because God is gracious and merciful and has designed a way for us to be declared righteous when we are not (Psalm 86:5; Ephesians 2:4). When [Jesus became sin](#) for us (2 Corinthians 5:21), we inherited His righteousness. Salvation is a divine exchange: our tattered rags of self-effort for the perfection of Christ. Because His death and resurrection paid the price for our evil deeds, we can be declared perfect before God (Romans 5:1). We are told to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” like a flawless garment (Romans 13:14).

At salvation, the Holy Spirit moves into the repentant heart (Acts 2:38). Self is no longer the uncontested lord of our lives. Jesus is now the boss. That’s what it means to say that Jesus is “Lord” (Romans 10:9; Colossians 2:6). We were once headed south; we are now headed north. Everything is changed. We begin to view life from God’s perspective, not our own—as [John Newton](#) wrote, “I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now I see.”

The sins we once committed without thought now bring conviction. To know God is to see sin the way He sees it: “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God” (1 John 3:9). In other words, the believer will see a decreasing pattern of sin in his or her life. Believers may still sin, but they will not continue practicing sin as a way of life. There will be a difference between the old life without Christ and the new life in Christ. The born-again Christian produces “fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8). Salvation enables us to live “in the Spirit” and so truly perform good works (Galatians 5:16).

Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” God’s goal in saving us was not only to rescue us from hell, but also that we would reflect His character and goodness to the world. God delights to see us becoming more like His Son (Romans 8:29). We were created in God’s image. Sin marred that image. When God bought us back for Himself, it was to restore His image in us and free us to become all we were created to be. When the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us, He prompts us to do things that glorify God (John 14:26). Our desire to please God grows as our understanding of Him grows. That desire to please God results in good works.

It is biblically inconsistent to say that someone has been *saved* but has not *changed*. Many people go through the outward motions of giving their lives to Christ, but no lifestyle change follows. That is not real salvation but is a “dead” faith (James 2:26). When you walk into a dark room and flip the switch, you expect light. If no light appears, you rightly assume something is wrong. It would be logically inconsistent to say that the light is on when the room is still pitch black. Light naturally dispels darkness. When a dark heart receives the light of salvation, it is illuminated (John 12:46). Priorities change. Desires change. Outlook changes. Life is seen clearly for the first time. If the darkness of sin continues, we can rightly assume no light came on.

To use another biblical analogy, God wants to produce fruit in our lives (see Galatians 5:22–23). He is the Vinedresser, Jesus is the Vine, and we are the branches. The branches are naturally attached to the vine; from the vine they get their support, their ability to produce fruit, and their very life. Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit” (John 15:5). That is the purpose of the vineyard—to produce “much fruit.” Good works follow salvation.

So, although we cannot be saved *by* our good works, when we *are* saved, we *will* produce good works. Just as a baby will grow after birth, so a believer will grow after the new birth. We grow at different rates and in different ways, but a live birth results in growth. If a baby never grows, there is something very wrong. No one expects a baby to stay a baby forever. As he grows, the child begins to look more and more like his parents. In the same way, after salvation, we grow, and we begin to look more and more like our Heavenly Father. This is only possible as we “abide in Him” and allow Him to reproduce His character in us (John 15:4).

Good works do not produce salvation. Good works are the product of salvation. Jesus said to His followers, “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). [GotQuestions.org](#)

GOOD WORKS R A TORREY

- Christ, an example of John 10:32; Acts 10:38

CALLED

- Good fruits James 3:17
- Fruits meet for repentance Matthew 3:8
- Fruits of righteousness Philippians 1:11
- Works and labours of love Hebrews 6:10
- Are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God Philippians 1:11
- They alone, who abide in Christ can perform John 15:4,5
- Wrought by God in us Isaiah 26:12; Philippians 2:13
- The Scripture designed to lead us to 2 Timothy 3:16,17; James 1:25
- To be performed in Christ's name Colossians 3:17
- Heavenly wisdom is full of James 3:17
- Justification unattainable by Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16
- Salvation unattainable by Ephesians 2:8,9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5

SAINTS

- Created in Christ to Ephesians 2:10
- Exhorted to put on Colossians 3:12-14
- Are full of Acts 9:36
- Are zealous of Titus 2:14
- Should be furnished to all 2 Timothy 3:17
- Should be rich in 1 Timothy 6:18
- Should be careful to maintain Titus 3:8,14
- Should be established in 2 Thessalonians 2:17
- Should be fruitful in Colossians 1:10
- Should be perfect in Hebrews 13:21
- Should be prepared to all 2 Timothy 2:21
- Should abound to all 2 Corinthians 9:8
- Should be ready to all Titus 3:1
- Should manifest, with meekness James 3:13
- Should provoke each other Hebrews 10:24
- Should avoid ostentation in Matthew 6:1-18
- Bring to the light their John 3:21
- Followed into rest by their Revelation 14:13
- Holy women should manifest 1 Timothy 2:10; 5:10
- God remembers Nehemiah 13:14; Hebrews 6:9,10
- Shall be brought into the judgment Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10
- In the judgment, will be an evidence of faith Matthew 25:34-40; James 2:14-20

MINISTERS SHOULD

- Be patterns of Titus 2:7
- Exhort to 1 Timothy 6:17,18; Titus 3:1,8,14
- God is glorified by John 15:8
- Designed to lead others to glorify God Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12
- A blessing attends James 1:25
- The wicked reprobate to Titus 1:16
- Illustrated John 15:5

NAVE'S TOPIC WORKS

- Jesus an example of John 10:32; Acts 10:38
- Holy women should manifest 1 Timothy 2:10; 5:10
- God remembers Nehemiah 13:14; Hebrews 6:9,10
- Will be brought into judgment Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10
- In the judgment, will be an evidence of faith Matthew 25:34-40; James 2:14-20
- Servants should be patterns of Titus 2:7
- Servants should exhort to 1 Timothy 6:17,18; Titus 3:1,8,14
- God is glorified by John 15:8
- Designed to lead others to glorify God Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12
- A blessing attends James 1:25
- Of the righteous, are manifest 1 Timothy 5:25

Parables relating to

- The talents Matthew 25:14-29
- The pounds Luke 19:12-27
- The laborer's in the vineyard Matthew 20:11-15
- The two sons Matthew 21:28-31
- The barren fig tree Luke 13:6-9

UNCLASSIFIED SCRIPTURES RELATING TO

Deuteronomy 6:25; 24:13; Nehemiah 5:19; 13:14; Job 30:25; Psalm 37:3; 90:17; 106:30,31; Jeremiah 22:15,16; Ezekiel 14:14,20; 18:5-9; Matthew 3:8; 6:1-4; 10:42; 18:5; 19:16-21; 25:34-46; Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; John 3:21; 15:2-8,14; Acts 10:4,38; Romans 2:13; 1 Corinthians 3:6-9; 2 Corinthians 9:8; Galatians 6:4; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:11; 2:13; Colossians 1:10; 3:12-14,17; 1 Thessalonians 1:3,7,8; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; 1 Timothy 2:10; 5:9,10; 6:18,19; 2 Timothy 2:21; 3:16,17; Titus 2:14; 3:1,2,8,14; Hebrews 6:10; 10:24; 13:21; James 1:22-27; 3:13,17,18; Revelation 14:13; 22:14

INSUFFICIENCY OF, FOR SALVATION

Psalm 49:7,8; 127:1,2; Ecclesiastes 1:14; Isaiah 43:26; 57:12; 64:6; Ezekiel 7:19; 33:12-19; Daniel 9:18; Matthew 5:20; Luke 17:7-10; 18:9-14; Acts 13:39; Romans 3:20-31; 4:1-22; 8:3; 9:16,31,32; 11:6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Galatians 2:16,19,21; 3:1-29; 4:9-11; 5:2,4,6,18; 6:15; Ephesians 2:8,9; Philippians 3:3-9; Colossians 2:20-23; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:4,5; Hebrews 4:3-10; 6:1,2; 9:1-14; James 2:10,11

ALL USES OF EXOUSIA IN THE BIBLE

Exousia - 102x in 93 verses - Usage: authorities(7), authority(65), charge(1), control(1), domain(2), dominion(1), jurisdiction(1), liberty(1), power(11), powers(1), right(11).

Matthew 7:29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Matthew 8:9 "For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Matthew 9:6 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins "-- then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."

8 But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Matthew 10:1 ¶ Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

Matthew 21:23 ¶ When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"

24 Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.

27 And answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Mark 1:22 They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

27 They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."

Mark 2:10 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins "-- He said to the paralytic,

Mark 3:15 and to have authority to cast out the demons.

Mark 6:7 ¶ And He summoned the twelve and began to send them out in pairs, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits;

Mark 11:28 and began saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"

29 And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

33 Answering Jesus, they said, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Mark 13:34 "It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert.

Luke 4:6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.

32 and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.

36 And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, "What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out."

Luke 5:24 "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"-- He said to the paralytic-- "I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home."

Luke 7:8 "For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."

Luke 9:1 ¶ And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases.

Luke 10:19 "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

Luke 12:5 "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

11 "When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say;

Luke 19:17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.'

Luke 20:2 and they spoke, saying to Him, "Tell us by what authority You are doing these things, or who is the one who gave You this authority?"

8 And Jesus said to them, "Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor.

Luke 22:53 "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours."

Luke 23:7 And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

John 5:27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

John 10:18 "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

John 17:2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

John 19:10 So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

Acts 1:7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

Acts 5:4 "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Acts 8:19 saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Acts 9:14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

Acts 26:10 "And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.

12 ¶ "While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests,

18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Romans 9:21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

Romans 13:1 ¶ Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

1 Corinthians 7:37 But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well.

1 Corinthians 8:9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

1 Corinthians 9:4 Do we not have a right to eat and drink?

5 Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

6 Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

12 ¶ If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.

18 What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

1 Corinthians 11:10 Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.

1 Corinthians 15:24 then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.

2 Corinthians 10:8 For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame,

2 Corinthians 13:10 For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

Ephesians 1:21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Ephesians 3:10 so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Colossians 1:13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Colossians 2:10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;

15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

2 Thessalonians 3:9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.

Titus 3:1 ¶ Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

1 Peter 3:22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

Jude 1:25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Revelation 2:26 'He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS;

Revelation 6:8 I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Revelation 9:3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

10 They have tails like scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months.

19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

Revelation 11:6 These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

Revelation 13:2 And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.

4 they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"

5 ¶ There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

7 It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

Revelation 14:18 Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe."

Revelation 16:9 Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

Revelation 17:12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.

13 "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

Revelation 18:1 ¶ After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Revelation 22:14 ¶ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

EXOUSIA

24x in the Septuagint

2 Kings 20:13 Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold and the spices and the precious oil and the house of his armor and all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

Esther 3:13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder.

Esther 4:17 So Mordecai went away and did just as Esther had commanded him.

Esther 8:12 on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar).

Psalms 114:2 Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion.

Psalms 136:8 The sun to rule by day, For His lovingkindness is everlasting,

9 The moon and stars to rule by night, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Proverbs 17:14 The beginning of strife is like letting out water, So abandon the quarrel before it breaks out.

Ecclesiastes 8:8 No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it.

Daniel 3:2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent word to assemble the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

3 Then the satraps, the prefects and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates and all the rulers of the provinces were assembled for the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

30 Then the king caused Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego to prosper in the province of Babylon.

Daniel 4:1 ¶ Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound!

3 "How great are His signs And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And His dominion is from generation to generation.

17 "This sentence is by the decree of the angelic watchers And the decision is a command of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind, And bestows it on whom He wishes And sets over it the lowliest of men."

26 'And in that it was commanded to leave the stump with the roots of the tree, your kingdom will be assured to you after you recognize that it is Heaven that rules.

27 'Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.'

31 "While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you,

34 ¶ "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

Daniel 5:4 They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

7 The king called aloud to bring in the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners. The king spoke and said to the wise men of Babylon, "Any man who can read this inscription and explain its interpretation to me shall be clothed with purple and have a necklace of gold around his neck, and have authority as third ruler in the kingdom."

16 "But I personally have heard about you, that you are able to give interpretations and solve difficult problems. Now if you are able to read the inscription and make its interpretation known to me, you will be clothed with purple and wear a necklace of gold around your neck, and you will have authority as the third ruler in the kingdom."

29 ¶ Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he now had authority as the third ruler in the kingdom.

Daniel 6:3 Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

Daniel 7:6 "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.

12 "As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time.

14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

26 'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever.

27 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

Daniel 11:5 ¶ "Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with one of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain will be a great dominion indeed.

DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE ANY GOOD WORKS?

Charles H. Spurgeon

This is the first of nine messages that in some way relate to Good Works. They were originally compiled by Chapel Library and are free for use worldwide.

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"—Titus 2:14.

WE shall not be afraid of leading any of you into a legal spirit this morning through what we shall say, for after our frequent exhortations to avoid anything like trusting in your works—attended as they have been, we trust, by the Holy Spirit—we are not afraid that you will so misunderstand us as to suppose that when we speak of good works today, we shall in any way whatsoever

wish you to imagine that they can promote your eternal salvation. We labored when here the Sabbath morning before last, to let you know the difference between the two covenants, the covenant of grace and the covenant of works. We shall beg you to remember what we then said, and if by any slips of --- the tongue we should say anything that should look like legality, we beg you will put the two together, and wherein we shall err from the great truth of justification by faith to reject our testimony...

The children of God are a holy people. For this very purpose were they born and brought into the world: that they should be holy. For this, they were redeemed with blood and made a peculiar people. God's end in election, the end of all His purposes, is not answered until they become a people zealous of good works.

FIRST, THEN, WE ARE ABOUT TO ANSWER THE QUESTION, "WHAT ARE GOOD WORKS?" Now, I dare say we shall offend many here when we tell them what good works are; for in our opinion good works are the rarest things in the world. We believe we might walk for many a mile before we should see a good work at all. We use the word good now in its proper sense. There are many works that are good enough between man and man, but we shall use the word good in a higher sense today as regards God. We think we shall be able to show you that there are very few good works anywhere and that there are none out of the pale of Christ's church. We think, if we read Scripture rightly, that no work can be good unless it is commanded of God. How this cuts off a large portion of what men will do in order to win salvation! The Pharisee said he tithed mint, anise, and cummin:6 could he prove that God commanded him to tithe his mint, his anise, and his cummin? Perhaps not. He said he fasted so many times a week: could he prove that God told him to fast? If not, his fasting was no obedience. If I do a thing that I am not commanded to do, I do not obey in doing it. Vain then are all the pretenses of men, that by mortifying their bodies, by denying their flesh, by doing this, that, or the other, they shall therefore win the favor of God. No work is good unless God has commanded it. A man may build a long row of almshouses, but if he build without reference to the commandment, he has performed no good work.

Again, nothing is a good work unless it is done with a good motive; and there is no motive that can be said to be good but the glory of God. He, who performs good works with a view to save himself, does not do them from a good motive because his motive is selfish. He, who does them also to gain the esteem of his fellows and for the good of society, has a laudable motive as far as man is concerned; but it is, after all, an inferior motive. What end had we in view? If for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, then let our fellow-creatures pay us; but that has naught to do with God. Work is not good, unless a man does it with a view to God's glory. And no man can do it with a view to that until God has taught him what His glory is, and he has been brought into subjection to God's divine will, so that in everything he has an eye to the Most High and works in order to promote His glory and honor in the world.

And even, beloved, when our works are done from the best motives, nothing is a good work unless it is done with faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb 11:6). Like Cain, we may build the altar and lay the first fruits of the earth upon it, and it may appear an acceptable sacrifice in itself; but if destitute of the salt of faith, there it will lie. It will not be accepted by God, for without faith it is impossible to please Him. Bring me a man, who all his life long has been spending his health and strength for his fellow-creatures. Fetch me some public officer, who has fully discharged his trust, who has labored night and day, even to the wearing down of his constitution because he believed that England expected every man to do his duty, and he wished to do it. Bring me that man; let me see all his charitable works; let me witness the most lavish benevolence, the most profuse bounty. Tell me that he has always with a consistent motive labored for his country; and then, if he cannot answer this question, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" I shall be bound in all honesty to tell him that he has not done a solitary good work in all his life, so far as God is concerned.

Furthermore, when we have faith in God and perform all our works with the best of motives, even then we have not so much as a solitary good work, until the blood of Christ is sprinkled thereon. Looking on all that we have ever done in our lives, can we find a solitary thing that we dare call good until Christ's blood is put upon it? Grant there is something good about it—for the Spirit wrought it in our souls—there is much also that is evil about it. For even our best exercises are so terribly spoiled, marred, and ruined by the sins and imperfections that are in them that we dare not call them good, until Jesus Christ hath sprinkled them with His blood and taken the stain away. Oh, how often have I thought to myself, "Now, I have labored to preach God's Word. I have not spared at all times before friends or foes, and I hope I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God!" And yet, beloved, how many of those sermons have not been good works at all because I had not an eye to my Master's honor at the time or because there was not faith mixed with them. I preached in a desponding, low, miserable frame, or perhaps I had some natural aim, even in the winning of souls. For I have often feared, even when we rejoice to see souls converted, that we may have some evil motive, such as honoring ourselves, that the world may say, "See how many souls are brought to God by him!" And even when the church associates in doing holy works, have you not noticed that something selfish creeps in—a wish to exalt our own church, to glorify our own people, and to make ourselves mighty? I am sure, beloved, if you sit down and pull your good works to pieces, you will find so many bad stitches in them that they need to be all unstitched and done over again. There are so many spots and blurs about them, that you need to have them washed in the blood of Christ to make them good for anything.

And now, beloved, do you think you have any good works? "Oh!" you say, "I am afraid I have not many myself— nay, I know I have not. But thanks be unto His love, He Who accepted my person in Christ, accepts my works through Christ. And He who blessed me in Him, that I should be a chosen vessel, has been pleased to accept that which He Himself poured into the vessel, 'to the praise of

the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made me accepted in the beloved' ” (Eph 1:6).

And now, ye moralists, ye who have trusted in yourselves that ye are righteous: if what I have said be true, what has become of all your holiness? You are saying, “I am a charitable man.” Grant that you are! I tell you to go and appeal to your fellow-creatures, and let them pay you for your charity. You say, “Ay, but I am a consistent and moral man; I am a great credit to the country. If all men would act as I do, what a good thing for this world and generation!” Of course, you have served your generation. Then send in your bill, and let your generation pay you. I tell you, you have toiled for naught. You have only sown the wind, and likely enough, you will reap the whirlwind. God owes you nothing. You have not lived to His honor. You must honestly confess that you have not performed a single action with a desire to please Him. You have labored to please yourself—that has been the highest motive you have had... And as for your good works, where are they? Where are they? Ah! It is a figment and a fiction, a laugh and a dream. Good works in sinners? There are no such things. Augustine well said, “Good works, as they are called, in sinners are nothing but splendid sins.” This is true of the best works of the best man, who is out of Christ. They are nothing but splendid sins, varnished sins. God forgive you, dear friends, for your good works! You have as great need to be forgiven for your good works as you have for your bad ones, if you are out of Christ; for I reckon they are both alike, bad, if they come to be sifted.

From a sermon delivered on Sabbath morning, March 16, 1856, at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

WORKS, GRACE, AND SALVATION

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Ephesians 2:1-22

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”—Ephesians 2:8-10.

WE ARE CHRISTIANS ENTIRELY AND SOLELY AS THE RESULT OF THE GRACE OF GOD. Let us remind ourselves once more that grace means “unmerited, undeserved favor.” It is an action that arises entirely from the gracious character of God. So the fundamental proposition is that salvation is something that comes to us entirely from God’s side. What is still more important is this: it not only comes from God’s side, it comes to us in spite of ourselves—“unmerited” favor. In other words, it is not God’s response to anything in us. Now there are many people who seem to think that it is—that salvation is God’s response to something in us. But the word grace excludes that. It is in spite of us. The Apostle, as we have seen, has already been very much concerned to say this... Listen to him: “Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ,” and then, instead of going on to the next step—in parenthesis “(by grace ye are saved)” (Eph 2:5). Here, he puts it a little more explicitly. Salvation is not in any sense God’s response to anything in us. It is not something that we in any sense deserve or merit. The whole essence of the teaching at this point and everywhere in all the New Testament is that we have no sort or kind of right whatsoever to salvation, that the whole glory of salvation is that though we deserved nothing but punishment and hell and banishment out of the sight of God to all eternity, yet God, of His own love and grace and wondrous mercy, has granted us this salvation. Now that is the entire meaning of this term grace.

We need not stay with this because we have been dealing with it in the previous seven verses. What is the point of those verses? Is it not just to show us that very thing negatively and positively? What is the point of that horrible description of man by nature as the result of sin in the first three verses, if it is not just to show that man, as he is in sin, deserves nothing but retribution? He is a child of wrath by nature, and not only by nature but also by conduct, by his behavior, by his whole attitude to God—living according to the course of this world, governed by the prince of the power of the air. That is the sort of creature he is: dead in trespasses and sins, a creature of lusts, lusts of the flesh, “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (Eph 2:3). There is no more appalling description possible than that. You cannot imagine a worse state than that. Does such a creature deserve anything? Has such a creature any right at all in the presence of God? Can he come forward with a plea or with a demand? The whole point of the Apostle is to say that such a creature deserves nothing at the hands of God but retribution. And then he works it out in his great contrast—“but God”...And the whole purpose of that, surely, is to exalt the grace and the mercy of God and to show that where man deserves nothing at all, God not only gives him, and gives him liberally, but showers upon him “the exceeding riches of his grace” (Eph 2:7).

THAT, THEREFORE, IS THE FIRST PRINCIPLE, THAT WE ARE CHRISTIANS SOLELY AND ENTIRELY AND ONLY BECAUSE OF THE GRACE OF GOD. I have referred to that fifth verse because it is extremely important in this whole argument. Notice the way the Apostle inserted it there, slipped it in, as it were, insinuated it. Why did he do so? Notice the context. He says that it was even “when we were dead in sins” that God quickened us. Then at once— “(by grace ye are saved).” If you do not see it at that

point, you will see it at no point. What he has been saying is this: We were dead, which means without any life at all, without any ability, therefore. And the first thing that was necessary was that we should be given life, that we should be quickened. And he says that that is the very thing that God has done to us. Therefore, he says, "Can you not see it? It is by grace you are saved." So he puts it in at that particular point obviously for that reason. It is the only conclusion one can draw. Creatures who were spiritually dead are now alive—how has it happened? Can a dead man raise himself? It is impossible. There is only one answer, "By grace ye are saved." We come, therefore, to this inevitable conclusion: we are Christians at this moment only and entirely by the grace of God.

The Apostle was never tired of saying this. What else could he say? As he looked back on that blaspheming Saul of Tarsus, who hated Christ and the Christian Church and did his best to exterminate Christianity, breathing out threatenings and slaughter; as he looked back at that and then looked at himself as he now was, what could he say but this, "I am what I am by the grace of God"? And I must confess it passes my comprehension to understand how any Christian looking at himself or herself can say anything different. If, when you get on your knees before God, you do not realize that you are "a debtor to mercy alone,"¹² I confess I do not understand you. There is something tragically defective, either in your sense of sin or in your realization of the greatness of God's love. This is the running theme of the New Testament; it is the reason why the saints of the centuries have always praised the Lord Jesus Christ. They see that when they were utterly hopeless, indeed dead and vile and foul, "hateful and hating one another" (Tit 3:3) as Paul puts it in writing to Titus, then God looked upon them. It was "while we were yet sinners", more, it was "while we were enemies" (Rom 5:8, 10) that we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son—at enmity, aliens in our minds, utterly opposed. Surely, we must see that it is by grace and by grace alone that we are Christians. It is utterly undeserved; it is only as the result of the goodness of God.

THE SECOND PROPOSITION, AS I HAVE INDICATED, IS PUT BY THE APOSTLE IN A NEGATIVE FORM. He says that the fact that we are Christians gives us no grounds whatsoever for boasting. That is the negative of the first proposition. The first is that we are Christians solely and entirely as the result of the grace of God. Therefore, secondly, we must say that the fact that we are Christians gives us no grounds whatsoever for boasting. The Apostle puts that in two statements. The first is, "that not of yourselves." But he is not content with that; he must put it still more explicitly in these words, "Lest any man should boast." There we have two vitally important statements. Surely, nothing could be stronger than this: "Not of yourselves: lest any man should boast." This must always be the crucial test of our view of salvation and of what makes us Christians.

Let us then examine ourselves for a moment. What is your idea of yourself as a Christian? How have you become a Christian? What is it dependent upon? What is the background, what is the reason? That is the crucial question, and according to the Apostle, the vital test. Does your idea of how you have become a Christian give you any grounds whatsoever for being proud of yourself, for boasting? Does it in any way reflect credit upon you? If it does, according to this statement—and I do not hesitate to say it—you are not a Christian. "Not of yourselves: lest any man should boast." In the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle puts it still more plainly. He asks his question. Here, he says, is God's way of salvation, and then he asks in verse 27, "Where is boasting then?" He answers by saying, "It is excluded," it is put out through the door and the door locked on it. There is no room for it here at all.

It is not surprising that the Apostle Paul is so fond of putting it in that particular way because before his conversion, before he became a Christian, he knew a great deal about boasting. There was never a more self-satisfied person or a more self-assured person than Saul of Tarsus. He was proud of himself in every respect—proud of his nationality, proud of the particular tribe into which he had been born in Israel, proud of the fact that he had been brought up as a Pharisee¹³ and had sat at the feet of Gamaliel,¹⁴ proud of his religion, proud of his morality, proud of his knowledge. He tells us all about it in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians. He would boast. He would stand up and say, as it were, "Who can challenge this?" Here I am, a good and a moral and a religious man. Look at me in my religious duties, look at me in my life, look at me in every respect; I have given myself to this godly, holy living, and I am satisfying God. That was his attitude. He was boasting. He felt that he was such a man and had lived in such a way that he could be proud of it. It was one of his great words. But he came to see that one of the biggest differences that becoming a Christian made to him was that all that was put out and rendered irrelevant. That is why he used rather strong language. Looking back on all that in which he had boasted so much, he says, "It is dung and loss!" He is not content to say that it was wrong; it is vile, it is filthy, it is foul. Boasting? Excluded! But the Apostle knows the danger at this point so well that he does not content himself with a general statement; he indicates two particular respects in which we are most liable to boast.

The first is this question of works: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." It is always in connection with works that we are most liable to boast. It is at that point that the devil tempts us all in a most subtle manner. Works! That was why the Pharisees were the greatest enemies of Jesus Christ: not because they were mere talkers, but because they really did things. When that Pharisee said, "I fast twice in the week," he was speaking the truth. When he said, "I give tithes of all that I possess," it was strictly accurate (Luke 18:9). The Pharisees were not merely talkers, they really did these things. And it was because of this that they so resented the preaching of the Son of God and were most responsible for His crucifixion. Is it going too far to say that it is always more difficult to convert a good person than a bad one? I think the history of the Church proves that. The greatest opponents of evangelical religion have always been good and

religious people. Some of the most cruel persecutors in the history of the Church have belonged to this class. The saints have always suffered most acutely at the hands of good, moral, religious people. Why? Because of works. The evangelical Gospel always denounces reliance upon works and pride of works and boasting about works, and such people cannot stand it. Their whole position has been built up on that—what they are and what they have done and what they have always been doing. This is their whole position; and if you take that from them, they have nothing. They therefore hate such preaching, and they will fight it to the last ditch. The Gospel makes paupers of us all. It condemns us every one. It strips us all naked. There is no difference, Paul argues everywhere, there is no difference between the Gentile, who is outside the pale, and the religious Jew, in the sight of God—

“There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom 3:10). So works must go out, they must not be boasted of. But we tend to boast of them—our good living, our good deeds, our religious observances, our attendance at services (and particularly if we do so early in the morning), and so on. These are the things, our religious activities, these make us Christian. That is the argument.

But the Apostle exposes and denounces all that, and he does so very simply in this way: he says that to talk about works is to go back under the Law. If you think, he says, that it is your good life that makes you a Christian, you are putting yourself back under the Law. But that is a futile thing to do, he says, for this reason: if you put yourself back under the Law you are condemning yourself, for “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20). If you want to try to justify yourself by your life and by your works, you are walking straight to condemnation because the best works of man are not good enough in the sight of God. The Law has condemned all—“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom 3:10). So do not be foolish, says Paul; do not turn away from grace, for in so doing you are turning to condemnation. No man’s works will ever be sufficient to justify him in the sight of God. How foolish, therefore, to go back under works!

But not only that, he explains further in the tenth verse that it is to put things the wrong way round. Such people think that by their good works they make themselves Christian, whereas Paul says, it is exactly the other way round. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” The tragedy is that people think that if only they do certain things and avoid certain things, and live a good life and go out and help others, in that way they will become Christian. “What blindness!” says Paul. The way to look at good works is this. God makes us Christians in order that we may do good works. It is not a question of good works leading to Christianity, but Christianity leading to good works. It is the exact opposite of what people tend to believe. There is nothing, therefore, that is such a complete contradiction of the true Christian position as this tendency to boast of works and to think that because we are what we are and are doing what we are doing, we are making ourselves Christian. No! God makes Christians, and then they go on to do their good works. Boasting is excluded. “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith” (Rom 3:27). We see that works are excluded in the matter of becoming Christian. We must not boast of our works. If we are in any way conscious of our goodness, or if we are relying upon anything that we have done, we are denying the grace of God. It is the opposite of Christianity.

But alas, it is not only works and deeds that tend to insinuate themselves. There is something else—faith! Faith tends to come in and to make us boast. There is great controversy about this eighth verse—“For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” The great question is, what does the “that” refer to? And there are two schools of opinion. “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that (faith) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,” says the one school. But according to the other view, the “that” does not refer to the “faith” but to the “grace” at the beginning of the sentence: “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that (this position of grace) not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” Is it possible to settle the dispute? It is not. It is not a question of grammar; it is not a question of language...It is a question that cannot be decided. And there is a sense in which it really does not matter at all because it comes to much the same thing in the end. In other words, what is important is that we should avoid turning faith into “works.”

But there are many people who do that. They turn their faith into a kind of works. Indeed, there is quite a popular evangelistic teaching at the present time which says that the difference which the New Testament makes can be put in this way. In the Old Testament, God looked at the people and said, “Here is my Law, here are the Ten Commandments, keep them, I will forgive you, and you will be saved.” But, it goes on to say, it is not like that now. God has put all that on one side; there is no longer any Law. God simply says to us, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” and if you do, you will be saved. In other words, they say that by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ a man saves himself. But that is to turn faith into works because it says it is our action that saves us. But the Apostle says “Not of yourselves.” Whether the “that” refers to faith or to grace, it does not matter; “you are saved,” says Paul, “by grace, and that not of yourselves.” If it is my belief that saves me, I have saved myself. But Paul says that it is not of yourself, so that I must never speak of my faith in a way that makes it “of myself.” And not only that. If I become a Christian in that way, again surely it gives me some grounds for boasting; but Paul says, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” My boasting must be entirely excluded.

As we think of faith, we must be careful, therefore, to view it in this light. Faith is not the cause of salvation. Christ is the cause of salvation. The grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ is the cause of salvation, and I must never speak in such a way as to represent

faith as the cause of my salvation. What is faith then? Faith is but the instrument through which it comes to me. "By grace are ye saved, through faith." Faith is the channel, it is the instrument through which this salvation which is of the grace of God comes to me. I am saved by grace, "through faith." It is just the medium through which the grace of God bringing salvation enters into my life. We must always be extremely careful, therefore, never to say that it is our believing that saves us. Belief does not save. Faith does not save. Christ saves—Christ and His finished work. Not my belief, not my faith, not my understanding, nothing that I do—"not of yourselves," "boasting is excluded," "by grace, through faith."

Surely, the whole point of the first three verses of this chapter is to show that no other position is at all possible. How can a man who is "dead" in trespasses and sins save himself? How can a man who is an "enemy and alienated in his mind," whose heart is "at enmity against God" (for that is what we are told about the natural man), how can such a man do anything that is meritorious? It is impossible. The first thing that happens to us, the Apostle has told us in verses 4 to 7, is that we have been "quickened." New life has been put into us. Why? Because without life we can do nothing. The first thing the sinner needs is life. He cannot ask for life, for he is dead. God gives him life, and he proves that he has it by believing the Gospel. Quickening is the first step. It is the first thing that happens. I do not ask to be quickened. If I asked to be quickened, I would not need to be quickened; I would already have life. But I am dead, and I am an enemy, and I am opposed to God; I do not understand, and I hate. But God gives me life. He has quickened me together with Christ. Therefore, boasting is entirely excluded, boasting of works, boasting even of faith. It must be excluded. Salvation is altogether of God.

That brings us to the last principle, which I summarize in this way: our being Christians is entirely the result of God's work. The real trouble with many of us is that our conception of what it is that makes us Christian is so low, is so poor. It is our failure to realize the greatness of what it means to be a Christian. Paul says, "We are his workmanship"! It is God Who has done something, it is God Who is working; we are His workmanship. Not our works, His work. So, I say again, it is not our good life, and all our efforts, and hoping to be a Christian at the end, that makes us Christians.

But let me go further. It is not our decision, our "deciding for Christ" that makes us Christians either: that is our work. Decision does come into it, but it is not our decision that makes us Christians. Paul says we are His workmanship. And thus, you see how grievously our loose thinking and our loose speaking misrepresent Christianity! I remember a very good man—yes, a good Christian man—whose way of giving his testimony was always this: "I decided for Christ thirty years ago, and I have never regretted it." That was his way of putting it. That is not Paul's way of describing becoming Christian. "We are his workmanship"! That is the emphasis. Not something I have gone in for, not something I have decided, but something that God has done to me. He might better have put it like this: "Thirty years ago, I was dead in trespasses and sins, but God began to do something to me; I became aware of God dealing with me; I felt God smashing me; I felt the hands of God re-making me." That is Paul's way of putting it; not, I decided, not, I went in for Christianity, not, I decided to follow Christ, not at all. That comes in, but that is later.

We are His workmanship. A Christian is a person in whom God has worked. And you notice what kind of work it is according to Paul. It is nothing less than a creation. "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works." The Apostle is very fond of saying this. Listen to him saying it to the Philippians: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (1:6). God! He has begun a good work in you! It is God's work! He came when you were dead, and He quickened you, He put life into you. That is what makes a man a Christian. Not your good works, not your decision, but God's determination concerning you put into practice.

It is here [that] we see how our ideas of what the Christian is fall hopelessly short of the biblical teaching. A Christian is a new creation. He is not just a good man or a man who has been improved somewhat; he is a new man, "created in Christ Jesus." He has been put into Christ, and the life of Christ has come into him. We are "partakers of the divine nature," says the Apostle Peter (2Pe 1:4). "Partakers of the divine nature"! What is a Christian? A good man, a moral man, a man who believes certain things? Yes, but infinitely more! He is a new man; the life of God has come into his soul—"created in Christ," "God's workmanship"! Had you realized that that is what makes you a Christian? It is not attending a place of worship. It is not doing certain duties. These things are all excellent, but they can never make us Christians (They could make us Pharisees!). It is God Who makes Christians, and He does it in this way. He created everything out of nothing at the beginning, and He comes to man, and He makes him anew and gives him a new nature, making a new man of him. A Christian is "a new creation," nothing less.

"If you are interested in works," says Paul, "I will tell you the sort of works that God is interested in." It is not the miserable works that you can do as a creature in sin by nature. It is a new kind of work—"created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"—God's good works! What does he mean? He means that our trouble is not only that our notion of Christianity is inadequate, [but] our notion of good works is still more inadequate. Put down on paper the good works that people think are good enough to make them Christian. Get them to put them all down on paper, all those things on which they are relying. Put them on paper, and then take them to God and say, "This is what I have done." The thing is laughable; it is monstrous. Look at what they are doing! They are not the good works in which God is interested. What are God's good works? Well, the Sermon on the Mount and the life of Jesus Christ provide the answer: not just a little negative goodness and morality, not perhaps

doing an occasional kindness and being very conscious of it—no! Disinterested love! “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phi 2:5-8)—giving Himself for others without counting the cost. Those are God’s good works. Loving God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves! Not doing him an occasional good turn, but loving him as yourself! Forgetting yourself in your concern for him! Those are God’s good works. And those are the works for which He has created us.

THE SCRIPTURES AND GOOD WORKS

Arthur W. Pink

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”—
2Ti 3:16, 17.

MEN, left to themselves, have ever found it impossible to keep the even line of truth between what appear to be conflicting doctrines, such as the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man; election by grace and the universal proclamation of the Gospel; the justifying faith of Paul and the justifying works of James. Only too often, where the absolute sovereignty of God has been insisted upon, it has been to the ignoring of man’s accountability; and where unconditional election has been held fast, the unfettered preaching of the Gospel to the unsaved has been let slip. On the other hand, where human accountability has been upheld and an evangelical ministry been sustained, the sovereignty of God and the truth of election have generally been whittled down or completely ignored.

Many of our readers have witnessed examples that illustrate the truth of what has been said above, but few seem to realize that exactly the same difficulty is experienced when an attempt is made to show the precise relation between faith and good works. If, on the one hand, some have erred in attributing to good works a place that Scripture does not warrant, certain it is that, on the other hand, some have failed to give to good works the province that Scripture assigns them. If, on the one side, it be serious error to ascribe our justification before God to any performances of ours, on the other side, they are equally guilty who deny that good works are necessary in order to our reaching heaven and allow nothing more than that they are merely evidences or fruits of our justification. We are well aware that we are now (shall we say) treading on thin ice and running a serious risk of ourselves being charged with heresy. Nevertheless, we deem it expedient to seek Divine aid in grappling with this difficulty, and then commit the issues thereof to God Himself.

In some quarters, the claims of faith, though not wholly denied, have been disparaged because of a zeal to magnify good works. In other circles, reputed as orthodox (and they are what we now have chiefly in mind), only too rarely are good works assigned their proper place, and far too infrequently are professing Christians urged with apostolic earnestness to maintain them. No doubt, this is due at times to a fear of undervaluing faith and encouraging sinners in the fatal error of trusting to their own doings rather than to and in the righteousness of Christ. But no such apprehensions should hinder a preacher from declaring “all the counsel of God”...Let him not forget that Divine command, “Affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works” (Titus 3:8).

The last-quoted Scripture is the most pertinent one for these days of looseness and laxity,¹⁹ of worthless profession, and empty boasting. This expression “good works” is found in the New Testament in the singular or plural number no less than thirty times; yet, from the rarity with which many preachers, who are esteemed sound in the faith, use, emphasize, and enlarge upon them, many of their hearers would conclude that those words occur but once or twice in all the Bible... Now in Ephesians 2:8–10, God has joined two most vital and blessed things together which ought never to be separated in our hearts and minds, yet they are most frequently parted in the modern pulpit. How many sermons are preached from the first two of these verses, which so clearly declare salvation to be by grace through faith and not of works? Yet how seldom are we reminded that the sentence that begins with grace and faith is only completed in Eph 2:10, where we are told, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

We began this series by pointing out that the Word of God may be taken up from various motives and read with different designs, but that 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, makes known for what these Scriptures are really “profitable,” namely for doctrine or teaching, for reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, and all of these that “the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”. . . let us now consider how these furnish us unto “all good works.” Here is another vital criterion by which an honest soul, with the help of the Holy Spirit, may ascertain whether or not his reading and study of the Word is really benefiting him.

We profit from the Word when we are thereby taught the true place of good works. "Many persons, in their eagerness to support orthodoxy as a system, speak of salvation by grace and faith in such a manner as to undervalue holiness and a life devoted to God. But there is no ground for this in the Holy Scriptures. The same Gospel that declares salvation to be freely by the grace of God through faith in the blood of Christ, and asserts in the strongest terms that sinners are justified by the righteousness of the Savior imputed to them on their believing in Him without any respect to works of Law, also assures us that without holiness no man shall see God; that believers are cleansed by the blood of atonement; that their hearts are purified by faith, which works by love and overcomes the world; and that the grace that brings salvation to all men, teaches those who receive it that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Any fear that the doctrine of grace will suffer from the most strenuous inculcation of good works on a scriptural foundation betrays an inadequate and greatly defective acquaintance with Divine truth. And any tampering with the Scriptures in order to silence their testimony in favor of the fruits of righteousness, as absolutely necessary in the Christian, is a perversion and forgery with respect to the Word of God."

But what force (ask some) has this ordination or command of God unto good works, when, notwithstanding it, though we fail to apply ourselves diligently unto obedience, we shall nevertheless be justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and so may be saved without them? Such a senseless objection proceeds from utter ignorance of the believer's present state and relation to God. To suppose that the hearts of the regenerate are not as much and as effectually influenced with the authority and commands of God unto obedience as if they were given in order unto their justification is to ignore what true faith is, and what are the arguments and motives whereby the minds of Christians are principally affected and constrained. Moreover, it is to lose sight of the inseparable connection that God has made between our justification and our sanctification:²³ to suppose that one of these may exist without the other is to overthrow the whole Gospel. The Apostle deals with this very objection in Romans 6:1–3.

We profit from the Word when we are thereby taught the absolute necessity of good works. If it be written that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb 9:22) and "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb 11:6), the Scripture of Truth also declares, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). The life lived by the saints in heaven is but the completion and consummation of that life which, after regeneration, they live here on earth. The difference between the two is not one of kind, but of degree. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Pro 4:18). If there has been no walking with God down here, there will be no dwelling with God up there. If there has been no real communion with Him in time, there will be none with Him in eternity. Death effects no vital change to the heart. True, at death the remainders of sin are forever left behind by the saint, but no new nature is then imparted. If then he did not hate sin and love holiness before death, he certainly will not do so afterwards.

No one really desires to go to hell, though there are few indeed who are willing to forsake that broad road which inevitably leads there. All would like to go to heaven, but are professing Christians really willing and determined to walk that narrow way which alone leads thereto? It is at this point that we may discern the precise place that good works have in connection with salvation. They do not merit it, yet they are inseparable from it. They do not procure a title to heaven, yet they are among the means that God has appointed for His people's getting there. In no sense are good works the procuring cause of eternal life, but they are part of the means (as are the Spirit's work within us and repentance, faith, and obedience by us) conducing²⁴ to it. God has appointed the way wherein we must walk in order to our arriving at the inheritance purchased for us by Christ. A life of daily obedience to God is that which alone gives actual admission to the enjoyment of what Christ has purchased for His people—admission now by faith, admission at death, or His return in full actuality.

We profit from the Word when we are taught thereby the true nature of good works...The true nature of "good works" was perfectly exemplified by the Lord Jesus. All that He did was done in obedience to His Father. He "pleased not himself" (Rom 15:3), but ever performed the bidding of the One Who had sent Him (Joh 6:38). He could say, "I do always those things that please him" (Joh 8:29). There were no limits to Christ's subjection to the Father's will: He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phi 2:8). So too, all that He did proceeded from love to the Father and love to His neighbor. Love is the fulfilling of the Law; without love, compliance with the Law is naught but servile subjection, and that cannot be acceptable to Him Who is Love. Proof that all Christ's obedience flowed from love is found in His words, "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps 40:8). So also, all that Christ did had in view the glory of the Father: "Father, glorify thy name" (Joh 12:28) revealed the object constantly before Him.

We profit from the Word when we are taught thereby the true scope of good works. This is so comprehensive as to include the discharge of our duties in every relationship in which God has placed us. It is interesting and instructive to note the first "good work" (as so described) in Holy Writ, namely, the anointing of the Savior by Mary of Bethany (Mat 26:10; Mark 14:6). Indifferent alike to the blame or praise of men, with eyes only for the "chiefest among ten thousand," she lavished upon Him her precious ointment. Another woman, Dorcas (Acts 9:36), is also mentioned as "full of good works"; after worship comes service, glorifying God among men and benefiting others.

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work" (Col 1:10). The bringing up (not "dragging" up!) of children, lodging (spiritual) strangers, washing the saints' feet (ministering to their temporal comforts), and relieving the

afflicted (1Ti 5:10) are spoken of as “good works.” Unless our reading and study of the Scriptures is making us better soldiers of Jesus Christ, better citizens of the country in which we sojourn, better members of our earthly homes (kinder, gentler, more unselfish), “thoroughly furnished unto all good works,” it is profiting us little or nothing.

GOOD WORKS AND THE JUSTIFIED

Horatius Bonar

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt”—Romans 4:4.

DOES [Paul] by this speech make light of good works? Does he encourage an unholy walk? Does he use a rash word, which had better been left unspoken? No, truly, he is laying the foundation of good works. He is removing the great obstacle to a holy life, viz.,²⁶ the bondage of an unforgiven state. He is speaking, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the words of truth and soberness. The difference between working and believing is that which God would have us to learn, lest we confound these two things and so destroy them both. The order and relation of these two things are here very explicitly laid down, so as to anticipate the error of many who mix up working and believing together, or who make believing the result of working, instead of working the result of believing. We carefully distinguish, yet we as carefully connect the two. We do not put asunder what God has joined together; yet we would not reverse the divine order, nor disturb the divine relation, nor place that last which God has set first.

It was not to depreciate or discourage good works that the Apostle spoke of not working, but believing; or of a man being “justified by faith without the deeds of the law”; or of God imputing “righteousness without works” (Rom 3:28; 4:6). It was to distinguish things that differ. It was to show the true use of faith in connecting us for justification with what another has done. It was to stay us from doing anything in order to be justified. In this view, then, faith is truly a ceasing from work and not a working. It is not the doing of anything in order to be justified, but the simple reception of the justifying work of Him Who finished transgression and made an end of sin (Dan 9:24). For the one justifying work was completed eighteen hundred years ago, and any attempt on our part to repeat or imitate this is vain. The one cross suffices.

Nor was it to undervalue good works that our Lord gave, what many may deem such a singular answer to the question of the Jews, “What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?...This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Joh 6:28, 29). They wanted to work their way into the favor of God. The Lord tells them that they may have that favor without waiting or working by accepting at once His testimony to His only-begotten Son. Until then, they were not in a condition for working. They were as trees without a root, as stars whose motions, however regular, would be useless, if they themselves were unlighted.

To say to a groping, troubled spirit, “You must first believe before you can work,” is no more to encourage ungodliness or laxity of walk, than to say to an imprisoned soldier, “You must first get out of your dungeon before you can fight”; or to a swimmer, “You must throw off that millstone before you can attempt to swim”; or to a racer, “You must get quit of these fetters before you can run the race.” Yet these expressions of the Apostle have often been shrunk from, dreaded as dangerous, quoted with a guarding clause, or rather cited as seldom as possible, under the secret feeling that unless greatly diluted or properly qualified, they had better not be cited at all. But why are these bold utterances there, if they are perilous, if they are not meant to be as fearlessly proclaimed now as they were fearlessly written eighteen centuries ago? What did the Holy Spirit mean by promulgation of such “unguarded” statements, as some seem disposed to reckon them? It was not for nothing that they were so boldly spoken. Timid words would not have served the purpose. The glorious Gospel needed statements such as these to disentangle the great question of acceptance, to relieve troubled consciences and purge them from dead works, yet at the same time to give to works their proper place...

In another’s righteousness we stand, and by another’s righteousness are we justified. All accusations against us, founded upon our unrighteousness, we answer by pointing to the perfection of the righteousness that covers us from head to foot...

Protected by this perfection, we have no fear of wrath, either now or hereafter. It is a buckler to us; and we cry, “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed” (Psa 84:9), as if to say, “Look not on me, but on my Substitute. Deal not with me for sin, but with my Sin-bearer. Challenge not me for my guilt, but challenge Him; He will answer for me.” Thus, we are safe beneath the shield of His righteousness. No arrow, either from the enemy or from conscience, can reach us there.

Covered by this perfection, we are at peace. The enemy cannot invade us; or if he try to do so, we can triumphantly repel him. It is a refuge from the storm, a covert from the tempest, a river of water in a dry place, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The work of righteousness is peace; and in the Lord we have righteousness and strength.

Beautified with this perfection, which is the perfection of God, we find favor in His sight. His eye rests on the comeliness²⁸ that He has put upon us; and as He did at viewing the first creation, so now, in looking at us as clothed with this divine excellency, He pronounces it “very good.” He sees no iniquity in Jacob and no transgression in Israel (Num 23:21). “The iniquity of Israel shall be

sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found” (Jer 50:20). This righteousness suffices to cover, to comfort, and to beautify.

But there is more than this: we are justified that we may be holy. The possession of this legal righteousness is the beginning of a holy life. We do not live a holy life in order to be justified; but we are justified that we may live a holy life. That which man calls holiness may be found in almost any circumstances of dread, or darkness, or bondage, or self-righteous toil and suffering; but that which God calls holiness can only be developed under conditions of liberty and light, and pardon and peace with God. Forgiveness is the mainspring of holiness. Love, as a motive, is far stronger than law, far more influential than fear of wrath or peril of hell. Terror may make a man crouch like a slave and obey a hard master, lest a worse thing come upon him; but only a sense of forgiving love can bring either heart or conscience into that state in which obedience is either pleasant to the soul or acceptable to God.

False ideas of holiness are common, not only among those who profess false religions, but among those who profess the true. For holiness is a thing of which man by nature has no more idea than a blind man has of the beauty of a flower or the light of the sun. All false religions have had their “holy men,” whose holiness often consisted merely in the amount of pain they could inflict upon their bodies, or of food which they could abstain from, or of hard labor which they could undergo. But with God, a saint or holy man is a very different being. It is in filial,²⁹ full-hearted love to God that much of true holiness consists. And this cannot even begin to be until the sinner has found forgiveness and tasted liberty and has confidence towards God. The spirit of holiness is incompatible with the spirit of bondage. There must be the spirit of liberty, the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, “Abba, Father” (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). When the fountain of holiness begins to well up in the human heart and to fill the whole being with its transforming, purifying power, “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us” (1Jo 4:16) is the first note of the holy song that commenced on earth and [is] perpetuated through eternity.

We are bought with a price that we may be new creatures in Christ Jesus. We are forgiven that we may be like Him, Who forgives us. We are set at liberty and brought out of prison that we may be holy. The free, boundless love of God, pouring itself into us, expands and elevates our whole being; and we serve Him, not in order to win His favor, but because we have already won it in simply believing His record concerning His Son. If the root is holy, so are the branches. We have become connected with the holy root and by the necessity of this connection are made holy too.

Forgiveness relaxes no law nor interferes with the highest justice. Human pardons may often do so: God’s pardons never. Forgiveness doubles all our bonds to a holy life, only they are no longer bonds of iron, but of gold. It takes off the heavy yoke in order to give us the light and easy. Love is stronger than law. Whatever connects our obedience with love must be far more influential than what connects us with law.

The love of God to us and our love to God work together for producing holiness in us. Terror accomplishes no real obedience. Suspense brings forth no fruit unto holiness. Only the certainty of love, forgiving love, can do this. It is this certainty that melts the heart, dissolves our chains, disburdens our shoulders so that we stand erect, and makes us to run in the way of the divine commandments.

Condemnation is that which binds sin and us together. Forgiveness looses this fearful tie and separates us from sin. The power of condemnation which the Law possesses is that which makes it so strong and terrible. Cancel this power, and the liberated spirit rises into the region of love and in that region finds both will and strength for the keeping of the Law, a law which is at once old and new: old as to substance—“Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart” (Deu 6:5)—new as to mode and motive—“for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:2); that is, the law of the life-giving Spirit, which we have in Christ Jesus, has severed the condemning connection of that Law which leads only to sin and death. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (i.e., unable to carry out its commandments in our old nature), God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom 8:3, 4).

The removal of condemnation is the dissolution of legal bondage and of that awful pressure upon the conscience that at once enslaved and irritated; disabling as well as disinclining us from all obedience; making holiness both distasteful and dreadful, to be submitted to only through fear of future woe...But the message, “God is love,” is like the sun bursting through the clouds of a long tempest. The good news, “Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins” (Act 13:38), is like the opening of the prisoner’s dungeon gate. Bondage departs, and liberty comes. Suspicion is gone, and the heart is won. Perfect love has cast out fear (1Jo 4:18). We hasten to the embrace of Him Who loved us; we hate that which has estranged us; we put away all that caused the distance between us and Him; we long to be like one so perfect and to partake of His holiness. To be “partakers of the divine nature” (2Pe 1:4), once so distasteful, is henceforth most grateful and pleasant; and nothing seems now so desirable as to escape the corruptions that are in the world through lust.

We undergo many false changes, which look like holiness, but which are not really so...Time changes us, yet does not make us holy. The decays of age change us, but do not break the power of evil. One lust expels another; frailty succeeds to frailty; error

drives out error; one vanity pails, another comes freshly in its room; one evil habit is exchanged for a second, but our [flesh] remains the same. The cross has not touched us with its regenerating power; the Holy Spirit has not purified the inner sources of our being and life.

Fashion changes us; the example of friends changes us; society changes us; excitement changes us; business changes us; affection changes us; sorrow changes us; dread of coming evil changes us; yet the heart is just what it was. Of the numerous changes in our character or deportment, how many are deceitful, how few are real and deep! Only that which can go down into the very depths of our spiritual being can produce any change that is worthy of the name.

The one spell that can really transform us is THE CROSS. The one potent watchword (the call of a sentinel on his rounds) is, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (Joh 12:32)... "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (Joh 17:19). Christ presents Himself as the Holy One, Consecrated One, to God that His people may partake of His sanctification and be like Himself—saints, consecrated ones, men set apart for God by the sprinkling of the blood. Through the truth, they are sanctified by the power of the Holy Ghost. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:14); so that the perfection of His saints, both as to the conscience and as to personal holiness, is connected with the one offering and springs out of the one work finished upon Calvary. "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). Here again the sanctification is connected with the offering of the body of Christ. Whatever place "the power of His resurrection" may hold in our spiritual history, it is the cross that is the source of all that varied fullness by which we are justified and purified. The secret of a believer's holy walk is his continual recurrence to the blood of the Surety and his daily intercourse with a crucified and risen Lord...

Want of sensitiveness to the difference between truth and error is one of the evil features of modern Protestantism. Sounding words, well-executed pictures, [and] pretentious logic carry away multitudes. The distinction between Gospel and no Gospel is very decided and very momentous; yet many will come away from a sermon in which the free Gospel has been overlaid, not sensible of the want, and praising the preacher. The conversions of recent years have not the depth of other days. Consciences are half-awakened and half-pacified; the wound is slightly laid open and slightly healed. Hence, the want of spiritual discernment as to truth and error. The conscience is not sensitive, else it would at once refuse and resent any statement, however well argued or painted, which encroached in the slightest degree upon the free Gospel of God's love in Christ; which interposed any obstacle between the sinner and the cross; or which merely declaimed about the cross, without telling us especially how it saves and how it purifies.

SAVING FAITH AND GOOD WORKS

Ebenezer Erskine

FIRST, WHAT BELIEVING IN GOD IMPORTS: It imports the knowledge of God, in a suitableness to the revelation which He hath made of Himself to us, through Christ, in the Gospel. I do own that the very heathens may know His eternal power by the things that are seen. But there is no saving knowledge of God by a guilty sinner, but as He is in Christ: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Co 4:6). And whatever fine notions or speculations people may have of God and of His excellencies, as discovered in the works of creation and providence, yet, if their notions of Him be not regulated by the Gospel revelation, and if this revelation of a God in Christ be not opened by the Spirit of wisdom, rending the veil of ignorance and unbelief that is upon the mind by nature, there can be no saving, satisfying, or sanctifying knowledge of God and consequently no true faith or believing... Only a saving illumination of the mind with the knowledge of a God in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, can produce a saving faith. And this knowledge is so essential to faith, or believing, that we find it frequently in Scripture called by the name of knowledge: "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (Joh 17:3).

To believe in God implies a firm and steady assent unto the truth and veracity of God speaking in His Word. It is to believe and credit what He says on His own testimony. This is called a "receiving the record of God, a setting to the seal that God is true, a believing of the report of the Gospel." When the man hears "the word of the truth of the Gospel," he is ready to cry out with the Apostle, "It is a faithful saying." This Word is established in the heavens; yea, heaven and earth shall pass away, but this Word of God endureth forever...

I proceed now to inquire what influence this faith hath upon good works:

True faith unites the soul to Christ, Who is the very root and fountain of all holiness. "From me (saith the Lord), is thy fruit found. Except ye abide in me, and I in you," to wit, by faith, "ye cannot bring forth much fruit." Indeed, a person in a state of nature may bring forth many fruits that are morally and materially good; but, without union with Christ, we can do no work that is spiritually good and acceptable; for "as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (Joh

15:4). We may as well gather grapes off thorns or figs off thistles as expect works that are spiritually good from a person out of Christ . . .

Faith works by love, and love is the fulfilling of the Law. Love to God in Christ is the next and immediate fruit of true and saving faith. Now, the heart being oiled with the love of God in Christ, this makes the man to abound in good works: "The love of Christ constraineth us," says the Apostle (2Co 5:14). Love makes a man to keep God's commandments. Love will make a man to run through fire and water for Him. "Many waters cannot quench love" (Song 8:7). "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom 8:35).

Faith applies the promises of the New Covenant and fetches grace from thence for obeying the precept of the law. Faith, as it were, travels between the precept and the promise: it carries the man from the precept unto the promise and from the promise to the precept. As for instance, when the law says, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deu 6:5; Luk 10:27), faith runs to the promise, where God hath said, "God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God" (Deu 30:6)...Does the law say, "Thou shalt know the Lord?" (Hos 2:20). Well, faith looks to the promise, "I will give them an heart to know me" (Jer 24:7). Does the law oblige us to keep all His commandments? Faith runs to the promise and applies it, "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes" (Eze 36:27).

Faith hath influence on good works, as it beholds the authority of a God in Christ interposed in every commandment of the Law. The eye of natural reason may see, as was hinted, the authority of a God-creator, as is plain in the case of the heathens; but it is only the eye of that faith, which is of God's operation, that can behold the authority of a God in Christ and receive the Law out of His hands...O! when a God in Christ is viewed by faith, the soul cannot but cry out, "He is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth: His commandments are not grievous, His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. For I see it no more a covenant of works to me, but a rule of obedience, sweetened with redeeming love and grace." Thus, you see what influence faith hath upon good works.

ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS

Thomas Manton

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"—Titus 2:14.

WE should be forward and cheerful in well doing. Zeal is "a higher degree of love": the more love, the more forward in acting. Certainly, zeal will readily set us a-work to do all we do willingly, freely, and cheerfully, as the Apostle intimates, "For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many" (2Co 9:2). It is not zeal to stand bucking and disputing every inch with the Spirit of God. You are not only called to the bare practice of good works, but you must be first and most forward and leaders of others. Watch [for] opportunities to do good, and take hold of them when they are offered. We should be glad of an opportunity offered, wherein to discover³³ our affection to God and our hatred to sin. This is zeal: to be willing and forward.

To be zealous is to be self-denying and resolute notwithstanding discouragements. Zeal is a mixed affection. It consists partly of love and partly of indignation. So when I am zealous of a thing, I love that thing and shake off and hate all that lets and hinders it. Zeal sets us a-work and holds us to it notwithstanding discouragements. Zeal will not stick at a little labor and charge; the more resistance, the more glory! God's children are glad that they may not serve God with that which cost them nothing, as David professeth, "Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing" (2Sa 24:24). Certainly men are not zealous and their hearts are not set upon the ways of God, when every slight excuse will serve the turn, and every little profit draws them away, and every petty business doth hinder them and break off communion with God, and every slender temptation doth interrupt and break off all their purposes and resolutions to duty and obedience, be it prayer, charity, or acts of righteousness. We must be resolute for "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing" (Gal 4:18).

To be zealous of good works imports diligence and earnestness to advance piety³⁶ to the highest pitch...Is he zealous that is contented with a little charity, with a little worship only? Sloth and idleness will not stand with zeal:

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Rom 11:11). Thus, it will be when we are seething hot in spirit...A large affection cannot be contented with mean³⁷ things and low degrees of holiness...Those that are planted into this noble Vine, Jesus Christ, are full of good works.

To be zealous of good works is to be constant to the end. The fire on the altar never went out, but it was always maintained and kept in; so we must never let the fire of zeal go out. Zeal is not like fire in straw. Alas! Sudden fervors are soon spent...But it is like fire in

wood that casts a lasting heat: "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing" (Gal 4:18). Not at first only for a fit or pang;³⁸ that doth not come from sanctification; therefore, you should keep up your fervor. Watch against all decays, especially in age. The motions of youth are very vehement, for youth is full of eager spirits and seems to be all on fire; but many times these motions are not so sincere. But the actions of age are more solid, though many times they [lack] vigor and heat. Therefore, strive to keep up your zeal: "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?" (Gal 5:7). Carnal men, when their first heats are spent, give over: they grow cold, careless, and indifferent in matters of religion...

THE RESPECT AND PLACE OF ZEAL IN GOOD WORKS IS A NOTE OF GOD'S PEOPLE AND A FRUIT OF CHRIST'S DEATH:

It is a note of God's people. There is in the new creature a propensity and inclination to good works. As all creatures are created with an inclination to their proper operations, such a willing tendency is there in the new creature to those actions that are heavenly. As sparks fly upward and a stone moves downward, so the new creature is carried to obedience and holiness from a free principle with-in⁴¹... Good works are a note of the new creature: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph 2:10). As an artificer (skilled craftsman) sets a mark upon his workmanship that he might know it, so God sets a visible mark upon His servants: He doth not make a new creature for old works. Good works are witnesses that you can bring to evidence the truth and power of grace. Luther saith, "Good works are faith incarnate," that is, faith is manifested by them, as the Son of God was manifested in the flesh. They are witnesses to the world, to yourselves, and unto God that you are His. They are signs and witnesses to the world. This is the badge by which God would have His peculiar children known—not by pomp and worldly splendor, not by any outward excellency, riches, greatness, and estate, but by zeal to good works.

There are no barren trees in Christ's garden... Our heavenly Father would be glorified in His servants' bringing forth much fruit: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (Joh 15:8). God standeth much upon His honor. Now it is for the honor of God that all which are planted and grafted into Christ should be full of good works... Look: as in a tree, the sap and life is hid, but the fruit and apples do appear, so zeal of good works is that which appears... It is the difference between us and hypocrites: a hypocrite, like a carbuncle, (a deep red garnet gemstone) seems to be all on a fire; but when you touch it, it is quite cold. So they pretend to religion, talk much, but have no true regular zeal, no spiritual warmth. It is notable our Lord Himself proves His divine original by His works, "Though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him" (Joh 10:38). So is this the sensible evidence you are in Christ and Christ in you.

Graces are not always evident in feeling, but in fruit; the effects cannot be hid. Then they are signs and evidences to God Himself. The Lord will look upon them as marks and evidences of His people... That the faith of the elect might be found to praise and honor, He will have works produced. Not that God wants evidences of our sincerity, but He will have all the world know we have not been unfruitful. A man that expecteth to be posed (interrogated) is preparing to answer, and would give something to know the questions beforehand. Christ hath told us what are the questions upon which we shall be examined and taxed at the Day of Judgment. He will say, "Have you fed and clothed My people? Have you ministered to their necessities? Have you relieved them with spiritual counsel and admonition? Have you been good, holy, and just?" (cf. Mt 25:31-46). Therefore, let us provide to give an answer that we might not be ashamed at the Last Day. Thus, this zeal for good works hath the place and room of a witness: to God, as the rule and measure of His process; to ourselves, as the ground of our assurance; and to the world, as the great vindication of the honor of our profession.

It is a fruit of Christ's death... Certainly, God hath not been at all this cost and labor for nothing. He did not project the sending of Christ, and Jesus Christ did not so give up Himself in the work of redemption for nothing, but [rather] to inflame us to a great height of piety. They that live at a low rate of holiness cross and disgrace the whole design of the Gospel. They are not apprehensive of the love of God in giving Christ or the love of Christ in giving Himself. Our redemption was carried on in such a way, not only that the comfort, but also the duty of the creature might be raised to the highest.

Partly, again, as Christ hath purchased the gift of the Spirit to fit us for good works, yea, to make us zealous in them: "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5, 6). Now the Spirit dwelleth in our hearts to set our graces a-working: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (Joh 4:14). So John 7:38, 39: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him shall receive." The Spirit is not a fountain sealed up, but flowing forth. The Spirit of God is a mighty Spirit and comes in upon the soul not only as a gentle blast, but as a mighty rushing wind! He comes not only in the appearance of a dove, but of cloven tongues of fire (Act 2). He comes as a Spirit of power to quicken and awaken the soul to great heights and fervors in obedience.

Look: as men acted (influenced) by Satan (the unclean spirit) are restless in evil and carried headlong as the herd of swine into the sea, so those that are acted by the Spirit of God are much more carried on with great earnestness in the ways of God. The devil hath not such advantages to work upon his instruments as the Spirit of God hath upon us. The devil works and operates in all the children of disobedience: "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2). But the devil cannot work but by man's

consent, neither can he work immediately upon the soul, but only by the senses and by the fancy, (delusive imagination) but the Spirit of God can work immediately upon them in whom He acts. Therefore, being acted by Him, they must needs be zealous and earnest; for the Spirit of God “knows no slow motions”... When the Spirit puts forth its force upon the soul, such as are drawn by the Holy Ghost are not in jest, as carnal men are, but in earnest. They do not dally with religion, but make it their great business to surprise heaven and carry on constant communion with God: “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Mat 11:12).

USE 1: Grace is no enemy to good works. Libertinism (no moral restraint) is ancient and natural. Christ died to improve piety, not to lessen it, but to raise it to the highest, to make us zealous of good works that we might be carried on to heaven with full sails. Therefore, he that grows looser, less watchful against sin, less diligent in the exercise of holiness, less frequent in communion with God, less humble and penitent after committing of sin, offers the greatest abuse to grace that may be and perverts its natural use. There is no freezing by the fire. We may freeze indeed by painted fire: that may make us contract chilliness and drowsiness. But true grace is a fire that warms and inflames our affections. Christ came to make us more cheerful and lively, but not slack, careless, and cold...A cold Christian will have but cold comfort. For whom did Christ die? For those that are zealous of good works...It is not cold prayers, yawning devotions, and drowsy wishes when men are half-asleep that will serve in this case. Heaven is gotten by force and surprised by onset and storm.⁴⁸ It signifies breaking through the rail, and all restraints that are set to keep us off from God.

USE 2: To stir us up to this zeal of good works. In a dead and drowsy age, we need an alarm. Knowledge hath now devoured practice in these decaying times. Seneca complains men are altogether studious for filling their brains,

not warming their hearts. And when once men became more learned, they were less good. The world is altogether for storing the head with notions, empty and airy strains; so that if Christ should come amongst us, He would find few zealous, but a company of lazy Christians that live at a low, cheap rate of Christianity. High-flown we are indeed in our fancies, in notions and pretences, but low and flat in practice and conversation. Usually thus it is in the time of the church's prosperity; like a river, it loseth in depth what it gains in breadth. Then it hath many friends, but their love is not so strong nor so hot as at other times...Thus it often falls out with the church of God that, when religion is fair, many take up the profession, but alas! It is but weak and spiritless without any life and vigor...Therefore, let us inquire what kind of enforcements and considerations are likely to be most operative to press us to this zeal and care of good works.

Consider how violent and earnest carnal men are in the ways of sin, and shall they serve Satan better than you serve God? Oh! Consider, you have a better master, better work, and better wages. Their master is the devil; their work is the basest drudgery, being slaves to their own lusts; and their wages are suitable: their reward is everlasting damnation and a separation from the presence of the Lord. How active are wicked men for the kingdom of darkness! How zealous and earnest to ruin themselves, as if they could not be damned soon enough...God bids the prophet look upon this sight (as indeed it is worthy of a Christian consideration): Seest thou what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? “The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto other gods” (Jer 7:17, 18). What a busy diligence is here to promote their false worship! Fathers, children, husbands, wives— they all put their helping hands to the work and find some employment or other. Where will you have a family so earnest and zealous to set up the work of God? Oh! How can you look upon such a spectacle as this without shame, that a lust should have more power with them than the love of God with you?...You have higher motives, nobler employment; your work is the perfection of the creature; the noblest faculties are exercised in the noblest way of operation; your rewards are more excellent; and you have greater advantages and helps. Shall they take more pains to undo their souls than you do to save your souls? We read in ecclesiastical story, when Pambus saw a harlot curiously dressed, he wept, partly to see one take so much pains for her own eternal ruin, and partly because he had not been so careful to please Christ and to dress up his soul for Christ as she was to please her wanton lover. Christians, whenever you are cast upon such a sight or spectacle, when you come by a shop, and see men labor and toiling out their hearts, and all this for temporal gain, doth it not make you blush and be ashamed that you are so negligent and careless in the work of God?

Consider you yourselves have been violent and earnest in the ways of sin: will you not do as much for God? How may every one say, “When I was a wicked and carnal man, I followed it with all my heart, and shall I do less now in a state of grace?” The Apostle hath a notable expression, “I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Rom 6:19). Mark how the Apostle brings it in with a preface, “I speak after the manner of men,” that is, men in common sense and reason judge it equal that they should be as diligent to come up to the height of sanctification and as zealous of good works, as ever you were to come up to the height of sin and were zealous for hell. Should you not have as much care to save yourselves as to ruin and damn yourselves? You made haste to do evil, as if you could not be damned soon enough; now, in reason, you should be as zealous for God as [you were] for Satan. Heretofore we could riot away the day and card away the night; and shall not some days be spent in fasting and prayer? Shall every hour be begrudged that is bestowed upon God?...It is an equitable, modest, and just proposal that I make, and with condescension to your infirmities, that you should be as earnest and zealous for God, and to grow in grace, as ever you were zealous to increase your guilt and sin. Formerly, I never ceased until I got to the top,

until I was so wicked that I could hardly be more wicked. Why should I not now labor to grow in grace? Can conversion be right when sin had more of our thoughts than ever God had?...

Consider what Christ hath done in purchasing our salvation. It was no play and sport to redeem [sinners]. Christ was not in jest when He yielded up Himself to be tempted, to be persecuted, to be crucified, to be exercised with bitter agonies; and is all this expense and cost for nothing? The temptations of Christ and the sorrows of His cross all show that it is no easy matter to bring a soul to heaven; and, therefore, shall not we be zealous? Carnal and careless Christians do lessen Christ's sufferings interpretatively, as if they were not so great. They trifle and dally, and compliment in religion, and so do not make it so weighty a matter to save their souls: "Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luk 24:26); and, "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer" (24:46). As matters were laid in God's decree, nothing else would serve the turn: Christ ought to suffer; it was foreordained.

But you will say, "How do you force this zealousness and earnestness for good works out of what Christ hath done! For if He hath done so much, what need we do any more?" I answer—He is gone to heaven as the Captain of our salvation, and we must follow Him in the same way; He is gone to seize upon heaven in our right, but we must force our way thither. Canaan was given to Israel, but they were to take possession by the sword. [Likewise], Caleb was to drive out the giants out of Hebron, though it was given him. So, though heaven be given and Christ hath seized upon it in our right, yet we have our conflicts. Indeed, the power of Satan is broken, his head bruised, yet there are some relics of the battle left for our exercise. Therefore, be earnest, be zealous.

Consider how odious want of zeal is to God. He will not own a cold, careless, neutral spirit: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev 3:16). Cold, lazy professors, that have nothing but a dead form, are as lukewarm water to the stomach; and there is nothing the stomach nauseates so much as that which is lukewarm. So will God cast them out with much loathing...

Consider how dishonorable it is to the living God to serve Him with a dead heart and cold affections, when He hath indented (entered into a formal agreement) with you upon such glorious and noble terms... "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14). God, that is a living God, must have lively service; but men worship Him as a dead idol... What you do, it must be done with all the heart and all the might. Consider, religion is not a fancy (figment of the imagination). You do not worship the vanities of the Gentiles; therefore, be not dead, cold, and careless. You worship the living God, and He will be served with life, zeal, and strength of affection.

THE NECESSITY OF MAINTAINING GOOD WORKS

Ebenezer Erskine

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men"—Titus 3:8.

THE Apostle foresaw by the Spirit of prophecy that the doctrine of grace would meet with strange opposition in after ages of the world. That opposition was already begun in his own day, as appears from his epistle to the Galatians. [He] therefore ratifies it with the greater solemnity, "This is a faithful saying." From whence I observe, by the by, that as ministers of Christ are to declare the whole counsel of God, so there are some truths that need to be more vouched and dwelt upon than others, particularly truths that are more fundamental and most controverted by gainsayers. (argued against by those who disagree and deny.) Hence, we find there is sometimes an oyes (hear ye) or a watchword added to some truths, requiring our more diligent attention and serious entertainment. Thus, the Apostle here, considering the opposition the doctrine of grace would meet with from men of legal spirits (those who believe in doing works to be right with God), adds this word of attention to the close of it: "This is a faithful saying."

Ministers are watchmen and set for the defense of the truth. Therefore, when any truth of God is in danger, they are to double their guard and to support these truths that are most attacked by the enemy, so they may not fall in the streets. And if it be the duty of ministers to teach, inculcate, and support those truths that are controverted or contradicted, surely it is also the duty of people to study these truths and the arguments that support them. [By this] they may be in a capacity to distinguish between truth and error and to give a reason of the faith and hope that is in them (1Pe 3:15). The Bereans have a high commendation given them. (Acts 17:10,11) They are called men of noble and excellent spirits on this account: they would not swallow down by an implicit faith (faith that one does not arrive at independently, but by resting on the authority of another without raising questions) the doctrines taught even by the Apostles themselves. No, but they tried even the apostolic doctrine by the standard of the Law and Testimony. And this is a thing not only commanded and commended in the Scriptures of truth, but most agreeable likewise to the dictates of right reason. How is it profitable that people can obey the command of "contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints," if they do not understand the doctrine of faith, particularly these doctrines that are in danger of being wrested from them? Ministers are called

“stewards in the house of God” (Tit 1:7) and “stewards of the mysteries of God” (1Co 4:1, 2). Now, you know it is very much the interest of the house or family to see that their steward feed them with sound and wholesome food, otherwise they may come to swallow a stone instead of bread or a scorpion instead of a fish. We call you, Sirs, to examine and try our doctrines at the bar of the Word; and if they will not abide the trial there, let them sink and perish forever. There is always ground to suspect any set of men who decline or shun any fair trial of their doctrines; for “he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (Joh 3:21). But,

In the words, we have an apostolic command given unto Titus and in him to all ministers of the Gospel: “These things I will that thou affirm constantly.” The word in the original rendered affirm is borrowed from the practice of these who, when they buy or sell a thing, do oblige themselves to maintain the claim and title against all law-suits or entanglements. Titus and other ministers are not only to teach the doctrines of the Gospel, but to confirm and make them good against all the cavils (trivial objections) or questions that may be moved about them.

In the words, we have a particular doctrine that the Apostle recommends to be taught by Titus, namely, “That they who have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works.” Notice the foundation of all good works, [which] is believing in God, to wit, (namely; that is to say) in God as He is manifested in Christ, God reconciling the world to Himself. For out of Christ, He cannot be the object of faith, but of terror to a guilty sinner. Now, this believing in God is the very foundation of all good works: for “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb 11:6); and they that have believed are enjoined to maintain good works. The word in the original is borrowed from the military, particularly such as set themselves on the front of the battle and march forward to encourage the whole army to follow them. “Believers,” would the Apostle say, “must not only do good works, but must be patterns and ensamples thereof to others,” according to that of Christ: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat 5:16)...

I COME TO INQUIRE WHAT MAY BE THE IMPORT OF THAT PHRASE OF BEING CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS.

To this I answer briefly, in the following particulars:

1. It implies a diligent attendance unto the rule of the Word. According to that of David, “Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psa 119:9), the [young] man makes God’s statutes the men of his counsel. And when he is called to this or that piece of service, he takes advice of his counselors, whether he may do or forbear. They are “a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa 119:105). As Israel looked to the pillar of cloud and of fire in all their motions and travels for direction through the wilderness, so the gracious soul looks to the Law or Testimony in every step of his way towards the Canaan that is above.
2. It implies an anxiety or solicitude (excess concern) of soul to have his actions managed and ordered according to that rule. It is the very desire of his soul to be found in the Lord’s way, as it was with David, “O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!” (Psa 119:5). He desires not only to have his outward walk, but the inward frame of his very soul—all the thoughts of it—molded in an agreeableness unto the Law of God: “Let my heart be found in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed” (Psa 119:80). Such is his concern for this that he lays up the Law of God in the very cabinet of his heart as an antidote against sin: “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa 119: 11).
3. It implies a holy watchfulness against all the temptations, motions, or occasions of sin in thought, word, or action: “I said, I will take heed to my ways,” says David (Psa 39:1). The man sets a watch over his heart according to that command, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Pro 4:23). He sets a watch over his eyes and makes a covenant with them and over his lips, lest sin should either enter or go forth by that door.
4. It implies an embracing of every opportunity for doing of good works that God puts into his hands and improving the same. When God puts the opportunity or talent in his hand, he studies to lay it out for the Master’s use and his own and others’ profit and advantage, according to that of Solomon: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Ecc 9:10).
5. It implies a going on or a progress in the duties of obedience without returning to the old trade of sin. The Christian is not like the dog returning to his vomit or the sow that was washed to wallow in the mire. No, but the righteous holdeth on his way: he maintains good works; he waxes stronger and stronger; he forgets things that are behind and reacheth forth unto things that are before (Phi 3:13).
6. The word here, as I hinted in the explication, implies an exciting or influencing of others to the study of good works. The word, as I said, is borrowed from captains or commanders that go in the front of the battle, encouraging the soldiers of the army to follow their example. The believer studies to cast a good copy and to recommend holiness and good works unto others by his practice, so as others, seeing his good works, may be encouraged to do the like.
7. Lastly, this maintaining of good works must needs take in a doing of all by faith and improving the strength of Christ: (making

better use of strength Christ gives) “I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only” (Psa 71:16).

THE BEST WAY TO PROVOKE GOOD WORKS

John Bunyan

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men”—Titus 3:7, 8.

THE best way both to provoke others and ourselves to good works is to be often affirming to others the doctrine of justification by grace and to believe it ourselves. “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works” (Tit 3:8)...I tell you that the best way to be fruitful in them is to be much in the exercise of the doctrine of justification by grace. And they both agree: for as faith animates to good works, so the doctrine of grace animates faith. Wherefore, the way to be rich in good works is to be rich in faith; and the way to be rich in faith is to be conscientiously affirming the doctrine of grace to others and believing it ourselves.

FIRST, TO BE CONSTANTLY AFFIRMING IT TO OTHERS: Thus, Paul tells Timothy that if he puts the brethren in mind of the truths of the Gospel, he himself should not only be a good minister of Christ, but should be nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine (1Ti 4:6). It is the ordinance of God that Christians should be often asserting the things of God each to others and that by their so doing they should edify one another (Heb 10:24, 25; 1Th 5:11).

The doctrine of the Gospel is like the dew and the small rain that distilleth upon the tender grass, wherewith it doth flourish and is kept green (Deu 32:2). Christians are like the several flowers in a garden that have upon each of them the dew of heaven, which being shaken with the wind, they let fall their dew at each other’s roots, whereby they are jointly nourished and become nourishers of one another. For Christians to commune savourly (with understanding) of God’s matters one with another is as if they opened to each other’s nostrils boxes of perfume. Saith Paul to the church at Rome, “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me” (Rom 1:11, 12). Christians should be often affirming the doctrine of grace and justification by it one to another.

SECOND, AS THEY SHOULD BE THUS DOING, SO THEY SHOULD LIVE IN THE POWER OF IT THEMSELVES. They should by faith suck and drink in this doctrine as the good ground receiveth the rain, which being done, forthwith there is proclaimed good works. Paul to the Colossians saith thus, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.” But how long ago? Why, “since the day ye heard it,” [saith he,] “and knew the grace of God in truth” (Col 1:3-6).

Apples and flowers are not made by the gardener, but are an effect of the planting and watering. Plant in the sinner good doctrine, and let it be watered with the word of grace, and as the effect of that, there [are] the fruits of holiness and the end everlasting life (Rom 6:22). Good doctrine is the doctrine of the Gospel, which showeth to men that God clotheth them with the righteousness of His Son freely and maketh Him with all His benefits over to them, by which free gift the sinner is [declared] righteous before God. And because he is so, therefore, there is infused a principle of grace into the heart, whereby it is both quickened and bringing forth fruit (Rom 3:21-26; 1Co 1:30; 2Co 5:21; Joh 1:16).

Now then, seeing good works do flow from faith and seeing faith is nourished by an affirming of the doctrine of the Gospel, take here these few considerations from the doctrine of the Gospel for the support of thy faith, that thou mayest be indeed fruitful and rich in good works.

Consider 1: The whole Bible was given for this very end: that thou shouldst both believe this doctrine and live in the comfort and sweetness of it. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom 15:4; Joh 20:31).

Consider 2: That therefore every promise in the Bible is thine to strengthen, quicken, and encourage thy heart in believing.

Consider 3: That there is nothing that thou dost [that] can so please God as believing: “The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy” (Psa 147:11). They please Him because they embrace His righteousness, etc.

Consider 4: That all the withdrawals of God from thee are not for the weakening, but for the trial of thy faith; and also that whatever

He suffers Satan or thy own heart to do is not to weaken faith (Job 23:8-10; 1Pe 1:7).

Consider 5: That believing is that which will keep in thy view the things of heaven and glory and that at which the devil will be discouraged, sin weakened, and thy heart quickened and sweetened (Heb 11:27; Jam 4:7; 1Pe 5:9; Eph 6:16; Rom 15:13).

Consider lastly: By believing, the lover of God is kept with warmth upon the heart; and this will provoke thee continually to bless God for Christ, for grace, for faith, hope, and all these things, either in God or thee that doth accompany salvation (2Co 2:14; Psa 103:1-3).

THIRD, THE DOCTRINE OF THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS RECEIVED BY FAITH WILL MAKE NOTABLE WORK IN THE HEART OF A SINNER TO BRING FORTH GOOD WORKS. But, forasmuch as there is a body of death and sin in every one that hath the grace of God in this world, and because this body of death will be ever opposing that which is good, as the Apostle saith (Rom 7:21), therefore take these few particulars further for the suppressing that which will hinder a fruitful life.

Keep a continual watch over the wretchedness of thy own heart, not to be discouraged at the sight of thy vileness, but to prevent its wickedness. That will labor either to hinder thee from doing good works or else will hinder thee in the doing thereof. For evil is present with thee for both these purposes. Take heed then, that thou do not listen to that at any time, but deny, though with much struggling, the workings of sin to the contrary.

Let this be continually before thy heart: God's eye is upon thee and seeth every secret turning of thy heart, either to or from Him. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb 4:13).

If thou deny to do that good which thou oughtest with what thy God hath given thee, then consider that though He love thy soul, yet He can chastise: First, thy inward man with such troubles that thy life shall be restless and comfortless. Secondly, and can also so blow upon thy outward man that all thou gettest shall be put in a bag with holes (Psa 89:31-33; Hag 1:6). And set the (suppose) He should license (permit) but one thief among thy substance or one spark of fire among thy barns, how quickly might that be spent ill and against thy will, which thou shouldst have spent to God's glory and with thy will. And I tell thee further, that if thou want a heart to do good when thou hast about thee, thou mayest want (lack) comfort in such things thyself from others, when thine is taken from thee (see Jud 1:6, 7).

Consider that a life full of good works is the only way on thy part to answer the mercy of God extended to thee: God hath had mercy on thee and hath saved thee from all thy distresses. God hath not stuck (hesitated) to give thee His Son, His Spirit, and the kingdom of heaven. Saith Paul, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom 12:1; Mat 18:32, 33).

Consider that this is the way to convince all men that the power of God's things hath taken hold of thy heart. I speak to them that hold the head (make prominent profession of religion)—and say what thou wilt—if thy faith be not accompanied with a holy life, thou shalt be judged a withered branch, a wording professor, (professes Christ, but with empty words) salt without savor, and as lifeless as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal (Joh 15; Mat 13; 1Co 13:1, 2). For, say they, show us your faith by your works, for we cannot see your hearts (Jam 2:18). But I say on the contrary, if thou walk as becomes thee who art saved by grace, then thou wilt witness in every man's conscience that thou art a good tree, now thou leavest guilt on the heart of the wicked (1Sa 24:16, 17). Now thou takest off occasion from them that desire occasion; and now thou art clear from the blood of all men (2Co 11:12; Act 20:26, 31-35). This is the man also that provoketh others to good works. The ear that heareth such a man shall bless him, and the eye that seeth him shall bear witness to him. "Surely," saith David, "he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance" (Psa 112:6; Heb 10:24; Job 29:11).

Again, the heart that is fullest of good works hath in it the least room for Satan's temptations. And this is the meaning of Peter, where he saith, "Be sober, be vigilant," that is, be busying thyself in faith and holiness, "because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Pe 5:8). He that walketh uprightly, walketh safely. And they that add to faith, "virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2Pe 1:5-10; Pro 10:9).

The man who is fullest of good works is fittest to live and fittest to die: "I am now," at any time, "ready to be offered," saith fruitful Paul (2Ti 4:6). Whereas he that is barren is neither fit to live, nor fit to die: to die, he himself is convinced he is not fit, and to live, God Himself saith he is not fit: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" (Luk 8:7).

Lastly, consider, to provoke thee to good works, thou shalt have of God when thou comest to glory a reward for everything thou dost for Him on earth. Little do the people of God consider how richly God will reward, what from a right principle and to a right end, is done for Him here. Not a bit of bread to the poor, not a draught of water to the meanest of them that belong to Christ, or the loss of a hair of your head shall in that Day go without its reward (Luk 14:13, 14; Mat 10:42). "For our light affliction," and so all other pieces

of self-denial, “which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2Co 4:17). I tell thee, Christian, be but rich in good works, and thou shalt have more than salvation. Thy salvation thou hast freely by grace through Christ without works (Eph 2:8-10), but now being justified and saved, and as the fruits hereof, renewed by the Holy Ghost. After this, I say, thou shalt be rewarded for every work that proved good.

JUDGMENT AND THE SAINTS’ REWARD

John Bunyan

“There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust”—Acts 24:15.

NOW when the saints are raised, as ye have heard, they must give an account of all things, in general, that they have done while they were in the world; of all things, I say, whether they be good or bad...Now here shall all things be reckoned up, from the very first good thing that was done by Adam or Abel, to the last that will fall out to be done in the world...

First, here will be a recompense for all that have sincerely labored in the Word and doctrine—I say, a recompense for all the souls they have saved by their word and watered by the same. Now shall Paul the planter, and Apollos the waterer, with every one of their companions, receive the reward that is according to their works (1Co 3:6–8).

Now, all the preaching, praying, watching, and labor thou hast been at, in thy endeavoring to catch men from Satan to God, shall be rewarded with spangling (sparkling) glory. Not a soul thou hast converted to the Lord Jesus, nor a soul thou hast comforted, strengthened, or helped by thy wholesome counsel, admonition, and comfortable speech, but it shall stick as a pearl in that crown “which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day” (2Ti 4:7, 8). That is, if thou dost it willingly, delighting to lift up the name of God among men; if thou doest it with love, longing after the salvation of sinners; otherwise thou wilt have only thy labor for thy pains and no more. “For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto me” (1Co 9:17; Phi 1:15). But, I say, if thou do it graciously, then a reward followeth: “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye,” saith Paul, “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (1Th 2:19, 20). Let him, therefore, that Christ hath put into His harvest, take comfort in the midst of all his sorrow and know that God acknowledgeth that “he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (Jam 5:20). Wherefore, labor to convert, labor to water, labor to build up, and to “feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind...And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1Pe 5:2, 4).

Secondly, and as the ministers of Christ’s Gospel shall at this day be recompensed, so shall also those more private saints. [They shall] be with tender affections and love looked on and rewarded for all their work and labor of love, which they have showed to the name of Christ in ministering to His saints and suffering for His sake (Heb 6:10). “Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph 6:8). Ah! Little do the people of God think how largely and thoroughly God will at that day own and recompense all the good and holy acts of His people. Every bit, every drop, every rag, and every night’s harbor, though but in a wisp of straw, shall be rewarded in that day before men and angels. “Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you,” saith Christ, “he shall in no wise lose his [a disciple’s] reward” (Mat 10:42). Therefore, “When thou makest a feast,” saith He, “call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just” (Luk 14:13, 14). If there be any repentance among the godly at this day, it will be because the Lord Jesus, in His person, members, and word, was no more owned, honored, entertained, and provided for by them when they were in this world. For it will be ravishing to all to see what notice the Lord Jesus will then take of every widow’s mite. He, I say, will call to mind even all those acts of mercy and kindness that thou hast showed to Him when thou wast among men. I say, He will remember, cry up, and proclaim before angels and saints those very acts of thine that thou hast either forgotten or through bashfulness wilt not at that day count worth the owing. He will reckon them up so fast and so fully that thou wilt cry, “Lord, when did I do this? And when did I do the other? Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?” And the King shall answer and say unto them, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me...I felt the nourishment of thy food and the warmth of thy fleece. I remember thy loving and holy visits when my poor members were sick, and in prison, and the like. When they were strangers, and wanderers in the world, thou tookest them in. Well done, thou good and faithful servant...Enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (cf. Mat 25:21–23, 34–47).

Thirdly, here also will be a reward for all that hardness and Christian enduring of affliction that thou hast met with for thy Lord while thou wast in the world. Here now will Christ begin from the greatest suffering, even to the least, and bestow a reward on them all: from the blood of the suffering saint to the loss of a hair. Nothing shall go unrewarded (Heb 11:36–40; 2Co 8:8–14). “For our light

affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2Co 4:17). Behold by the Scriptures how God hath recorded the sufferings of His people and also how He hath promised to reward them—“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Mat 5:11, 12; Luk 6:22, 23). “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Mat 19:29).

Fourthly, there is also a reward at this day for all the more secret and more retired works of Christianity. a. There is not now one act of faith in thy soul, either upon Christ, or against the Devil and Antichrist, but it shall in this day be found out and praised, honored, and glorified in the face of heaven (1Pe 1:7). b. There is not one groan to God in secret against thy own lusts; and for more grace, light, spirit, sanctification, and strength to go through this world like a Christian, but it shall even at the coming of Christ be rewarded openly (Mat 6:6). c. There hath not one tear dropped from thy tender eye against thy lusts, the love of this world, or for more communion with Jesus Christ, but as it is now in the bottle of God; so then it shall bring forth such plenty of reward that it shall return upon thee with abundance of increase. “Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh” (Luk 6:21). “Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?” (Psa 56:8). “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy” (Psa 126:5, 6)...

It remains that I now in few words show you something also of that with which they shall be rewarded.

First then, those that shall be found in the day of their resurrection...They, I say, that then shall be found the people most laborious for God while here, shall at that day enjoy the greatest portion of God or shall be possessed with most of the glory of the Godhead then. For that is the portion of saints in general (Rom 8:17; Lam 3:24). And

why shall he that doth most for God in this world enjoy most of Him in that which is to come? Because by doing and acting, the heart and every faculty of the soul is enlarged and more capacitated, whereby more room is made for glory. Every vessel of glory shall at that day be full of it. But everyone will not be capable to contain a like measure. If they should have it communicated to them, [they] would not be able to stand under it. For there is “an eternal weight in the glory” that saints shall then enjoy (2Co 4:17), and every vessel must be at that day filled— that is, have its heavenly load of it.

All Christians have not the same enjoyment of God in this life, neither indeed were they able to bear it if they had it (1Co 3:2). But those Christians that are most laborious for God in this world, they have already most of Him in their souls. [This is] not only because diligence in God’s ways is the means whereby God communicates Himself; but also because thereby the senses are made more strong and able by reason of use to understand God and to discern both good and evil (Heb 5:13, 14)...Lay up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come that you may lay hold on eternal life (1Ti 6:19), which eternal life is not the matter of our justification from sin in the sight of God. For that is done freely by grace through faith in Christ’s blood (but here the Apostle speaks of giving of alms). But it is the same that in the other place he calls “the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” And hence it is that he, in his stirring them up to be diligent in good works, doth tell them that he doth not exhort them to it because he wanted, but because he would have “fruit that might abound to their account” (Phi 4:17); as he saith also in another place, “Beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1Co 15:58). Therefore I say, the reward that the saints shall have at this Day for all the good they have done is the enjoyment of God according to their works, though they shall be freely justified and glorified without works.