



**F**OR if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:2-5)

There are none justified by works – none are righteous! *Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* (Romans 3:20) The Law of God provides the premises for righteousness, and also for sin. *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for **sin is the transgression of the law.*** (1 John 3:4) So, all we need do is perfectly obey the Law of God! Simple, isn't it? But wait, no one is able to do that! *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* (Romans 3:23-26)

You will note in the quoted text above that we are all alike guilty of sin before God; however, we have one who has paid our penalty of death for our sin – the only One qualified to do so, being sinless Himself. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Romans 6:23) The sacrifice, offered once-and-for-all, enables us to be considered righteous in the eyes of the Lord. But there was no work that we could have done to achieve that imputed righteousness – it was solely a work of grace which is a gift of God through the awakening, imbuing grace of the Holy Ghost first drawing by the means of an imparted faith. Being dead in trespasses and sins means exactly what it says. The dead can do nothing to revive their decomposing souls. An outside force is required – the same outside force as that which called Lazarus, dead for four days, from the stone-cold tomb at Bethany. Being justified (saved) by grace is a

free gift of God – not something earned by any works of our own. *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.* (Eph 2:8-10)

Having referenced all of these scripture texts on justification, are we to assume, as do the antinomian heresies, that we need not obey the Law of God? Not at all! In fact, our Lord Jesus Christ saved us under the very terms of the Law. *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.* (Eph 2:8-10) If fallen man is to be made in the image of God, we must possess characteristics that transcend merely those physical features of body and outward features. We must be made new in Christ. When we are chosen and elected in Christ, we dispense with that old carnal mind that possessed Adam that fateful moment in Eden; and we must take upon us the Will of God, or that Mind which was in Christ Jesus! *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:* (Phil 2:5) We surrender our sinful so-called free wills (which are self-wills) for the Will of God.

Perhaps it will be good to recall the words of the old Anglican cleric, Augustus Toplady, who wrote that venerable old hymn, *Rock of Ages*, 1763, (the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> verses in particular):

2.  
Not the labors of my hands  
can fulfill thy law's commands;  
could my zeal no respite know,  
could my tears forever flow,  
all for sin could not atone;  
thou must save, and thou alone.

3.  
Nothing in my hand I bring,  
simply to the cross I cling;  
naked, come to thee for dress;  
helpless, look to thee for grace;  
foul, I to the fountain fly;  
wash me, Savior, or I die.

So, should the life of the Christian professor reflect a Godliness through works of righteousness? By all means, it should! Does that make us righteous or not? No, it does not make OUR works righteous, but rather the righteousness of Christ working in and through us. *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* (Heb 13:20-21)

Please know that we are unworthy and incapable of doing any works of righteousness except by the means of grace through faith – Christ working through us. *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* Isaiah 64:6 (KJV) I realize that some will shake their heads and believe that they are exceptions to this blanket condemnation. Not so! But we can be ACCOUNTED righteous through the imputed righteousness of Christ. *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,*

*that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Heb 13:20-21)*

Jesus is our REST, or, in Hebrew, our Sabbath, just as He is also our Passover. If our carnal impulses are made to rest, the Lord will work righteous works through us.

Remember the rich young ruler who came running to Jesus and knelt before Him: *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, **Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.** (Mark 10:17-18)* There was nothing that the young man could DO to be saved. He did not know that Jesus was God, as well, being the Son of God. He claimed to have kept the Commandments, but Jesus revealed that he had not even kept the First without which none of the others can be kept.

What is the impetus for the faith we receive by the GRACE of God? Even our faith is a work of God and not native to ourselves: ***THIS is the WORK OF GOD, that ye BELIEVE ON HIM WHOM HE HATH SENT.*** (John 6:29) So, you see, even our faith comes from God and not any merit of our souls.

It is a great peace and consolation to know our adoption was a spiritual decision of the Father and not an act of self-decision on our parts; *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.* (John 15:16-17) It is by the means of the power of Love that we serve and obey the Lord. That love also comes from God. *We love him, because he first loved us.* (1 John 4:19) Even our love for God is merely an echo of the LOVE declared by God our Father. Look once more at Toplady's biblical counsel:

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
simply to the cross I cling;  
naked, come to thee for dress;  
helpless, look to thee for grace;  
foul, I to the fountain fly;  
wash me, Savior, or I die.

Just as Adam was naked and ashamed in the Garden, so is the sinner naked with sin and ashamed before God. God, with sorrow, killed a beautiful creature of His making in the Garden to cover that nakedness of Adam. But an animal would not suffice to cover our sins – more was necessary since animals are innocent, and we are not. God sent His Son to redeem us. *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.* (Gal 4:4-7)