

FAITH AND WORKS.

The relationship between faith and works is simple and clear when seen from a scriptural standpoint, yet very obscurely recognized by the great majority.

Works can never justify us, nor so long as we are under the imperfections resultant from sin can God recognize works at all. He is perfect, and cannot accept or enjoy that which is imperfect. Since of the Adamic race there are none righteous, no not one, it follows that Jesus' works only are well pleasing and acceptable to God.

But here comes in the province of FAITH. Jesus having "died for our sins," faith may grasp the fact that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree and appropriated to us the freedom from sin – justification which results. Thus we are justified and brought into fellowship with God, not by our own works, but by FAITH in the works which Jesus did for us; and as a result of our faith in the thoroughness of Jesus' work and its acceptableness to God as a "propitiation [satisfaction] for our sin," we realize that "there is now therefore no condemnation" resting upon us in Jehovah's sight. Our works alone could not accomplish this result, and to attempt to add them to the perfect work which Jesus did for us would be to doubt the perfection and completeness of Jesus' work – his sacrifice – and thus to lose all our interest in it; for it is imputed to us as a result of faith.

Thus it appears that our works are ruled out entirely, and have no share in justifying us to life. What, then, is the value and province of works on our part? We reply that when faith has grasped and appropriated justification through Jesus' work, then

we reckoned of God as thus freed from sin, can bear fruit, i.e., perform works acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The works of many justified ones are really no better, and perhaps through a larger share in the Adamic fall and depravity, not actually so good as many others, yet from God's standpoint the works of those justified by faith in Christ's work are counted absolutely perfect, both the works and the person being acceptable to God by or through the implied or imputed merits of Jesus. On the contrary, he who accepts not of Jesus' ransom is not justified; hence, neither himself nor his works would be acceptable to God. He abides still under the condemnation [the same word elsewhere translated damnation] – that is on the world. (Rom. 5:18; Jno. 3:18.)

The whole world, as tried representatively in Adam, was found disobedient and condemned to the penalty prescribed, viz., excommunication from God and final extinction of being. This penalty still remains, and is strictly enforced. (Rom. 5:16.) Consequently the grand aim of all should be, not to avoid being condemned – it is too late for that, all are condemned. (Rom. 5:18.) Our object must be to escape [from] the condemnation that is on the world.

There is only one way to escape, and that is an absolutely certain and perfect way. God provided it. You cannot escape by your own righteousness [truly we have none; yours and mine are only "filthy rags,"] even as you were not condemned for your own sin. We are condemned on account of another's sin, and a way of escape has been provided through a ransom given on our behalf.
