

What MUST I Do?

Is Any “PERFORMANCE” Required of the Christian?

The Typical Christian, Understanding that We are not Saved BY Works, is then Disinclined to Accept ANY Suggestion that Works are in any way Required under the New Covenant. A Number of Scriptures Address the Subject Directly. Many, it seems, Would Prefer they be Left Unmentioned.

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An instinctive aversion exists among Christians of nearly every persuasion. To the suggestion of there being a need to perform certain ‘works’ pursuant to one’s salvation, it is met with near instant rejection. In regard to the matter of being ‘subject to’ the law, a separate article is available, titled, “*We Are Not Under the Law*”, which focuses more on the issue of Old Testament Law. It isn’t bypassed here with intent to minimize the relevance of the Law, as law is shown to be fundamental to the New Covenant in places such as Hebrews 8:10.¹ This article instead, considers a more insidious component imbedded in the thought structure of religious people nearly everywhere: One that, if not well clarified, could ultimately threaten their salvation in this age.

Two friends lived across the street from each other, neither professing any religious inclination, and freely engaging in every form of ‘worldly conduct’ typical of modern society. Until one day, one of the two happened to attend a religious meeting. Becoming convicted, he responded to the well-known altar call. Having uttered the ‘believer’s prayer’ and ‘confessing Jesus as personal savior’, he left there confident that his eternal destiny was sure and secure from that day forward. After all, that’s what he was assured.

The interesting thing being, that neither of these two, afterward, lived any differently than before,

except that one was certain of salvation, while the other never gave it a thought. Just for a moment of contrition, and uttering those particular phrases, one became heir of the most blessed eternity, while the other was consigned to an eternal torment, though both lived out their lives in generally the same life styles as ever!

This is how it works in the opinions of many. A momentary confession and profession makes all the difference. Any modification in their personal conduct thereafter being irrelevant! Irrelevant on account of ‘works’ being totally unnecessary! We are saved by Faith and Faith ALONE, as many are taught. Some even go so far as to suggest that doing any works is tantamount to disrespecting the efficacy of Christ’s Sacrifice on our behalf.

Few are aware that the Protestant, Martin Luther’s real intent, when promoting his “by faith alone” premise, was primarily to ‘protest’ various church proscribed formulations, such as ‘absolutions, indulgences and other religious mis-creations, NOT the moral Laws of God. That application came to be in more recent times, due to its perfect adaptability to our basic human spiritual orientation. (Some enjoy reminding their counter-parts on the broader pathway that the only place the word ‘alone’ is coupled to the word ‘faith’ in the Bible, it’s immediately prefixed by the words: ‘**not by**’!)

Our Natural Enmity

We have a natural disposition. We were born with it. It’s very natural for us to react negatively to being told, ‘**no**’. We first experienced the emotional responses to any prohibition (of what we wanted at the time to do), as infants, with disappointment,

¹ Hebrews 8:8-10 “‘Behold, the days are coming,’ says the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers...For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days.’ Says the LORD. ‘I will put My law in their mind and write them on their hearts; ...’”

sadness and even rage, depending on how much we wanted to do what we were being told to **not** do! It's the way we were made. Only with loving discipline could we gain the ability to counter this natural state and function acceptably within society

Few, it seems, perceive the parallel! Because we never completely lose the characteristic! It is central to what we are, morally. God represents Himself as the loving parent in so many contexts. Also, the potter with clay; the good shepherd; but in other contexts, as a gate to the fold, (both an avenue and a barrier to entrance) and as 'Lord and King'. These comparisons are not contradictory.

A Non-Negotiable Gospel?

But, to address the question of just what we are called upon to do in our Christian experience, we'll examine a little booklet, put out by The Berean Call, Bend, Oregon, titled "*The Nonnegotiable Gospel*". This booklet offers some pertinent observations on this subject, their position being that 'works' pervert true Christian faith.

It's interesting that their very first comment, before the table of contents, is a quote from Romans 8:38-39. "*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor **angels**, nor **principalities**, nor **powers**, nor things **present**, nor things **to come**, 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.*" (NKJ) This passage, as my article on "*Gnosticism and the New Testament Church*" explains, is often used to dismiss 'works' as though it was referring to Jewish religious practices, when in fact, it's referring to Gnostic ideas, which were even by then beginning to contaminate New Testament doctrines! Those ideas included a 'licentious grace' and disbelief in Christ having truly become flesh. (We do need to be careful in our selection of supporting scriptures.)

We need also to be reminded that the 'love of God' referred to by Paul, in this selected verse is defined in the gospel and epistles of John as being 'the keeping of the commandments'! (1st John 5:2-3, etc.)

Reviewing this booklet, we find a number of statements that illustrate the common understanding held by many, that grace supplants any requirement that we keep the moral laws of God. At the bottom of page 2 is the quote, "*Forgiveness of sins and*

eternal life would be theirs as a free gift of His grace." We need to consider what about the interval between the forgiveness of sins and the entrance into eternal life. That's somewhat alluded to in the previous sentence. "*He would rise from the dead to live in those who would believe in and receive Him as their Lord and Savior.*" Many draw great comfort in the idea that both forgiveness and eternal life are granted together at once. This is the central premise of so many modern theologies. Whether or not eternal life is granted at the start with initial forgiveness of sins, there are many who once were forgiven, who don't end up in receipt of eternal life. Those who repent and receive God's Spirit, then later fade out. (1st Cor.9:27)

What most do not consider, and do not adequately understand, is the picture God gave His people thru the illustration of the days of unleavened bread. (As kept by the Gentile Corinthian Church.) Before the days of unleavened bread can be celebrated, the true Paschal Sacrifice must have happened. That sacrifice makes possible the forgiveness of sin. But that isn't all there is to it. Once forgiven, there is still a problem! We must **stay** forgiven. We must continually put sin out of our lives. When forgiven of past sins, we are still practical sinners, and remain so throughout our entire lives. Grace isn't permission to continue in sin. That is stated emphatically in a number of places. "*What, shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid!*"²

This is the illustration: We become forgiven, we then put sin and sinfulness away, (thus becoming unleavened), but in that state, we are only forgiven. We must at the same time take in and put on the unleavenedness that is Jesus Christ. **Forgiveness by itself is not enough.** We can be as thoroughly forgiven as it's possible to be, but if we don't have within ourselves the unleavened sinless nature of Christ, we remain mere clean empty vessels. It isn't what God absolves us of only, but what He puts into this earthen vessel after that!

Saved By His Life.

Thus the statement from the booklet: "*He would rise from the dead to live in those who would believe in and receive Him as their Lord and Savior.*" He must live in us! Consider Paul's statement in Romans 5:10 "*For if when we were*

² Not the least of which is Romans 6:1 & 15

enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Most rest easy with the conclusion that being forgiven is all there is to it. That salvation is the same thing as initial forgiveness. No, first our accumulated sin must be taken care of, then our habitual sinfulness, then the receipt of and the internalization of His sinless life. Here is where most religions miss the point. They might have a better chance of understanding the process if they observed a God given exercise that illustrates this. An annual practice that the gentile Corinthian Church observed. (1st Cor. 5:7&8) The Feast of Unleavened Bread: God’s prime tool to illustrate this essential point of Truth. Paul there advocated they continue keeping it!

None of us has the capability to **earn** forgiveness or salvation by any means. But even if it were possible, we would still be only clean empty vessels. That is all we could do for ourselves. We can’t self-generate life. Not even physically, which is the easier dimension! If we don’t possess and live His life, we aren’t saved, only forgiven. (Presuming we never sin again. Yeah right!)

That’s the perfect illustration God gave us in the experience of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: We accept the only effective sacrifice, (Our Passover) then we with God’s help remove the leaven, and we allow installation of His truly unleavened nature, which abhors and forbids sin. Forgiveness is only step one. Those who have gone only that far have two essential steps yet to go.

His Life Factors-In

Interesting comment in 1st Corinthians 15:17, where it says, ***“And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”*** (NKJ) (It’s rare that the scripture uses an exclamation point.) Note the extraordinary affirmation. If Christ was not raised, our faith is vain (KJV) and we are yet in our sins!!! How could that be? What this is saying is that Christ’s Sacrificial act **alone** is insufficient to absolve our sinfulness. He must also be alive to make that sacrifice effective. **What are we missing here?** Do we know this? It has to involve His constant intercession for us before the Throne of God because we remain sinners and our salvation has to involve His Life, being in us. That Life can not cohabit with God-Forbidden continual

sin! This point is so well illustrated in the Days of Unleavened Bread.

At the top half of page 3, it makes a point, that it was not a new gospel... That: *the Old Testament declares witness of His eternal plan of salvation.* Not only that, but the righteousness which is by faith is also affirmed in the Old Testament! ³

What the booklet could better do is to expand its numerous short quotes. There are many. One that always gets me is the old favorite: Ephesians 2:8-9. (The top of page 6.) They never seem to want to continue on into verse 10, the next verse. Let me expand verse 10 here for clarity: ***“For we are His workmanship, created in the character likeness of Christ Jesus unto those specific good works which God has before ordained in the Old Testament that we should walk in them.”*** This verse is rarely presented, but it is the concluding part of that sentence begun in verse 8. It is HE who creates in us His sinless character, we are His workmanship. It isn’t what we do ourselves, but what He does in us. The problem is, those who are not yet being molded and shaped into His Righteous Character imagine or perceive that those who **are**, are doing it of and by themselves, only with intent of earning something. Granted there are fakers, some of whom do an excellent imitation job, but their ‘product’ is not that of God in us through His Spirit. “...unto those good works which God has before ordained...” we should walk in those before ordained good works!

This is a tough concept among those who’ve grown up in the environment which regards any ‘performance’ as being an attempt to EARN salvation, as opposed to it being the reasonable and appropriate **response** to having already been awarded it! There is the unattainable salvation BY works, and there is salvation UNTO good works. It can be rather hard to tell the difference from a distance. Ephesians 2:10 explains UNTO good works, and not just any newly-made-up actions, but those pre-ordained of

³ Romans 3:19 thru 31 This essential passage establishes many important considerations: 1) Those ‘under the law’ are those guilty of having broken it, 2) Lawkeeping can’t reverse the process of guilt, 3) That the righteousness of God which is by faith is attested to in the Old Testament (the law and the prophets) 4) That the Law applies to both Jew and Gentile alike, 5) Christ’s blood is applicable to remission of sins that are past, 6) That He is our justifier (implying an ongoing process), and 7) That faith establishes the Law!

God in the past! Not as the **means** of salvation, but the appropriate **response** to having been given it! This is what so many just don't get.

Upper middle of page 8: *"The gospel contains nothing about baptism, church...attendance, tithing...If we add anything to the gospel, we have perverted it..."* We need to realize, that to leave anything out, we also pervert it.⁴ But in fact, there is much said about **baptism**: It is an essential step in the salvational process. One that can not be omitted. *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved..."* (Mark 16:16) *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"* (Acts 2:37) The answer: *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you..."* The 'every one of you' shows that it isn't optional in any case. *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* (Gal. 3:27) This one refers to that act of internalizing the sinless nature of Christ. He instructed His disciples to *"Baptize them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."* We should hope this isn't one of the points that's considered 'non-negotiable'. Baptism can not be minimized. How anyone could suggest that to include the requirement for baptism is perverting the gospel is beyond belief!

Nor can **attendance**: *"Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together..."* (Heb. 10:25)

If **tithing** is irrelevant, then why did God devote an entire chapter to the reversion of tithing from the Levitical Order back to the Melchizedek Order (which He was and His New Testament ministry is of), **if** the practice was to be discontinued after the cross? Again, Hebrews 7 references the Old Testament to legitimize that reversion.⁵

The top of page 9 gives another repetition of Ephesians 2: 8-9. (Again, they avoid verse 10.) Then, just below that, they say, *"Instead of works, the gospel requires faith."* Yes, it requires faith, but a specific kind of faith, a living faith. A faith illustrated by evidence of works. *"Faith without works is dead."* (Jas. 2:26) *"What does it profit...if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?"* (Jas. 2:14) The answer to this rhetorical is no! It's NOT a faith instead of works, it's a faith that establishes works. Paul says that it

⁴ Revelation 22:18-19 pronounces a curse on anyone who adds to or takes away from the words written.

⁵ See my article on "Is TITHING Required Today?"

is by faith that the Law is established!⁶

The Cross, Not the Throne?

The middle of page 9 is a sentence that bears close focus. It says, *"The gospel is all about what Christ has done. It says nothing about what Christ must yet do, because the work of our redemption is finished."* **This is perhaps the most egregious error in all of Christendom!** As to His paying the penalty, that's what's 'finished', but as to the suggestion that the gospel says nothing about Christ doing anything further is incredibly deficient. What is 'overcoming' all about? If overcoming wasn't an ongoing **doing** of God, then it would require that it be 'of ourselves' alone! Right? Much is made of the absolute need to overcome to the end. What is Christ's ongoing representation on our behalf before the Throne of God in Heaven all about?⁷ It is because we continue to remain sinners needing intercessory representation to the ends of our lives. To disregard this incessant activity is to minimize His official "High Priest" function, which is **essential**. That is the primary consideration in the statement that *"...if Christ is not risen, our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins."* (1st Cor. 15:17) Because, without a continuing application of His atoning act, we revert to the sinful state that we originally were in! What does it mean, *"We are His workmanship"*, if His work was 'all finished' at the cross? This is the major problem area. People are becoming forgiven, (they think), but aren't amenable to becoming converted!

What About the Resurrection?

Bottom of page 9. *"...the most difficult part of the gospel to accept..."* This admitted difficulty, of accepting the fact that those who are not saved now are hopelessly doomed, is because they don't accept or understand the purposes of the Biblical resurrections from the dead. Non-believers are not all eternally lost, just because they are not called in

⁶ Romans 3:31 *"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law."*

⁷ Hebrews 4:14 thru 5:11. Here we are introduced to our Eternal High Priest, ever interceding on our behalf before the Throne of God in Heaven. If our redemption were "all finished", as claimed, then what need would there be of this perpetual office? Much of what is called Christianity is totally unaware of this essential ongoing representation, made necessary by our recurring sins!

this age. Those who truly are called and who reject their calling is another matter. (Several articles addressing the subject of the resurrections are available from this author.)

The middle of page 10 is interesting. He being: *"both just, and the justifier of him which believes..."* This takes us back to the illustration of unleavened bread. A 'justifier' is one who works to justify. It is His workmanship in us that creates the 'justified' state. Justification is a process, not just a one time dispensation of forgiveness. It is His work to change our characters. We are His workmanship, but, the product of His workmanship is not an attitude callous and indifferent to sin. Rather, it's one that yields willing obedience.

On page 11 there are two "onlys". *"Only accept ...only believe."* And as was commented on above, on page 9, it suggests *only faith*, (not involving works). Page 12 has *'only repentant'*. Watch out for the word 'only'. (Too many 'onlys' isn't only!) The fundamental steps toward conversion are faith, repentance and baptism. But even then, not those only, but also the receipt of God's Spirit, (*which God gives to those who obey Him. (Acts 5:32)*), without which, we are not one of His. (Rom. 8:9-11) Obedience is essential also. (Heb. 5:9) It's not by any one thing, certainly not 'by faith only' as Luther alleged.

The top of page 12 makes a point we should pause to consider: *"By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight."* This is very correct, but it is apparent that the matter isn't fully understood. The next sentence says, *"Keeping the law perfectly from now on could never make up for having already broken it."* This is a 'bullseye', but most blissfully overlook the obvious and go on to draw another conclusion. What those passages refer to is that our subsequent perfect compliance can not absolve us of guilt of the past. A good deed done today can not expunge a bad one of yesterday! No amount of lawkeeping can accomplish the remission of sins that are past. There is nothing in the structure of the law that allows the reversal of accumulated guilt. That's the point Paul makes. 'Justification' is the process of removing guilt. The law doesn't facilitate removal of sin, only prevention. What the law is for is to provide definition, and to set a true moral standard we are to use to overcome personal sin.

(Not that that overcoming isn't by the power of God working in us.) Disregarding the moral standard God 'ordained before' in a supposed Christian life is ludicrous! Yet, that is the thrust of many modern religions!

Then there are the advocates of the idea that it isn't even possible to break the law, because the law was abolished, Christ nailing it to His cross!!⁸ Another twilight zone!

We need to consider that statement in the middle of page 12, *"...lest, in our zeal to get people to accept the gospel, we manufacture a gospel acceptable to people and produce 'converts' who aren't saved."* Do we recognize the danger of 'playing loose' with this truth? If a 'saved' person does that, and misleads an unsuspecting believer into an 'inadequate' or ineffectual salvation, do they jeopardize their own salvation? Page 13, *"[Some] preach a gospel that is so diluted or perverted that it deceives many into thinking they are saved. No fraud could be worse, for the consequences are eternal!"* This is beautiful stuff! *"Religion, not atheism, is Satan's main weapon."* It can be!

Now, the next thought. *"To combat 'the gospel of the grace of God', the great deceiver has many false gospels, but they all have **two** subtle rejections of grace in common: ritual and/or self-effort."* Now, there is further definition: *"Ritual makes redemption an ongoing process performed by a special priesthood; and self-effort gives man a part to play in earning his salvation."* In this, the writers have exposed the essence of their condemnation of 'works'! Let me counterbalance their potent suggestion with specific scriptures. *"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."* (Phil. 2:12) *"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (2 Tim. 2:15) *"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."* (Titus 1:16) *"Go you therefore into all the world, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you."* (Matt. 28:20) *You yourselves are a Royal Priesthood...* (1 Pet. 2:9), here

⁸ My article "Gnosticism and the New Testament Church" addresses the mis-application of this statement to the Old Testament religion, when in fact, it's referring to Gnostic elementals, as is clearly evident in the context.

officiating in our own lives. ***“(for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.)”***⁹ (Rom. 2: 13) ***“If you were the sons of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham... If ye be Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.”*** (John 8:39 / Gal. 3:29) Then there’s the easy to understand scriptures: ***“Faith without works is dead.”*** and ***“If you love me, keep my commandments...”*** etc. Here, in this chapter, the booklet alleges that the suggestion that ‘works’ are an appropriate component of the Christian life is deceit. Deceit involving the rejection of grace. That performance of any ‘works’ at all represents only ‘ritualism’ and ‘salvation by works’.

A Redefined Grace

Now, the scriptures are not silent on the matter of a perverted grace. It explains HOW it is perverted. ***“For certain men have crept in unaware, who were of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God unto lasciviousness...”*** (Jude 4) When we seek to identify perverted grace, we ought to be looking for a grace that advocates **not** reigning-in our personal lusts, not one that suggests we keep His Commandments, and imitate Christ’s sinless example. Eternal life and forgiveness remain gifts, pure and simple, but their receipt is not without appropriate personal response!

Low on page 17 and onto page 18, we see another amazing phenomenon expressed. ***“...If man is to come to God, it must be solely by His grace and His provision, not by any human work. On the other hand, we see man’s flagrant repudiation of God’s prohibition against self-effort, and his arrogant attempt to build a tower that would enable him to climb by steps of his own making into heaven itself.... There must be no illusion that man could contribute anything by his own efforts to his salvation.”*** Not only saying that certain activities are just ‘unnecessary’, but that obedience in any apparent form is wrong. Even a matter of defiance of God to consider doing anything in attempt to be reconciled to God, and that it is self-righteous to resolve to contribute anything toward salvation. (We need to consider that salvation is seen by some as a momentary event, by others as a

life process.) This line of theology openly advocates disregard of the commands of Christ and God, forgetting God’s invitation, ***“Turn unto me and I will turn unto you...”*** One thing we need to do in the process of reconciliation, is to ‘turn’ (repent)! There’s a blindness to the obvious. What accounts for that?

Salvation is by grace, not by works, but salvation, once received, imposes its responsibility. Obedience is a clear pre-requisite to receipt of God’s Spirit (also a gift of grace), without which we are none of His! Lascivious grace is more deeply rooted in religious consciousness than we think!

Keep this Temple Holy!

Top of page 21. OK, I guess this self-contradiction is inevitable. ***“Your body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit...which is therefore to be kept Holy.”*** Isn’t this the point made earlier? Here, the writer is advocating that we **keep** something! Keep the Temple of the Holy Spirit Holy. You don’t do that by carelessly sinning! We’re saved, not BY works, but UNTO them! This is our contribution to the process, and also our reasonable service. (Rom. 12:1)

Page 22: ***“...we are all Eve’s children by nature and still prone to follow the ways of Cain and Babel.”*** Think this one through. It admits to the point made earlier. That the application of forgiveness is not a one time thing, it’s not all over upfront, but is needed through an ongoing process, a constantly officiating High Priest before God’s Throne in Heaven. Otherwise, we are yet in our sins! ***“And if Christ is not risen, to serve in this essential capacity, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”*** (NKJ) (1st Cor. 15:17)

In the discourse on faith on page 24 etc., the issue of faith being the basis of our walk (the things we DO by faith) is bypassed. Faith that does not produce appropriate ‘works’ is dead!

Page 29: in concluding the second chapter, ***“The faith for which we must earnestly contend has definite moral and doctrinal content and must be believed for salvation.”*** We are at a loss to define the moral aspects without the Commandments. It isn’t just ‘belief’! “Earnestly contending” suggests a labor intensive activity! Notice that. We should be able to affirm, as did the Apostle Paul, that the ‘labors’ that he did were by means of the ‘em-

⁹ My article on *“We are Not Under the Law”* explains how we are not.

powerment' of God's Grace! ***"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*** (1st Cor. 15:10)

Now, to their conclusion, on the bottom of page 31, *"...converts begin a new life as Christ's followers, eager to learn of Him and to obey the One to whom they now owe such an infinite debt of gratitude."* Explain this without being in agreement with the 'appropriate response' comment made on page 3. If we are to truly 'follow Christ', wouldn't we do what He did? He obeyed the Father, not to earn anything, showing that there IS more reasons than that for DOING things!

As a side comment, these last couple of pages make reference to Jude 3, *"the faith once delivered"*. We need to read on to realize that the threat to that faith Jude was referring to was a 'licentious grace' seen in verse 4. Here's a most amazing thing. The verse is pointedly specific, yet everybody wants to make it seem like it's talking about something else! Preachers keep acting as though this was talking about people attempting to bring in a 'works' theology. The opposite was true! It was a 'no works' drift, where the overwhelming majority is aligned today! Continuing that same sentence at the top of page 33, *"teaching them to observe all things"*. So, observance is required, both of the hearer and teacher and that it was to be taught that way! There are things that Christ required His disciples teach all disciples to observe. Observe means **do**, not just think about it!

Coming Full Circle

So, even those who advocate what appears to be a non-performance Christianity inevitably come right back around to a contrary admission. There are things that must be done. We must 'put-in' the true 'unleavenedness' of Christ! The process of our conversion is incomplete without it!

On What Foundation?

Before we can correctly understand the matter of the appropriateness of 'works' in the Christian life, we need to understand that works are **not** a means of remission of sin, nor can we self-produce an acceptable righteousness by doing anything. That said, it is abundantly clear that once in receipt of

God's Grace, continuing in sin is expressly forbidden of God! (Romans 6:1-2)

We are saved by grace through faith unto good works! That is the full contextual message of Ephesians 2:8-10. Those good works are the same actions exhibited in the life of the 'author and finisher' (the producer of) our faith. (Hebrews 12:2)

We remain in constant need of a full-time 'justifier', an advocate with the Father, making intercession on our behalf, for the infractions of God's moral Law that we commit continually. A 'no-works' advocate denies the full efficacy of Christ's ministry of grace. *"Who was delivered (to death) for our offences, and was raised again (to life) for our justification."* (Romans 4: 25) Christianity, for the most part, fails to comprehend or allow this **two-part ministration**. If He was not raised from the dead to serve in the capacity of our True High Priest before the Throne of God, we could NOT become saved, the best we could hope for is to be forgiven (by His death). Forgiven is one thing, but becoming justified is another!

1st Corinthians 15:17 makes an interesting point: *"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."* Here, acknowledging His death, which supposedly paid the penalty for our sins in full, is ineffective unless He is also raised to officiate! You see, if He is not alive, continually interceding on our behalf, our faith is futile and our justification is totally unattainable!

Those who insist that our Christian calling involves 'grace only' are in danger of being unprofitable servants! Those who resist 'works' are likely to not have any. They risk a defiled consciousness. *"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."* (Titus 1:16)

*"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;"* (Heb.13:20-21) *"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:* (Philippians 1:6)

Who's the doer? Does this answer the question? **Ω**