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**by E.J. Waggoner**

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23)

Therefore it is that "being justified"--made righteous--"by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1)

Faith, not works, is that through which men are saved. "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." (Eph. 2:8,9)

"Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom. 3:27,28)

The gospel excludes boasting, and boasting is a natural consequence of all attempts at justification by works; yet the gospel does not exclude works. On the contrary, works--good works--are the one grand object of the gospel. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10, with margin)

There is not the slightest contradiction here. The difference is between our works and God's works. Our works are always faulty;

God's works are always perfect. Therefore, it is God's works that we need in order to be perfect. But we are not able to do God's works, for He is infinite, and we are nothing. For a man to think himself able to do God's works is the highest presumption. We laugh when a five-year-old boy imagines that he can do his father's work. How much more foolish for puny man to image that he can do the works of the Almighty.

Goodness is not an abstract thing. It is action, and action is found only in living beings. And since God alone is good, only His works are of any account. Only the man who has God's works is righteous. But since no man can do God's works, it necessarily follows that God must give them to us, if we are saved. This is just what He does for all who believe.

When the Jews in their self-sufficiency asked, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" Jesus replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. (John 6:28,29) Faith works. (Gal. 5:6; 1 Thess. 1:3) It brings God's works into the believing one, since it brings Christ into the heart (Eph. 3:17), and in Him is all the fulness of God. (Col. 2:9) Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8), and therefore God not only was but is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. So if Christ dwells in the heart by faith, the works of God will be manifest in the life, "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13)

How this is done is not within the range of our comprehension.

We do not need to know how it is done, since we do not have it to do. The fact is enough for us. We can no more understand how God does His works, than we can do those works. So the Christian life is always a mystery, even to the Christian himself. It is a life hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:3) It is hidden even from the Christian's own sight. Christ in man, the hope of glory, is the mystery of the gospel. (Col. 1:27)

In Christ we are created unto good works which God has already prepared for us. We have only to accept them by faith. The acceptance of those good works is the acceptance of Christ. How long "before" did God prepare those good works for us? "The works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall"--i.e., they, the unbelieving, shall not--"enter into my rest." (Heb. 4:3-5) But "we which have believed do enter into rest."

The Sabbath, therefore--the seventh day of the week--is God's rest. God gave the Sabbath as a sign by which men might know that He is God and that He sanctifies. (Eze. 20:12,20) Sabbath-keeping has nothing whatever to do with justification by works, but is, on the contrary, the sign and seal of justification by faith. It is a sign that man gives up his own sinful works and accepts God's perfect works. Since the Sabbath is not a work but a rest, it is the mark of rest in God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

No other day than the seventh day of the week can stand as the

mark of perfect rest in God, because on that day alone did God rest from all His works. It is the rest of the seventh day, into which He says the unbelieving cannot enter. It alone of all the days of the week is the rest day, and it is inseparably connected with God's perfect work.

On the other six days, including the first day of the week, God worked. On those days we also may and ought to work. Yet on every one of them we also may and ought to rest in God. This will be the case if our works are "wrought in God." (John 3:21) So men should rest in God every day in the week, but the seventh day alone can be the sign of that rest.

Two things may be noted as self-evident conclusions of the truths already set forth. One is that the setting apart of another day than the seventh, as the sign of acceptance of Christ and of rest in God through Him is in reality a sign of rejection of Him. Since it is the substitution of man's way for God's way, it is in reality the sign of man's assumption of superiority above God and of the idea that man can save himself by his own works. Not everyone who observes another day has that assumption, by any means. There are many who love the Lord in sincerity and who accept Him in humility, who observe another day than that which God has given as the sign of rest in Him. They simply have not learned the full and proper expression of faith. But their sincerity and the fact that God accepts their unfeigned faith does not alter the fact that the day which they observe is the sign of exaltation above God. When such hear God's gracious warning they will forsake the sign of apostasy

as they would a plague-stricken house.

The other point is that people cannot be forced to keep the Sabbath, inasmuch as it is a sign of faith and no man can be forced to believe. Faith comes spontaneously as the result of hearing God's word. No man can even force himself to believe, much less can he compel somebody else. By force a man's fears may be so wrought upon that he may say he believes and he may act as though he believed. That is to say, a man who fears man rather than God may be forced to lie. But "no lie is of the truth." Therefore since the Sabbath is the sign of perfect faith, it is the sign of perfect liberty--"the glorious liberty of the children of God"--the liberty which the Spirit gives, for the Sabbath, as a part of God's law, is spiritual. And so, finally, let no one deceive himself with the thought that an outward observance of even God's appointed rest day--the seventh day--without faith and trust in God's word alone, is the keeping of God's Sabbath. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin."