

Can "good works" become sinful?

"Know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves ... having a form of godliness but denying its power." "They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him" (2 Timothy 3:1, 2, 5; Titus 1:16).

The Jews followed after the law of righteousness, but did not attain to it. Why? "Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law" (Rom. 9:32).

How forcefully this sets forth that of which the entire Epistle to the Romans is a demonstration--that faith does not clear one from it's transgression, but that by faith alone can the law be kept!

The Jews are not blamed for following after the

law of righteousness, but for not following after it in the right way. It is not by works but by faith that the works which the law requires can be attained. There is no discount upon good works. They are the most necessary things in the world. They are the result of the keeping of the law by faith. But there cannot be good works without faith; for "whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

But the Jews came miserably short of it. Why? "For they stumbled at that stumbling stone" (Rom. 9:32). What stumbling stone? Christ. They were in the very same condition that so many people are today, they would not believe that the promises of God to Israel were wholly and solely in Christ.

That very stumbling stone is a stepping stone, and a sure foundation. That over which some fall is the means of lifting up and building up others. Christ is a rock of offense to those who disbelieve, but a sure foundation to those who have faith. He is "the Shepherd of Israel" (Psalm 80:1) and at the same time the fold, and the door into the fold.

Whoever comes not in at the door, the same will be proved to be "a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). But "whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame" (Rom. 9:33), because his faith will show him to be Abraham's seed, and thus an heir of God according to the promise." [1]

Note:

1. Waggoner on Romans, pp. 159, 160.