

1950

Not of Works

Clayton Winters

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books

 Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Winters, Clayton, "Not of Works" (1950). *Stone-Campbell Books*. 503.
http://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books/503

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Stone-Campbell Resources at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Stone-Campbell Books by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU. For more information, please contact dc@acu.edu.



Eph. 2:9

by Clayton Winters

Dedicated to
Mr. and Mrs. W.A. Kegley, Jr.
True Friends of the Gospel

Orders may be assorted

Price: 20¢ each; \$1.50 dozen; \$8 per hundred;
\$75 per 1000

Order From:
WIN-MORE TRACTS
Route 1
Duncan, S.C. 29334

"NOT OF WORKS"

Clayton Winters

"He was such a good man! I know he will be saved!"

"The good people of all denominations will be saved."

"If I were half as good as he is, I would have no concern about my eternal salvation."

These and similar statements are heard almost daily. They reflect what seems to be an almost universal belief that man somehow by his goodness can merit salvation. Yet despite the apparent widespread acceptance of this premise, it is simply not so: "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.)

Recognizing the dangers in the above cliches, as well as the gospel truth that salvation is **not of works**, the author conceived this tract. Its design is to set forth the total corruption of sinful man, while pointing him to the complete adequacy of

the gospel plan.

"THE WHOLE WORLD LIETH IN WICKEDNESS"

As to the proposition that all good people will be saved, we might easily concede the fact. The problem is: there are no such people! The Bible places all accountable persons under the penalty of sin and death. But may we allow it to speak for itself: "... Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. 19:17.) "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Rom. 3:9-12.) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23.) Thus it is evident that there is not an accountable being among God's creation who can by his own righteousness or merit expect eternal salvation. Of course we are well aware that there are good people by the world's standard — good husbands, good friends, good neighbors — good moral people who take human relationships seriously. But by God's holy standards all are sinners: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world

lieth in wickedness." (1 John 5:19.)

"NOT OF YOURSELVES"

Nor is man able to save himself from his alienated state, either in the sense of producing the **Man** or providing the **Plan**. "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.) If indeed man could have earned his salvation, he would have had no need at all for God's provision. Paul makes this clear in Romans 4:2-5: "For 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."

This dismal failure of man in his effort to attain God's righteous standard by works was also well attested by the Law of Moses. To the Galatians the apostle declared, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal. 2:16.) Again the same writer urged, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by

law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Gal. 2:21.)

In fact the design of the Law of Moses was just the opposite of justification; for it is called the letter that "killeth," the "ministration of death," and the "ministration of condemnation." (2 Cor. 3:6, 7, 9.) This could not be said of a law intended for the salvation of souls. Instead its design was to show the damnable and destructive nature of sin in alienating man from God, and man's desperate need for a perfect redeemer to propitiate for his sins.

Since the purpose of the law was to reveal the enormity of sin, it does not by its commandment (quite contrary to the belief of some) make sin. That is, adultery is not wrong just because the commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Adultery is wrong because it is contrary to the created nature of man and his social relationship in which he was designed to live. Thus the law did not make this impure act sin (it would have been detrimental to society had the law never been given), but it did serve to point it out as sin. Paul asked, "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. 7:7.)

So the law was not sin. Neither did the commandment create lust—it was there all the time. The writer simply would not have been aware of it had the commandment not revealed it. Knowing this should help us to better understand how Paul

could be alive without the commandment, die by receiving it, and yet declare the law as "Holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." (Rom. 7:7-13.) When Paul said, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died," he was not arguing for the non-existence of sin, or even its existence as an inactive force. This would have made law, not sin, his death-producing agent. Rather he was pointing out his ignorance of sin without law. Sin was dead only in the sense that Paul was not aware of its presence; but when the law came, he was made aware of it in all its deadly enormity. And this he declares to be the purpose of law: "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." (Rom. 7:13.)

The law no more made sin than an Xray makes an ulcer; but it did, like the Xray, reveal the source of the trouble.

Suppose a man is walking through a field of deadly diamond-back rattlers. But because of darkness he is totally oblivious to his danger. Then when he reaches the middle of the field, someone turns on some lights and he sees the serpents ready to strike. He might well exclaim, "I was alive without the lights, but now I am a dead man!" So Paul, although he was unaware of sin, was already in its deadly clutches. The law merely served to reveal to

him his helpless and hopeless condition, and his need for a Savior. "And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Rom. 7:10.)

Thus man is hopelessly lost in sin and doomed to an eternal hell. His own meritorious works are too few and too late to give him the needed assistance. Nor does the law offer him any comfort. It served only to point out how desperate his plight really is: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Rom. 3:19.)

GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION

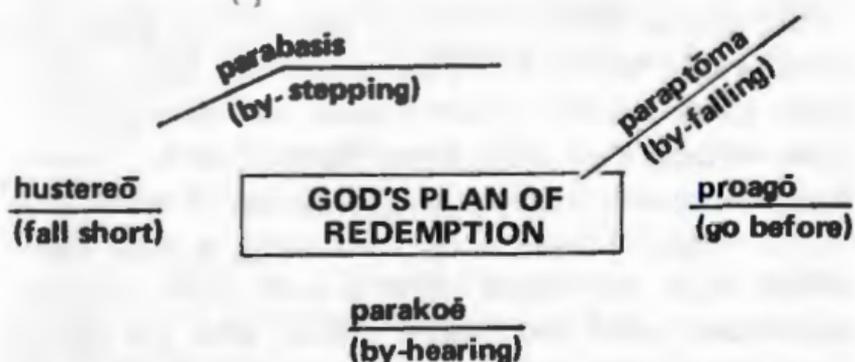
The foregoing, proving the whole world guilty before God and the inadequacy of good works in bringing its ransom, should force us to the realization that if we are ever to be saved from sin, it will have to be through the **Lord's** means and not our own. It should make us willing both to search for and to accept the **Lord's** plan of salvation. **And Jesus Christ is that plan!** He proclaimed, "... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.) Peter affirmed of Him, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (John 14:6.) He is our Saviour (Matt.

1:21), our Master (Matt. 23:10), our Lord (Acts 2:36), our Lawgiver (Acts 3:19; Heb. 8:6-13), our Propitiation (Rom. 3:25), our Advocate (1 John 2:1), and our Judge (John 5:26, 27). Thus if man is ever saved, it will be through Jesus Christ and His revealed will contained in the New Testament. Whatever He says, whatever He requires, that is the plan of salvation, and should be considered as absolutely essential for human redemption. Or as His mother put it, "... Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." (John 2:5.)

But many think that since man is not saved by meritorious works, or by works of law, then obedience to the Lord's plan would not be essential. How wrong they are! Jesus Himself said, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt. 7:24-27.) Paul voiced the same principle in Hebrews 5:8, 9 when he said, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation

to all them that obey him." Finally the Apostle John proclaimed, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:3, 4.)

From the Greek New Testament the extent of this compliance to the Lord's plan is made very emphatic, as may be observed from the following chart.



Hustereō. This term was used of the shortage of wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. (John 2:3.) Jesus also used it when He told the rich ruler, "One thing thou lackest." (Mark 10:21.) There was some wine at the feast, but it fell short of the requirements; there were some requirements met by the young man (he had kept the commandments), but he had fallen short of one thing necessary to eternal life. So the Apostle Paul warns, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem

to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.)

Parabasis. Para means "by" and basis means, "A stepping, walking, that with which one steps, the foot." (Thayer.) Thus it is literally a by-stepping of obligation, an over-stepping of authority, or a transgression of law. The verb form was used by Jesus when He said the Pharisees transgressed (by-passed) the law of God by tradition. (Matt. 15:3.) The Hebrew epistle warns that every transgression of the law received a just recompense of reward. Its warning is even more emphatic when it involves deviation from the gospel plan: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" (Heb. 2:3.) One who wants to be saved cannot afford to side-step God's plan of redemption. "... No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6.)

Paraptōma. This is a composition of para "by" and piptō "to fall." It was used of Israel's fall by disobedience to the will of God (Rom. 11:11, 12), also of Christians who fell away from Christ: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." (Heb. 6:4-6.) Most often,

however, it is translated "offense" or "trespass." And this is very illustrative, because it depicts one who would allow his steps to fall outside the prescribed boundary, and thus become a trespasser on forbidden property.

Parakoē. This literally means "by-hearing." In the New Testament it is translated **disobedience** (see Heb. 2:2) because the hearer merely allows the word to pass by him—"In one ear and out the other"—as we would say. On the other hand the Greek term for obedience is **hupakoē** (under-hearing), because the hearer supports the obligation laid on him by the commandment. James warns those who would hear lightly the word of God: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (Jas. 1:22-25.)

Proagō. This means to "go before." It is the word represented by **transgress** in 2 John 9: "Who-soever **transgresseth**, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." One seeking redemption must never forget that he is a **follower**, not a leader. He must

go where, and only where, Christ leads. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10:27, 28.) Paul urged, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1.) To go where Christ has not gone, to practice what he has not preached, is to be without God and without hope in the world.

So beyond question God's plan is both all sufficient and absolutely essential. Any falling short, side-stepping, by-falling, by-hearing, or going beyond it leads to alienation from God and eternal destruction. ". . . Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." (John 2:5.) And what He has said we are now ready to discuss.

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE ALIEN

FAITH. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John 8:24.)

REPENTANCE. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3.)

CONFESSION OF CHRIST. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32.)

BAPTISM FOR REMISSION OF SINS. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot

enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16.)

Thus faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism make up the Lord's plan of redemption from alien sins; and a perusal of the conversions in the book of Acts will show that this is precisely the plan which the apostles preached. (See Acts 2:37, 38; 8:12, 13; 8:26-39; 18:8; 22:16.)

But many will respond, "Certainly I believe that faith, repentance, and a confession of Christ are essential to salvation; but I just do not see what baptism has to do with it!" Well, here is the real test! You have come face to face with a requirement of the Lord which, for some reason, you do not like. Will you fall short of it and forfeit your soul? Will you side-step Christ's authority and devise something more to your liking? Will you allow His commandment to "go in one ear and out the other" while you argue that it is non-essential? Or will you obey the Lord that He might be the Author of your eternal salvation? (Heb. 5:8, 9.) After all if you cannot save yourself, why should you feel qualified to argue with the Lord as to how He might choose to do it? I personally realize that I am a sinner, unable to save myself by my own work or merit. I, therefore, submit myself without argument to this and every other ordinance of my Lord, because I am depending on

Him for my salvation. And I believe implicitly that He only requires of me that which is necessary.

Nor would submission to this act constitute salvation by works (in the sense of Eph. 2:9) as some foolishly charge. Remember, this is a part of the **Lord's plan**, not our own. It is therefore salvation through Him, not of ourselves.

GOD'S PLAN OF WORSHIP

Just as in the Old Testament plan (see Heb. 9:1), God's New Covenant contains ordinances of divine worship. Paul said, "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." (1 Cor. 11:2.) These ordinances consist of praying (1 Cor. 14:15), singing (Eph. 5:19), giving (1 Cor. 16:1, 2), teaching (1 Tim. 6:2), and communing (1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 20:7). This is the **Lord's plan** for public worship as is substantiated by these and many other Scriptures. But what is man's reaction to these?

He seems to be very discontent with the plan. God's word authorizes only vocal music: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." (Eph. 5:19.) But man seems to think that much quality may be added by the use of an instrument of music, a thing for which there is absolutely no New Testament authority whatsoever. And not only does he add the instrument to his singing, but he adds the rosary and incense to

praying, substitutes sales and gimmicks for giving, and often wholly omits the Lord's Supper. Strange indeed! Man admits that he is so entangled in sin that he cannot approach God himself, but when God sent His Son with a plan for the world, man immediately sets about to improve upon it!

Perhaps we need once more to call the reader's attention to the word **proagō** on our chart as taken from 2 John 9: "Whosoever **transgresseth** and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Can you follow Christ with the use of an instrument in worship? with the beads of the rosary? with sales and gimmicks instead of giving? If not, then where would this leave you in your practice of such?

Now may we close by citing a scripture which shows the importance of following exactly God's plan, rather than depending on our own merits or devices: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Rev. 22:18, 19.)