

Question 62 -- But why can not our good works be the whole or part of our righteousness before God?

Answer -- Because the righteousness which can stand before the Judgment-seat of God must be perfect throughout, and wholly conformable to the divine law; whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.

Question 63 -- How is it that our good works merit nothing, while yet it is God's will to reward them in this life and in that which is to come?

Answer -- The reward comes not of merit, but of grace.

The *New Hampshire Baptist Confession* (A.D. 1833), Article 5, states:

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

#### B. Development of the Doctrine

1. Justification is a judicial (forensic) act of God's free grace, in which He declares the believing sinner to be just (righteous).

a. Scriptural usage of "justify"

(1) In the Old Testament (קָדַשׁ)

Deuteronomy 25:1-2 -- "If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, and the judges decide their case, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, then it shall be if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall then make him lie down and be beaten in his presence with the number of stripes according to his guilt."

Exodus 23:7 -- "Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty."

Isaiah 5:22-23 -- "Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine, And valiant men in mixing strong drink; who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!"