

Faith and Good Works

E G White

VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do [through the grace and power of Christ]; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments." This promise was spoken by lips that never deceived, and we must take the pledged Word of God and believe it, and act upon it. We must receive His Word as spoken to us; and if we regard it thus, we shall come to the throne of grace with full assurance of faith.

Many who profess to be children of God have lost their simplicity; there is no genuine faith in their prayers, no confidence in the promise that if we believe we shall receive the thing we ask of Him. But if we have this faith, we shall not be disappointed; for God will honor His word. The Lord would have us tell Him all our perplexities, and ask Him for those things that we need. His promise is, "Ask, and ye shall receive." God will give us the very things we need. It is our privilege to ask, it is God's prerogative to know what is for our good, that receiving them we may glorify His name by giving of them to others.

We need to have more of Jesus, and far less of self. We need a childlike simplicity that will lead us to tell the Lord all our wants, and believe that according to His riches and goodness and love He will satisfy our needs. "If ye shall ask anything in My name," He says, "I will do it." If you love Me, you will show that love by keeping My commandments. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth."

The Comforter is promised only as the Spirit of truth. There is no comfort in a lie. The work of the Comforter is to define and maintain the truth; and there should be no worry lest the comfort will not follow. The Holy Spirit first dwells in the heart as the truth, and this He does through the truth. The world, said Christ, can

not receive the Spirit of truth, "because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." This is the only true test of character. In doing the will of God we give the best evidence that we love God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The oft-repeated words of love for God are of no value unless that love is made manifest in the life practise. Love for God is not a mere sentiment; it is a living, working power. The man who does the will of his Father who is in heaven shows to the world that he loves God. The fruit of his love is seen in good works.

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This means more than an assent to the truth that Christ came into the world and died for the salvation of the race. The understanding may be convinced, but the text means more than this. It means entire sincerity. It means faith, intelligent faith, that will cling to the Saviour as the only hope of a fallen world. It means a faith that will grasp the wonderful provision made, and will engage the affections and control the life, resting upon the merit of a crucified and risen Saviour. It means a faith that works by love and purifies the soul.

The apostle James saw that dangers would arise in presenting the subject of justification by faith, and he labored to show that genuine faith can not exist without corresponding works. The experience of Abraham is presented. "Seest thou," he says, "how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Thus genuine faith does a genuine work in the believer. Faith and obedience bring a solid, valuable experience.

There is a belief that is not a saving faith. The word declares that the devils believe and tremble. The so-called faith that does not work by love and purify the soul will not justify any man. "Ye see," says the apostle, "how that by works a man is justified, and

not by faith only." Abraham believed God. How do we know that he believed? His works testified to the character of his faith, and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness.

We need the faith of Abraham in our day, to lighten the darkness that gathers around us, shutting out the sweet sunlight of God's love, and dwarfing spiritual growth. Our faith should be prolific of good works; for faith without works is dead. Every duty performed, every sacrifice made in the name of Jesus, brings an exceeding great reward. In the very act of duty, God speaks and gives His blessing.

"Being justified freely by His grace," the apostle Paul says, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Here the truth is laid out in plain lines. This mercy and goodness is wholly undeserved. The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace.

There is nothing in faith that makes it our saviour. Faith can not remove our guilt. Christ is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe. The justification comes through the merits of Jesus Christ. He has paid the price for the sinner's redemption. Yet it is only through faith in His blood that Jesus can justify the believer.

The sinner can not depend upon his own good works as a means of justification. He must come to the point where he will renounce all his sin, and embrace one degree of light after another, as it shines upon his pathway. He simply grasps by faith the free and ample provision made in the blood of Christ. He believes the promises of God which through Christ are made unto him sanctification and righteousness and redemption. And if he follows Jesus, he will walk humbly in the light, rejoicing in the

light, and diffusing that light to others. Being justified by faith he carries cheerfulness with him in his obedience in all his life. Peace with God is the result of what Christ is to him. The souls who are in subordination to God, who honor Him, and are doers of His Word, will receive divine enlightenment. In the precious Word of God, there is purity and loftiness as well as beauty that, unless assisted by God, the highest powers of man can not attain to.

Faith earns nothing for us; it is the gift of God, which we may receive and cherish by making Christ our personal Saviour. We may refuse the gift, and talk doubts, and become unhappy by cherishing unbelief. But this will grow into an impassable barrier, shutting us away from the Spirit of God, and closing our hearts to His light and His love. Thus we dishonor God, and make of none effect to us the priceless sacrifice. We give Satan an opportunity to triumph over us, when we might triumph over him.

We are none of us excusable, under any form of trial, for letting our hold upon God become loosened. Although the compassion of man may fail, still God loves and pities, and reaches out His helping hand. God's everlasting arms encircle the soul that turns to Him for aid. He is our source of strength, or stronghold in every trial. When we cry unto Him for help, His hand will be stretched forth mightily to save. In earnest resolution and prayer to God for the help we need, we shall find strength. God loves to have His children ask Him, and trust Him to do for them those things which they can not do for themselves. Then let us heed the voice of Him who spoke as never man spake: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments." *Signs of the Times*, .May 19, 1898.