

FAITH AND WORKS.

The relationship existing between faith and works is seemingly much confused in the minds of God's children. We would suggest that works without faith would not count, as then it would be a sinner's works, which of necessity are imperfect: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Faith might exist alone for a time, for not by works are we justified, but by faith only.

First, then, while sinners we learned of our ransom by the Lord, from sin, death, and all of the Adamic curse; "that Christ died for our sins" – "the just for the unjust;" that we "were bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ." We believed this, and then God told us that though we do not actually become free from the Adamic penalties, we are to reckon ourselves as though we had none of the imperfections and ailments of the fallen nature – as though perfect. God tells us that he has received full satisfaction for our sins in the ransom and henceforth looks upon all who come unto him by Jesus, as sinless beings – "justified freely from all things." This is the meaning of justified – reckoned righteous, sinless. And thus we see how we come to this condition by faith without any regard to works. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God."

From that moment you are a saved person and will surely be recovered from the effects of sin, and from that moment forward you should never think nor speak of yourself as "a poor sinner." Such we were, but have been redeemed and justified. But you are not yet an "heir of glory." Only believers, justified ones, are called to be "heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord." And now that you are a saved man or woman God calls you to be something more than human. He calls you to become a "partaker of the divine nature," and mentions as the conditions upon which you can make your calling and

election sure, that you shall resign your will to his, and thus take his will as the law of your being. He tells you that his will is that you thus crucify, or put to death and ignore the human nature which you are finally to lose entirely. Thus your new divine nature grows up within the old or human, using this earthen vessel to the service of the Lord and not in its own service.

And here works join faith. We believe God's call and the exceeding great and precious promises of "Glory, Honor and Immortality," and begin to seek for it. And now comes God's instruction to you: "Work out your (higher spiritual) salvation with fear and trembling," and let God "work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil. 2:12.

This salvation to the divine nature cannot be obtained by faith only – cannot be obtained without works, because there is no other way of complying with the conditions of our call and making our election sure. We were called to suffer, if we would reign with Christ. But if you have faith in all these promises, and keep that faith locked in your bosom and live as an earthly being, working for earthly things, your faith without works is valueless, and the works of earth will swallow up and destroy the faith, and you will not suffer and consequently not reign.

If you know the conditions of this "high calling" to be: "Take up your cross and follow Jesus' example of self-denial, do you think that faith in the promise, without following the example, will insure you the prize?" Not so; faith alone justifies us, but works of obedience, as well as faith, are necessary if we would attain to that whereunto we are called. It is the overcomer that inherits all things promised. May the Lord help us to work not our own will, but to "work the works of God," and may he give grace and increase our faith so that the promises may be so real to us that works will be easy.
