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Things That Accompany Salvation

(Hebrews 6:9)

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you doubtless have realized that salvation is 'by *grace*, through faith', to the exclusion of all works as a procuring cause. In this leaflet we would seek to adjust the balance by showing that while salvation is not, and never can be, *of* works, it does, and should, lead *to* works as evidence of life and product of gratitude:

'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. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Eph. 2:8-10).

'... WORK OUT YOUR OWN salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which WORKETH IN YOU both to will and to do of His good pleasure' (Phil. 2:12,13).

'NOT BY WORKS of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us ... I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain GOOD WORKS' (Titus 3:5-8).

These three passages clearly reveal the twofold truth, that whereas salvation does not *arise from* good works by reason of the sinfulness of those being saved, salvation does most surely *lead to* good works as evidence of the new life received by grace.

Abraham is used in the New Testament as an example of this twofold truth :

(1) The apostle Paul, in Romans, cites the justification of Abraham as an example of 'justification by faith *without works*' (Romans 4), the passage referred to in the life of Abraham being Genesis 15:6, where it is written :

'And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness'.

(2) The apostle James, in his epistle, cites the test and trial of Abraham recorded in Genesis 22, where the faith of Abraham was tested and proved by his willingness to offer even Isaac his son, when called upon so to do. James' argument is as follows:

'Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?' (James 2:19-22).

There is no contradiction between these two passages of Scripture; they deal with one subject from two points of view. The point of James' argument is in the last words of the quotation, 'by works was faith made *perfect*'. This contains an element of truth that demands a little further elaboration, and as the essence of the teaching resides in the word 'perfect', we must endeavour to arrive at a scriptural understanding of the term.

The English word 'perfect', when its true meaning is perceived, will be found to be very near to the meaning of the original word used by James. *Per*, in Latin, means 'through', and *facio* means 'to do', which gives us our word 'fact'. To perfect, both in the English and in the Greek, means, 'to take anything to its logical end', or, as it were, to turn 'theory' into 'fact', to turn faith without works into trust and confidence, which in their turn produce the fruits of righteousness. Perhaps an extreme example of the use of this idea will help to fix it in the mind. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 the apostle Paul asks: 'What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' He cites from the Old Testament the promise that, if God's people came out and were separate, touching not the unclean thing, the Lord would receive them. He then applies the teaching to the church, saying:

'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting* holiness in the fear of God' (2 Cor. 7:1).

It is obvious that ‘perfecting holiness’; cannot mean ‘*improving* holiness’; it does, however, make most blessed sense when we perceive that the apostle Paul is urging the believer to take the sanctification which is already his in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30) to its logical conclusion. These Corinthians had been ‘cleansed’, for he had already written to them, ‘but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God’ (1 Corinthians 6:11). In 2 Corinthians 7:1, he was but urging them to make this cleansing a living fact in their experience.

This conception that true Christian practice is the taking of salvation and its blessings to their logical end is further expressed by the apostle Paul in his three great epistles, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, by the use of the word ‘worthy’.

‘I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk *worthy* of the vocation wherewith ye are called’ (Eph. 4:1).

As the use of this word ‘worthy’ (*axios*) in Romans 8:18 means ‘not worthy to be *compared*’, the idea of a balance is uppermost. The apostle says, in effect, put all the blessings of grace on one side of the scale, and put your practical outworking of this grace on the other: in other words, ‘Walk *worthy!*’.

In Philippians 1:27 the word *axios* is translated ‘as it becometh’, but once again the balance is emphasized:

‘Only let your conversation (manner of life) be *worthy* of (be put in the scale with) the gospel of Christ’ (Phil. 1:27).

For the third time we meet the word in the prayer of Colossians 1, ‘That ye might walk *worthy* of the Lord’ (Colossians 1:10).

Here is a threefold worthiness that embraces the whole of Christian living. These are *the things that accompany salvation*.

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