

higher standard but a retrogression to a lower; that the law-principle of Judaism and the faith-principle of the Gospel are not supplementary, but antagonistic, for the law was not given to save men, but to reveal sin by creating transgression, in other words to bring men under a sense of guilt and condemnation as a preparation for the salvation which is through Christ. Indeed Abraham himself had not been saved by circumcision but by faith. An acceptance of circumcision meant not only an acceptance of the law as a sole means of salvation, but a total rejection of Christ, and an absolute nullification of His death. This crushing refutation of the arguments presented by the Judaizers is followed, in the third place by a series of practical exhortations to conform the outer life to the high inward life of the Spirit.

It is difficult to conceive the originality and force of the arguments by which the Apostles broke away from the immemorial interpretation of the Old Testament, and from all the trammels and exclusiveness of Judaism as well as from its fondest hopes and most cherished observances. His well-nigh incredible boldness in bringing upon himself the furious hatred of his nation, as he knew he must, could have been due only to an inspired faith. The Epistle not only destroyed the work of the Judaizers in Galatia, root and branch, but it worked an epoch in the history of the church. To every subsequent age it has become the unanswerable vindication of the spiritual life from the bondage of legalism. It established forever the principle that justification is by faith, and not by outward rites or ceremonies.

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON IX.—CHRISTIAN FAITH LEADS TO GOOD WORKS.—MAY 30.
(1 James ii. 14-23.)

GOLDEN TEXT—"I will show thee my faith by my works." James ii. 18.

TIME AND PLACE.—A. D. 44 or 43. Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION.—The council at Jerusalem, referred to in the last lesson, was presided over by James, who seems at that time to have been the chief pastor of the church at Jerusalem. There is some uncertainty as to his identity. It is probable that he was "James the Lord's brother." The Apostle James, the brother of John, had suffered martyrdom some years before this, and there is good reason to believe that the other apostles of that name, James the Less, is not meant. Our present lesson is taken from the Epistle of James, and is placed in this connection because of the prominence of its author in the council at Jerusalem. The epistle is addressed to Jewish Christians throughout the world, and its purpose is to promote morality among them.

VERSE BY VERSE.—V. 14. "What doth it profit?"—Of what use is it? "Though a man say,"—That is, though a man profess to have faith in Christ. "Works."—Such acts of obedience and service as are prompted by faith.

V. 15. "A brother or sister."—The reference is to a Christian brother or sister, but the principle is of wider application.

V. 16. "Be ye warmed, etc."—To say this might be a token of sympathy, but it does not make the sufferer warm; it avails nothing.

V. 17. "Is dead."—It gives no evidence of life, because it does not act. "Being alone."—Having no works, nothing to show that it is alive.

V. 18. "Show me thy faith, etc."—It is impossible to show faith except by obedience to the divine law, and a life of service to Him and to our fellow-men.

V. 19. "Thou believest. . . devils also believe."—This illustration shows that simple belief is not enough. The question is what we believe and how we believe.

V. 20. "Is dead."—In the Revised Version the word is *barren*, that is, *fruitless*.

V. 21. "Our father."—Abraham was regarded as the father of the whole Jewish race. "Justified."—Made righteous, or accepted as righteous. "By works."—Because the works showed his faith. "Offered Isaac his son."—He did not actually slay him, but his purpose was to obey the command.

V. 22. "Imputed unto him for righteousness."—The fact that he believed God, as shown by his obedience; that is, his faith was so imputed.

THOUGHT.—False standards are the weapons which Satan uses in his efforts to destroy the Christian church. He will wreck a soul on some little question, if he can, as quickly or as willingly as on some more difficult one. He will discuss matters of religion wherever he sees a chance for him to overthrow a soul. In dealing with the Pharisees, Paul had frequently to warn them against trusting in good works. In the church, he labored earnestly

against any such standards being lifted up. James here deals with those who have gone over the line the other way, who place no value upon good works, but talk only of faith. Both Paul and James were sound in their teaching, but they were presenting different phases of the truth to different people, for different needs. "Those who cry up the Gospel so as to set aside the law, and those who cry up the law so as to set aside the Gospel, are both in the wrong. There must be both faith in Jesus Christ and good works, the fruit of faith."

Profit and loss is a question of vital importance to the Christian. "All things should be counted profitable or unprofitable as they tend to forward or hinder the salvation of our souls." It is not all that is necessary to profess faith—not enough for a man to say I have faith; neither is it enough to do deeds of charity, or acts of kindness. There must be a responsive heart. While Paul enforces the rule that men are justified by faith, James illustrates the natural results of saving faith in the fruits of good works. They are inseparable. If a man believe in Jesus to the saving of his soul, and receives the love of God, he voluntarily finds expression for his love, and proves that his heart is renewed by his brotherly care of those around him. He serves others in love. He does all things for the glory of God.

Practical demonstration of truth may be expected from the true Christian. Profession, human reasoning, self-sufficiency, or imaginary goodness, will not weigh in the balances of God. Faith does not live alone. It takes to itself its counterpart, which is good works, and they twain are one, and from them spring all the acts of devotion which Christians set forth.

Head-belief alone does not make a Christian. Being convinced of the existence of a God, and His supreme power and authority, is not salvation. Admitting that it is a truth that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, does not bring pardon. "With the heart" man believeth unto righteousness." Heart-belief, in the plan of salvation, is what makes man "the friend of God." It is the solace which delivers man from slavish fear. True faith lives and grows, and is active. By it the heart, the soul, is brought into sweet communion with God, and is made acquainted with spiritual truths. Head-belief fails to bring these ~~exercises~~, and fails to make a man better because he believes. But real, true faith is a key to the storehouse of God, where the soul finds eternal life, with all the delights of God's abundant blessings.

ILLUSTRATION.—Faith, as a converted Irish lad defined it, is "grasping Christ with the heart." Another has said: "Faith is trusting God in the dark." A little girl wrote her definition on a slate: "Trusting God, and asking no questions." A devoted saint says: "Faith is the amen of the soul to what God says." This faith always is known by good works, as an oak tree is known by its acorn and leaf, and as an orange by its color and taste.

Two men were crossing the river in a boat. They disputed about faith and works. One said that good works were not necessary to prove a man's faith. The other said they were. The man who was rowing the boat, by their request, gave his opinion. He said, "I hold in my hands two oars. The one in the right hand I call faith; the one in my left, works. Now, gentlemen, please to observe, I pull the oar of faith, and pull that alone. The boat goes round and round, and makes no progress. I do the same with the oar of works, and there is no advance. I pull both together, and in a few minutes we will be at our landing-place." So faith without works, and works without faith will not answer. They must be united.

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

DAILY READINGS.

First Day—"That ye may be Perfect and Entire." James i. 1-16.

Second Day—"Be ye doers of the Word." James i. 16-27.

Third Day—Love is the Royal Law. James ii. 1-13.

Fourth Day—Christian Faith Leads to Good Works. James ii. 14-26.

Fifth Day—"He doeth Righteousness is Righteous." 1 John iii. 1-24.

Sixth Day—"Being Fruitful in every Good Work." Col. i. 1-29.

PRAYER MEETING TONIC, May 30,—"*THAT YE BEAR MUCH FRUIT.*" John xv. 1-14.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

Through the Scriptures, the righteous are represented as bringing forth fruit. "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." The bud and blossom represent, in a very striking manner, the first exercise of Christian experience. However, this may be easily counterfeited. Every tree bears a multi-