

## The Sunday School.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

## LESSON XLIII.

Oct. 26, } FAITH AND WORKS. { James ii.  
1879. } 14-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."—James ii. 26.

## HOME STUDIES.

- M. Gen. xv. 1-21..... The faith of Abraham.  
T. Josh. ii. 1-24..... Rahab and the spies.  
W. Rev. i. 1-25..... Abraham justified.  
Th. Gal. iii. 1-29..... Justification by faith.  
F. Ps. xv. 1-5..... The citizen of Zion.  
S. Jas. i. 16-26..... Pure religion.  
S. Jas. ii. 14-26..... Faith and works.

## HELPS TO STUDY.

It is not known with perfect certainty which James it was that wrote the epistle which contains our lesson.

James the brother of John has by some been regarded as the author, but it is now generally agreed that the fact of his early death, recorded in Acts xii. 2, renders it impossible that he could have written this epistle as it contains allusions to matters belonging to a later period in the history of the church.

James the son of Alphaeus is by most critics considered to have been the writer. He was one of the apostles, was the leading man in the church at Jerusalem after the death of James the brother of John, and is supposed to have been identical with that James whom Paul (Gal. i. 19) calls "the Lord's brother."

The epistle was written to Jewish Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and not to any particular church, and on that account it is headed "The General Epistle of James." Its chief object is to correct the error of those who were resting confidently in the fact of possessing the law without realizing the necessity of a holy life, and to insist on the doctrine that where living faith is there will also be good works; and it is this doctrine that is especially taught in our present lesson.

It may be taught under the following heads: (1) The Uselessness of an Empty Profession, (2) The Proof of Faith, (3) Justification.

## I. THE USELESSNESS OF AN EMPTY PROFESSION.—vers. 14-17.

It is an emphatic negative that the inspired writer places before us in verse 14: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? It profits nothing—it is useless. We are not told here that true faith can exist without good works, neither are we taught that a person can do good works without having faith. The word "say" in this verse is an important one and should not be overlooked. If a person says that he has faith, and has nothing to shew for it, then the sort of faith which that person has is a useless faith. Further on in the lesson it is spoken of as a "dead" faith, that is no faith at all.

Can faith save him? Another strong negative. It is not real faith, however, that is condemned here, but the thing that the false professor calls by that name and claims to have. Such faith cannot save.

The apostle then proceeds to shew by a very apt illustration that saying will not do instead of doing—that however good words may be in their own place, they will never do in the place of deeds. The profession of those whose faith has not led to obedience is as hollow and vain as the words depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled would be if addressed to the destitute by way of supplying their wants. The one, as well as the other, is mockery.

## II. THE PROOF OF FAITH.—vers. 18-20.

James does not teach in verse 18 that it is possible for one person to have faith without works and for another to have works without faith. What he teaches is that the person who says he has faith, but has no works whereby to shew that faith, is in reality destitute of faith; whereas he who has works—he who renders a willing obedience to God's commandments—does not need to proclaim his faith by words, for his deeds shew it. Shew me thy faith without thy works; you cannot do it; there is no other way of shewing it; you have not got any faith although you say you have.

The person who is represented as saying "I have works" must have had faith, for he is afterwards represented as saying "I will shew thee my faith by my works."

Saving faith is something more than mere belief in the existence of God and of Christ. Regarding verse 19 the "Westminster Teacher" says: "Thou, *i.e.*, the man whose faith is without works. It is not now some supposed person who addresses this man, but the apostle himself. Believe, *i.e.*, theoretically, with the head. That there is one God.—The apostle is addressing a professedly Jewish Christian, or convert from Judaism to Christianity, and Jews and Christians alike held to monotheism or belief in one God. Thou doest well, *i.e.*, so far. This is good as far as it goes, for it is necessary. But how lamentably it falls short of true Christian faith, is terribly manifest by what follows. The devils.—Better and literally, "demons," evil spirits. There is but one Devil, the prince and leader of these demons. Believe and tremble.—Their belief does nothing for them. Yea, rather, it is their very belief that intensifies their misery. Their condition is the worse for the

very faith they have without works. There is intense significance in the Greek word here rendered tremble. It means, literally, to be rough with bristling points, and is applied to a field with ears of grain, to an army with spears. When spoken of persons, it indicates a horror, with the hairs standing on end. Where true faith is it will produce love and service; a cheerful obedience to God's commands; a strict attention to all Christian duty; and earnest effort for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

## III. JUSTIFICATION.

There is an apparent difference—to some even a contradiction—between James' statement of justification and the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith; but there is no contradiction, and even the difference is only on the surface. James, throughout the passage which forms our lesson, admits faith as the only possible basis and root of good works; Paul insists on good works as the fruit and test of faith quite as firmly as James does. When everything is taken that both apostles wrote on the subject it will be found that they agree. The doctrine of justification by faith is not peculiar to Paul although it is called Pauline. It is taught throughout the scriptures; and James neither denies it nor teaches a different Gospel.

But James distinctly says that Abraham was justified by works. Well if he was he had whereof to glory, but not before God. It was before men that he was justified by works.

Our works—our character and conduct—are all that we have to prove to ourselves or to our fellow-men that we are justified. It is God alone that knoweth the heart. Faith is invisible to the human eye, and works are but the visible embodiment of it. There is nothing for it but to repeat James' triumphant question, "Shew me thy faith without thy works and I will shew thee my faith by my works."

## CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. SHERAR, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

## Around the Table.

## LITTLE.

HAST thou little? Be content;  
It is more than many have;  
Joy in little makes it much,  
And will help thy soul to save.

Canst do little? It's enough;  
Do it well and let it be,  
It will count as much as more,  
When thy Judge requires it thee.

Little talent well improved,  
Little service rightly done—  
Be it all thy Master asks,  
Brings the victor's palm and crown.

Hopeful, gladsome, humble, too,  
In thy toiling find thy rest,  
And the little toils of time  
Shall forever make thee blest.

## NO!

MANY years ago, a young man whose name has since rung through the land, was sitting at table, in what was counted "first society." It was almost his entrance into the charmed circle; for he was poor, of obscure birth, a shoemaker by trade, the son of a dissipated, degraded man; and without education, except so far as his own earnest, persevering effort had obtained it. But he was rich in integrity, courage, and reliance on God; and with the strength that is only given through right principles of life, he had made his way amidst difficulties such as you who read this can hardly dream, and set out on a career of true, noble manhood.

At that time, it was a universal custom to put wine on the dinner-table when guests were

invited; it was regarded as only common courtesy to offer it even to callers. Ministers drank it; the most respectable people of all classes, who could afford the expense, were in the same habit.

The host himself asked the young man to take wine with him. It was counted a rudeness to refuse.

Was it an easy thing, think you, for him, then and there, to say No?

But he had temperance principles. He had seen, yes, bitterly felt, in his childhood's home and his opening manhood, the evil of intemperance; and he knew that it was the one glass at dinner that began the downward tendency; that without the beginning, the terrible conclusion would never be reached; and believing in total abstinence as the only sure safeguard for others and himself, he would not sanction by his act, however trivial it might seem, the violation of that principle. Cost little or much, cost favour or feeling, he would be true.

"No," he said courteously, quietly, but firmly, "I never take wine."

Bravely, resolutely, has he maintained his ground through after-years, up to this time. That victory made every subsequent one easier. On the side of temperance, humanity, right, and God Himself, Henry Wilson firmly stands. Like him, boys, learn to say, NO!

## HARVEST.

THE grain harvest is over, and everywhere may be heard the sound of the threshing-mill. The quantity and the quality of the grain is the general topic; all "guessing" on that subject gives place to the hard matter of fact; 'tis certainty now; the grain winnowed and fit for the market is so many bushels to the acre, and no more. An abundant harvest fills the heart with gladness, the mouth with laughter, and the tongue with singing.

Another harvest is coming, in which we are all deeply concerned. The whole world is the field to be reaped, its inhabitants the grain. The Proprietor has arranged to employ the angels as His reapers and binders, and has already arranged the order in which the binding shall be done. First the tares are to be bound in bundles for the burning. The tares grow with the wheat, but the wheat must not be bound with the tares. Second, the wheat will be gathered into the barn.

Now, seeing every one of you would like to be wheat, you had better bestir yourselves, consider your ways, repent of your sins, accept the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, and consecrate yourselves to Him. "This is the day of salvation." "He that believeth shall be saved." What a glorious harvest the SAVED shall know. "Angels shall shout The Harvest Home."

WISDOM is better than riches. Wisdom guards thee, but thou must guard thy riches. Riches diminish in the using, but wisdom increases in the use of it.