

Lesson IX.

BELIEVING AND DOING

May 30, 1909

LESSON SETTING—The Epistle of James is called a General or Catholic (the word means universal, embracing all) Epistle, because it was not addressed, like the Epistles of Paul, to a particular church or individual, but to a more general body of readers. It was written, probably, between A.D. 40 and A.D. 50 to Jewish Christians of the Dispersion, that is, the Jewish communities scattered throughout the world. James was the brother of Jesus. The last Lesson (Acts 15: 1-5, 22-29) showed that Jews and Gentiles alike are saved through simple faith in Christ; to-day's Lesson teaches that true faith will manifest itself in good works.

GOLDEN TEXT—Faith without works is dead.—James 2: 20.

Memorize v. 26.

THE LESSON PASSAGE—James 2: 14-26.

14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren,¹ though a man say he hath faith,² and have not works? can³ faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, *Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled*,⁶ notwithstanding ye give them not⁷ those things which are needful to the body, what *doth it* profit?

17 Even so faith, if it⁸ hath not works, is dead,⁹ being alone.

18 Yea, a man¹⁰ may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith¹¹ without thy works, and I¹² will shew thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believest that¹³ there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and¹⁴ tremble.

Revised Version—¹if; ²but; ³that; ⁴in lack of; ⁵Go in peace; ⁶and yet ye; ⁷the things needful; ⁸have; ⁹in itself; ¹⁰will say; ¹¹apart from; ¹²by my works will shew thee my faith; ¹³God is one; ¹⁴shudder; ¹⁵barren; ¹⁶in that he offered up; ¹⁷Thou seest that; ¹⁸And; ¹⁹reckoned; ²⁰Omit then how; ²¹only by faith; ²²And in like manner was not also; ²³in that she received; ²⁴Omit had; ²⁵even so faith apart from works is dead.

Daily Readings—(Courtesy, I.B.R.A.)—M.—Believing and doing, James 2: 14-26. T.—Hearing and doing, James 1: 16-27. W.—Known by fruit, Matt. 7: 15-29. Th.—Faith and works, Tit. 3: 1-8. F.—Growing in grace, 2 Pet. 1: 1-11. S.—Faith and love, 1 John 3: 13-24. S.—The believer's life, Col. 3: 1-15.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. WORKLESS FAITH.
—14. **What doth it profit?** "What kind of use is it?" James had been speaking to those who professed to have faith in Christ, and yet cringed to the rich, while they despised the poor (see vs. 1-3). Such faith is useless and worthless. **My brethren.** Though the apostle has to point out his readers' faults and mistakes, he does this in love. **Man say he hath faith;** that is, he believes in Christ, but his word is the only evidence of this: the faith that he has does nothing. **Have not works.** His faith does not show itself in deeds, which are to faith what the fruit is to the tree. **Can faith save him?** No, not such faith. The faith that saves (Eph. 2:

whom a true believer would be specially bound to help, Gal. 6: 10. **Naked;** poorly clad, "in rags". **Destitute of daily food;** in danger of starving. **Say... Depart in peace** (the customary friendly wish at parting)... **warmed and filled.** Such words count for less than nothing, unless they are accompanied by deeds that help. **Give... not... things... needful.** True religion must be practical. **Faith... hath not works... dead... alone.** Faith that does nothing in the way of helping the needy, or in other ways, is no better than a statue or a corpse.

18. **A man may say;** any man of common sense and with the smallest understanding of true religion. **Thou hast faith;** without works,—suppose this to be possible. **I have works;** springing out of faith as their root. **Show me, etc.,** an impossible thing to do, for it is only by one's conduct that others can see that his faith is genuine. **I will shew, etc.** Faith in this case will be proved real by its fruits. **Believest that God is one** (Rev. Ver.). The Shema, which every pious Jew repeated morning and evening, began (Deut. 6: 4), "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord". The Jews claimed religious superiority to other nations because they held this belief in one God. **The devils;** evil supernatural beings, under the rule of the Prince of Darkness. **Believe;** that there is one God. **Tremble.** Their belief does not lead to their giving up fighting against God, and therefore they live in terror of His wrath.

II. WORKING FAITH.—20, 21. **Vain man;**



JAMES THE LORD'S BROTHER

8), Paul says, "worketh by love" (Gal. 5: 6); it is, says Luther, "a lively, busy, active thing, so that it is impossible for it not to be ceaselessly working good".

15-17. Brother or sister; fellow Christian,