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## Miscellaneous Articles.

### FAITH AND WORKS.

#### A SHORT EXPOSITION OF JAMES II. 14-26.

This passage is involved in some difficulty, and has been the subject of no little controversy, on account of its apparent inconsistency with the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith. On this ground some of the Reformers, and particularly Luther, taking advantage of some ancient but short-lived doubts and surmises as to the authenticity of the Epistle of James, were disposed to expunge it from the Sacred Canon. It is the design of this paper to give a brief explanation of the passage referred to, and to show that so far from contradicting, it confirms and establishes the current testimony of Scripture. We assume it as an axiom that the Scripture cannot contradict itself, for God is of one mind, without variableness or shadow of a change. When, therefore, any apparent discrepancy occurs, it is to be presumed that it lies not in the Scripture, but in our mode of apprehending it, or in the imperfection of human language, which like everything human is necessarily defective, and is, therefore, a frequent source of misapprehension and error. There is no doctrine more fully and explicitly laid down in the Word of God than that of our universal depravity by nature, and the impossibility of our restoration to the Divine favour by any deeds or worthiness of our own; and that consequently our salvation is entirely of grace, human merit having no place in it whatever. Now, this is one of the leading doctrines of Scripture, the very basis of the remedial scheme or economy of mercy, and it is taught with such frequency and clearness that we may well pause when we meet with any solitary expression of an opposite tendency and consider whether we have a right conception of its meaning. But we do the sacred writers injustice if we suppose that in any instance they contradict or oppose each other. They are distinguished by differences of style and phraseology, for they were men of different casts of mind and of varied attainments; they wrote in different ages and countries; they looked at objects from different points of view; and had often different ends to accomplish. Now, in interpreting an author, we ought always to consider the grand scope or drift of his reasoning; and this will often furnish us with a key to his meaning, when otherwise we might be left in uncertainty.