

LESSON IX—May 30th, 1897.

Christian Faith Leads to Good Works. James. 2: 14-23.

(Commit to memory verses 14-17).

GOLDEN TEXT: "I will shew thee my faith by my works." Jas. 2: 18.

PROVE THAT—Faith which bears no fruit is dead. Jas. 2: 17.

SHORTER CATECHISM. Quest. 104. *What do we pray for in the fourth petition?* A. In the fourth petition (which is, *Give us this day our daily bread*), we pray, That of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessings with them.

LESSON HYMNS. *Children's Hymnal*—Nos. 39, 105, 111, 113.

DAILY PORTIONS. *Monday.* Christian faith and good works. Jas. 2: 14-24. *Tuesday.* Hearing and doing. Jas. 1: 19-27. *Wednesday.* Abraham's obedience. Heb. 11: 13-19. *Thursday.* Known by its fruits. Matt. 7: 15-23. *Friday.* Meet for use. 2 Tim. 3: 14-21. *Saturday.* Good and profitable. Titus 3: 1-8. *Sabbath.* Called to virtue. 2 Pet. 1: 1-11. (*The I. B. R. A. Selections*).

HELPS IN STUDYING.

INTRODUCTORY. This epistle was written by James, surnamed the Just, brother of the Lord and head of the christian community at Jerusalem. He was a man of unbending rectitude, and a strict observer of the Jewish law. While Paul emphasizes salvation by faith alone, James points out that a faith which does not shew itself in good works is worthless. The epistle is addressed to no particular church, but to Jewish christians everywhere, hence it is one of the *Catholic*, or General Epistles, written some time between A. D. 45 and 62. James was martyred in A. D. 69, shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem.

LESSON PLAN. I. Profitless Faith. vs. 14-20. II. Profitable Faith. vs. 21-23

14. *What doth it profit?*—As we would say. "What does faith amount to that never shews itself?" Can that faith (R. V.)—A faith which has no effect on the life, which does not touch the heart, is not the kind which Christ accepts (Matt. 7: 26; Isa. 1: 23). 15. *Naked*—i. e. not sufficiently clad, cold (Matt. 25: 36, 43; Luke 3: 11; Job. 31: 19, 20). A fellow christian would have stronger claims upon us than another, yet our charity must not be limited to our brethren. 16. *Go in peace* (R. V.)—Good words without kind deeds are cruel and hypocritical (1 John 3: 17, 18; Prov. 3: 27, 28). *Be ye warmed*—A true faith works by love. One may believe every word in the shorter catechism and yet have no faith that is pleasing to God, unless he is kind and Christ-like. 17. *Being alone*—"Dead in itself" (R. V.) a faith that is alive can no more help showing itself in good works, than a tree can help bearing leaves and fruit. If the leaves and other signs of life, are absent, we conclude that the tree is dead all through. So it is with a faith that does nothing but talk. 18. *Thou hast faith and I have works*—This is said to the man who claims to have faith, but does not show it in his good deeds to others. No one can shew his faith to others except by his life of faith. God alone sees the heart. A Christ-like life is the only evidence of Christ in the heart by faith (Eph. 3: 17; Jas. 3: 13). 19. *God is one* (R. V.)—This

was a good and correct belief. But if you have nothing more than this, you are no better than the devils, for they believe that too, and "shudder" (R. V.) The belief must make you love and obey God, or it will not save you (Matt. 8: 29; Mark 1: 24; 5: 7; 9: 20-26; Luke 4: 34; Acts 16: 17; 19: 15). 20. *O vain man*—Vain means empty, hence, foolish. One who claims to have faith and yet does no good deeds, deceives himself and others. Is barren (R. V.)—Idle, useless, of no value. 21. *Abraham our father*—James was a Jew and he writes to Jews. *Justified*—Accounted righteous, or just, and so acceptable to God. Abraham was justified because he believed God (Gen. 15: 6) when he told him that in his seed all nations should be blessed, and this faith did not waver even when he was told to slay Isaac his only child and consequently the only one through whom the promised Saviour could come (Heb. 11: 19). Hence his works, his surrender of Isaac, proved his faith in God's promise. 22. *Made perfect*—Completed. 23. *Abraham's faith* is often referred to as a standard example for all time (Rom. 4: 3; Gal. 3: 6). He believed God's word in spite of everything. He wore the highest title a mortal man may wear (2 Chr. 20: 7; Isa. 41: 8). Yet Christ brings us into a similar relation of friendship and affection as children.

LESSON 1. No one was ever saved because they deserved to be. 2. Faith in Christ is the only ground of salvation. 3. But a real faith in Christ will lead us to imitate him. 4. All His true brethren will be kind and good. 5. The more religion we have in our hearts the more love will be there.