



LESSON,—SUNDAY, MAY 30, 1909.

**Believing and Doing.**

James ii., 14-26. Memory verse 26.

**Golden Text.**

Faith without works is dead. James ii., 20.

**Home Readings.**

- Monday, May 24.—Jas. ii., 14-26.
- Tuesday, May 25.—Jas. i., 16-27.
- Wednesday, May 26.—Matt. vii., 15-29.
- Thursday, May 27.—Tit. iii., 1-8.
- Friday, May 28.—II. Pet. i., 1-11.
- Saturday, May 29.—I. John iii., 13-24.
- Sunday, May 30.—Col. iii., 1-15.

**FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.**

We have been studying for quite a number of Sundays about Paul, some of the things he did, and some of the places he went to. We know, too, a good deal about Barnabas who used to travel about with Paul, and in last Sunday's lesson we heard something about another man; I wonder if any of you can remember his name? It was James, and we are very interested in that James, because he used to play with Jesus when they were boys together, and he used to help Jesus in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth. James found it very hard to believe that Jesus was the promised Saviour of the world (John vii., 5), because he had known and played with Jesus and worked with Him like this, but after Jesus rose from the dead and came specially to see James (I. Cor. xv., 7), he did believe and became a very earnest Christian. He was so fine a Christian that people called him, James the Just, and they made him head of the church council in Jerusalem. That was where we studied about him in our last Sunday's lesson, and to-day we are to study something from a letter that he wrote. James was what you call a 'practical' man. Do you know what that means? It means just doing what you believe; and that's what our lesson is about—believing and doing. Do you know any other word that sounds like 'practical.' There's 'practice': that means doing over and over the same thing until you do it well. You boys say you have to 'keep in practice' if you are going to play baseball well. Suppose that some one said 'Oh yes, I

believe there is such a game as baseball. I believe it is a splendid game and I know all the rules and all about it. I know baseball well.' Then you said 'What are you best at? Can you pitch or bat or field best?' What would you think if he said 'Well, I never have played but I know all about it, so I know I could get through a game in fine style.' Why, you would laugh at him, and say 'That's nonsense.' It doesn't matter what you know or what you believe, you've got to 'do' things if you are ever to be a baseball player. You've got to get out in a field and 'hit' the ball, not just 'say' you know how to hit it. You've got to prove you know how if you are going to play in any game. No one will believe you 'know all about it' until you show you do. Perhaps you would be too polite to say all that but you could think it just the same, and that is the kind of thing that James is telling us in our lesson to-day. He says its no use 'saying' we are Christians unless we 'show' we are. Its no use 'saying' we believe in Christ unless we 'do' the things that Jesus told us to. He says we have got to keep in practice as Christians just as much as you have got to keep in practice at baseball if you are really going to be any kind of a player. Now let us see just how he tells us all this.

**FOR THE SENIORS.**

Short though this epistle is it is a mine of delight to the living active, Christian. Here is the exposition of a Christianity that counts. Not any attempt to set forth a salvation through works, but the earnest exhortation to manifest to others one's own salvation through one's works, in other words to 'let your light shine.' James has no word against faith, that is, real earnest faith, but the man who merely 'seemed to be religious' (Jas. i., 26) the man who claimed an inward illumination that his life did not express, met with his unhesitating censure; that man's religion is vain, empty, the 'sounding brass or tinkling symbol' against whose hollowness Paul as unhesitatingly inveighed (I. Cor. xiii). So far from James denying the true power of faith he expresses in this very epistle a belief in the power of faith to which few indeed in the church to-day can rise (Chap. v., 15,16). So far from discounting the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice in favor of our own faulty works, he is only echoing the teaching of the Master. There is a great similarity between the teaching of this epistle and that of the sermon on the Mount. Verses 20 and 21 have a striking resemblance to Christ's words in John xiii., 13-17. Luke xii., 8; Matt. vii., 16-27; xiii., 8; xxv., 14-46, will show what importance Christ attached to works, making the fruit of the tree the evidence of its life, and a man's works the final test in the great day of judgment. Paul so far from opposing James as some have construed his words to do, is evidently with him (Rom. ii., 6-20; II. Cor. ix., 7-11; Eph. ii., 10; Col. i., 10, etc.). The place of importance to which James assigns faith is evident in his comparison of it to the body while works he compares to the spirit, or breath, the evidence merely of the body's life. But as the death of that body in which no life stirs is absolute, so the faith that is inert and useless is nothing but a deception of the soul (James i., 22).

**(SELECTIONS.)**

Verse 14.—What does James mean by 'faith'? Not at all what Paul or Luther would mean. Faith, as Paul defines it, "worketh" by love" (Gal. v., 6). Faith, as Luther said, 'is a lively, busy, active thing, so that it is impossible for it not to be ceaselessly working good; it does not ask if good works are to be done, but before it asks it has done them, and is ever doing.' 'Such' faith 'does' save a man.

'Can that faith save him?' We are assured that an educated Hindu will pass an examination in hygiene, and then look on complacently while every imaginable sanitary law is violated within the walls of his own compound. He does not so realize his science as to appreciate its practical import, he is content with the abstruse knowledge, never proceeding to apply it. Does that faith save him? Is the educated Hindu in his filthy compound delivered by his abstract knowledge from enteric, plague, cholera? We know that his theoretic science gives him no immunity

whatever, he falls a victim to the prevailing epidemic just as readily as do those who never heard of any science of health. Likewise the nominal saint masters the creed; sometimes in actual experience and conduct he violates every great spiritual and moral law. Will 'his' faith save him? Nay, 'does' it save him? Does it save in the day of temptation, enabling the tempted one to put away the evil thing? Does it save in the day of trouble, bringing strong consolation into the stricken heart?

And what fails to save here and now is not likely to save us elsewhere and hereafter. That faith, and that faith alone, which is genuine enough and strong enough to bring peace and purity now, can secure us eternal salvation. What stops with fancy and dreams is of little count in any department of life, least of all in questions of character and destiny.—W. L. Watkinson, in 'The Duty of Imperial Thinking.'

'He is a "good citizen." He believes in civic reform, and is ready to say so whenever it amounts to nothing to say it. He votes his party ticket religiously; he never goes to the primaries; has no time to interrogate a candidate as to his position or to try to influence others to combine with him in defeating an unworthy man or measure. He complains of party tyranny, but submits to it year after year, because "nothing better offers." Can that faith save the city, or the citizen? What doth it profit?'—The Rev. William E. Strong.

Verse 16.—'Christians in Turkey are hiding in the fields because their dwellings are burned, and the fear of death hangs darkly over their starved and naked bodies; and other Christians hearing of it, as they plan some fresh indulgence for their pleasure, say, "Too bad! but trust, be patient, and may God, who cares for the ravens, send you food and raiment."'—The Rev. William E. Strong.

Verse 20.—(Compare Eph. ii., 8, 9). Arnot well says, Paul and James do not stand face to face fighting each other, as so many have assumed, but back to back fighting opposite foes. Paul's foes are those who think faith a mere intellectual matter, and works the means of their justification; James foes are those who think works of little consequence, and mere intellectual faith their justification.

Verse 26.—A laboring man, asked whether it was possible for a child of God to live an ungodly life, made answer: 'If I pour boiling water into a cup, it makes the outside hot as well as the inside. So when the gospel gets into a man's heart, the life will soon show it's there.'

Faith alone justifies, but not the faith which is alone.—F. W. Robertson.

The truths that are not translated into lives are dead truths.—Woodrow Wilson.

**Junior C. E. Topic.**

Sunday, May 30.—Topic—The story of David Brainerd and the people for whom he worked. Acts vi., 4. (Missionary meeting.)

**C. E. Topic.**

Monday, May 24.—Righteous Lot. II. Pet. ii., 6-9.

Tuesday, May 25.—Courageous Nathan. II. Sam. xii., 1-7.

Wednesday, May 26.—John the Baptist. John i., 15-28.

Thursday, May 27.—Jesus. John i., 9-13; Matt. xv., 21-28.

Friday, May 28.—Peter. Gal. ii., 7-9.

Saturday, May 29.—A daughter of Jacob. John iv., 25-42.

Sunday, May 30.—Topic—Heroes of home missions. Matt. x., 7-16.

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