

**Saturday Night Talks**  
By Rev. F. E. DAVISON  
Rutland, Vt.

**FAITH AND WORKS**

International Bible Lesson for  
May 30, '09—(James 2: 14-26)

It is a common remark that there are two sides to every question. There are often more than that. Truth is very much like the New Jerusalem, it lieth four square, with three gates of entrance toward every point of the compass. Bigotry and egotism would drive all mankind through one of those gates, denying or ignoring all the others, but clear-eyed charity sees every one of those pearly gates, and is interested in getting people through them.

**Untenable Claims.**

Some of the bitterest ecclesiastical controversies have been waged by men who have shut their eyes to this principle and who have insisted that their system of theology was as axiomatic as mathematics. Just as certainly as two and two are four in their estimation they have the only demonstrable theological dogma. A cursory perusal of the writings of the apostles reveals the fact that each of those men presented one side of the body of divinity. Thus Paul's theme was almost exclusively justification by faith; John, in gospel and epistle dwelt upon the value of love; Peter was the champion of hope, and James shows up the necessity of good works.

The idea is never intimated by any one of these writers that the subject is expounding is all there is to Christianity, they each merely emphasize and develop one phase of truth. And yet there have always been carping critics who have sought to set these writers over again each other, and make them appear to contradict and oppose each other. Especially has that been true in regard to Paul and James. They have been represented as fighting each other. Even so clear-headed a man as Martin Luther called the epistle of James, "an epistle of straw."

**Fighting Common Foe.**

But such a view is altogether wide of the mark. Instead of attacking each other Paul and James stand back to back fighting the common foe. Paul's faith works by love and purifies the heart, and James' works are the fruit of the tree, of which the sap is faith. If there were no invisible sap in the tree there would be no visible fruit, the tree might claim to have sap but its falsity would be shown by lack of fruit. That sort of a profession could not save the tree from the axe. So the loudest profession of faith would avail nothing for the man who produced no fruit of right living. The world demands fruit, fixes its eyes upon fruit, and thinks not at all of the sap which produces it. So James says: Don't talk to me about faith in your heart if it does not show itself in works in your life.

**Faith and Work Harmonious.**

Faith is necessary and works are necessary and they can no more be separated than thunder and lightning. As Frederick W. Robertson puts it: "Suppose I say, 'A tree cannot be struck without thunder'; that is true, for there is never destructive lightning without thunder. But again, if I say, 'The tree was struck by lightning without thunder,' that is true, too, if I mean that the lightning alone struck it without the thunder striking it." Yet read the two assertions together and they seem to be absolutely contradictory. So, in the same way, Paul says, "Faith alone is that which justifies us," and James completes the statement by adding, "But not a faith which is without works." There will be works with faith, as there is thunder with lightning; but just as it is not the thunder, but the lightning, that strikes the tree so it is not the works that justify. Put it in one sentence—faith alone justifies but not the faith that is alone.

Works are the proof that our faith is genuine. A thistle might claim to be a rose bush but it would never produce American Beauty roses.

Or, to change the figure, Archbishop Whately tells the following story: "Two gentlemen were one day crossing the river in a row-boat. A dispute arose about faith and works, one saying that good works were of small importance, and that faith was everything, the other taking just the opposite view. Not being able to agree, the boatman asked permission to give his opinion, and said: 'I hold in my hand two oars. This in my right hand I call 'faith,' this in my left hand I call 'work.' Now, gentlemen, please to observe, I pull the oar of faith and pull that alone, and the boat goes round and round and makes no progress. I do the same with the oar of works, and with precisely the same result—no advance. But now I pull both oars together, we rush ahead, and are soon at the landing.' So faith without works, or works without faith, will not suffice. We must use them both in order to reach the haven of rest. Or, as James puts it, "But says one, 'Thou hast faith and I have works. Show me that faith of thine by thy works, and I will show thee by my works that faith of mine.'"

These are the two sides of the shield, the two wings of the bird, the two arms of a man, the two oars of the boat, the two hemispheres of the planet of truth. No contradiction, but perfect unity, between the apostle of faith and the apostle of works.

**HOW SHE SQUELCHED HIM.**

**Bloodless Duel Between the Stenographer and the Superintendent.**

"I don't see how you make your fingers go so fast," said the young mail-order superintendent to the young woman stenographer as she stopped to make an erasure.

"It's quite easy to make your fingers go," said the stenographer, quite pointedly.

"You make mistakes, though, I see."

"I'm but human. If I never made a mistake I might qualify for your job."

"But you're doing good work, on the whole," said the mail-order superintendent, patronizingly.

"You'll get me all puffed up if you talk like that. Kind words can never die, can they? Scatter a few of them over the office boy. He'd appreciate 'em."

"I didn't mean to offend you," said the young man.

"You couldn't," she retorted calmly, and resumed her letter. The mail-order superintendent lingered until she had completed it.

"I hear a joke the other day about a stenographer who married her boss," he said. "Before they were married he dictated to her and after—"

The stenographer rapped briskly on the bell of her machine with her pencil.

"You've heard it, have you?" "Not for some years. Isn't much business in your department this morning, is there?"

"Do you want me to go?"

"It doesn't make much difference to me," said the stenographer. "If you didn't talk or get in my light I wouldn't know that you were here."

"Well, if you don't want me to go I guess I'll stay. I like to watch you."

"No extra charge," said the stenographer. "I'm on exhibition from 9 till 5."

"Where do you go to lunch?"

"Sometimes to one place, but I often go somewhere else for a change. Where do you get shaved?"

"I shave myself."

"Do you ever talk to yourself? If you don't you might go away somewhere and try it sometime. I don't think you'd learn anything, but I'm sure you'd appreciate your conversation more than some other people do."

"You're pretty sassy, aren't you?"

"I'm just as cute as I can be, but I'm not sassy. Were you going to ask me to take lunch with you?"

"I was thinking of it."

"You've got another think coming. You'd better brace yourself for the strain. You're new to it."

"Would you order blue points?"

"Sure."

"Anything I wanted to order?"

"Certainly."

"And any place I wanted to go?"

The mail-order superintendent hesitated. "Where do you want to go?" he asked.

"I'll see where my aunt wants to go," said the stenographer. "She's more particular than I am. You wouldn't mind if I invited some one else, would you?"

"What do we want some one else for?"

"To talk to me while you talk to auntie," replied the stenographer. "Besides, he wouldn't like it if I went without him."

"I guess we'll call it off," said the mail-order superintendent as he moved away.

**THE SAME EFFECT.**



"Why doesn't he sing any more, lost his voice?"

"No, his nerve."

**Awkward.**

"You made a mistake in your paper," said an indignant man, entering the editorial sanctum of a daily journal. "I was one of the competitors at an athletic entertainment last night, and you referred to me as the well known lightweight champion."

"Well, are you not?" inquired the sporting editor.

"No, I'm nothing of the kind!" was the angry response; "and it confoundedly awkward, because I'm a coal dealer."

**Wounding Deftly.**

Bobbie—That Mrs. Castleton said something nice about you.

Mrs. Von Blumer (purring)—What was it, Bobbie?

"She said you didn't show your age."

**Couldn't Hold It.**

"Freddy, you shouldn't laugh out loud in the school room," exclaimed the teacher.

"I didn't mean to do it," apologized Freddy. "I was smiling when all of a sudden the smile busted."

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