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**THE PROBLEM OF THE APPARENT CONFLICT
BETWEEN PAUL AND JAMES**

**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity**

by

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June 1951

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FOREWORD

Such has been said and much has been written about the contrast between the letter of St. James and the epistles of the apostle Paul. Very seldom, however, is the matter treated at any length. To those who see in the seeming conflict between the apostles an opportunity to discredit the Scripture, a mere quotation of the varying texts, most often lifted free from their context, has been considered sufficient to demonstrate the "fault". To those who accept the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures and say, "The Scripture cannot be broken," there can be no conflict in the sacred Text; but the difference that exists between the writings of the two apostles, James and Paul, are often explained away in a weak manner that hints at timidity concerning the subject.

Resource material on the subject of this thesis thus became difficult to obtain, although the problem discussed is universally recognized and is deemed by Bible scholars to be of real importance. We hope that the difficulties involved in a proper understanding of the relationship between Paul and James may soon be exposed to the light of intensive research by some Bible scholar far more gifted than this writer.

we sincerely believe that it would be a tragedy to

permit any shadow to fall upon Twentieth-century Christians' acceptance or study of the inspired text of James' epistle. The epistles of Paul, in comparison with the former's brief contribution to the Sacred Text, are voluminous. They may naturally be expected to cover a far wider field of Christian theology than the one brief epistle of James. However, in the over all study of the Scriptures and of the scope and purpose of God's great revelation, particularly in searching for the solution to the universal problem of dead orthodoxy and of apathetic conduct on the part of confessing Christians, we feel that the Lord conferred a real blessing upon His children on earth by including for their benefit in the inspired Word the work of James. Presented in a way that is made dynamic by its unique approach, the epistle of James is wholly applicable to modern Christian life.

In this study of the Scriptures before us we find that the message of St. James is one that is declared also by the apostle Paul. We conclude, therefore, that the charges or suspicions concerning James' orthodoxy and the claims concerning the apparent conflict between Paul and James are frequently based more on the topics that James chose to omit from his letter than on the actual words and concepts which the apostle James proclaimed by the inspiration of God.

James' letter was the product of his own experience, fitted to the particular needs of the Jewish Christians to

whom he addressed his words. Paul's writings were similarly influenced by his own forcible experiences, and were words addressed by a missionary to his newly won flock. To this end we believe that our study of the life and the work of these two apostles must contribute to the definite understanding of the words which they wrote.

We can appreciate that the words of the Epistle of James might well be omitted from a Christian pastor's message of evangelism to a congregation that yearns for the assurance of salvation and of the forgiveness of sins. The apostle Paul's epistles are filled with the mission spirit and are particularly adaptable to such a purpose. On the other hand, we believe that to an established Christian group that is too often content to rely upon God's grace simply to overlook their coldness, too often unwilling to exercise the power of God which is theirs for the growth and improvement of the Christian life, too ready to shout "legalism" when the will and commandments of God are declared to them as the requisite fruit of a living faith, the epistle James penned brings a sorely needed message: that "faith without works is dead."

We can only marvel at the wisdom of God which chose to include in the Sacred Text both the Christ-centered evangelism of St. Paul and the inspired theme of the sanctified life found in James' account. It is our fervent prayer that Christian people everywhere may be led to study

all the pronouncements of the Scriptures, that they may be filled not only with the glory of the revelation of God's grace and of His love for men on earth, but that they may be enabled by wisdom and strength to live as witnesses to their Savior - as living testimonies to the power of the Christian faith.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

II Timothy 3, 15-17. Throughout the pages of His Holy Word, the Lord urges us not to receive such grace in vain.

Dr. F. Pieper, in his essay on "The Reconciliation of Man with God," wrote:

The doctrine of free grace is being abused even in our time. Many of our church members, instead of showing their gratitude for God's grace by being diligent in good works, are lazy and indifferent, - and still they comfort themselves with God's grace. That is a satanic delusion... This dreadful abuse of God's grace we certainly must combat.

There is another thought, however, that we must also bear in mind: The pastor and his congregation, inasmuch as they must pass judgment upon either the faith or the unbelief of the individual member, do not judge according to the faith in the heart, - for faith is something that only God can see, not the pastor or the congregation, - but they must insist that all who profess to have faith furnish proof of their faith by sanctification and good works. Indeed, all Christians always remain blunderers in sanctification and good works, but this they readily acknowledge, and with repentant hearts they not only promise to make amends, but actually strive to do so. Isn't it true that often the pastor and the congregation are to be blamed for the fault we are speaking of, inasmuch as they forget to

insist that all who profess to be Christians must also prove their faith by works?¹

We live in an age that is growing increasingly careless about its moral standards and about its principles of right and wrong. The latter days are certainly here, in which time the Lord tells us the world shall grow so very evil that, if it were possible, the very elect shall scarcely be saved. We can readily see how we must teach Christians not only how to find strength and assurance through the Words and promises of God, but also how they ought to live in God's will and in His way - avoiding that which is evil and clinging to that which is good.

The Savior's command in Matthew 28, 20 remains for His Church until the end of time: "Teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." As Christians and as Christian pastors, we are challenged by the very times in which we live to search out the whole counsel of God and to expound it without fear or favor before all men.

If this study may in any way contribute to such a program, we should be very grateful. Our grateful heart readily acknowledges the contribution this study has already made to our own wisdom and determination to live and to preach the whole counsel of God. To Him alone be the glory.

P Ph S

¹What is Christianity? and Other Essays (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), pp. 94-95.

CENTRAL

AN APPARENT CONFLICT

PART I

AN APPARENT CONFLICT

John Dewey

It will be seen, I think, that the main object of this work is to show that the two positions are not only compatible but that they are in fact identical. The main object of this work is to show that the two positions are not only compatible but that they are in fact identical. The main object of this work is to show that the two positions are not only compatible but that they are in fact identical.

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John Dewey

Chicago, Ill.

CHAPTER I

AN APPARENT CONFLICT

The major problem that exists in our study of the epistles of Paul and the Epistle of James centers about the relationship of works to the Christian faith and to salvation. The problem becomes apparent immediately when we set down the words of James and the words of Paul.

Says James:

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by his works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.¹

On the other hand, Paul writes:

What shall we say then that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.²

If we isolate these words from their context and study them on their face value, we must conclude that they are

¹James 2, 20-24.

²Romans 4, 1-5.

flatly contradictory. To this Hastings Rashdall wholeheartedly subscribes, contending that in St. James' epistle the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith is not merely ignored, but explicitly contradicted. "All sophistical evasions notwithstanding," he says, "it is impossible to doubt that the epistle attributed to St. James is intended as a protest against the use which was made of it in certain circles."⁵

Bible criticism traces the origin of such speculation concerning the seemingly varying views of Paul and James back to the early centuries of Christianity. The Epistle of James was adapted to the concepts of the Judaizers and legalists. So, however, were various passages from the letters of the apostle Paul perverted to support the views of the antinomians. Thus an apparent cleavage existed between the two apostles.

The primitive church placed the Epistle of James sometimes along the antilegomena, and sometimes even among the notha. In the Fourth Century its authority increased and the Council of Carthage (397 A.D.) pronounced it canonical. This did not settle the question of its authenticity; and at

⁵"The Idea of Atonement in Theology," quoted by Theo. Dierks in Reconciliation and Justification (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1933), p. 57.

the period of the Reformation, both its authenticity and its religious teaching were attacked by Erasmus and Cajetan (in the Roman Catholic Church), by Lucar (in the Greek church), and by Luther. In each case the question of the possible conflict between Paul and James entered into the consideration.⁴

J. Gresham Machen refers to the problem of the apparent conflict between Paul and James as "an ancient Biblical difficulty" and admits that if certain passages are lifted from their context "a contradiction could scarcely seem to be more complete."⁵

The Roman Catholic Church as such has never denied the authenticity of St. James' Epistle. Nor has it ever declared itself concerning the seeming difference between the above quoted passages. It, however, has from an early date confused the issue by its theological mix-up of Law and Gospel. In such articles as "Faith Alone No Guarantee of Salvation"⁶ and "Is Justification By Faith Alone? (Subhead: Performance of Good Works also Required by God)"⁷ the

⁴The International Encyclopedia (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1898), Vol. VIII, James.

⁵What is Faith? (New York: MacMillan Co., 1935), p. 100.

⁶Our Sunday Visitor, June 24, 1945, Religious Section, p. 1.

⁷Our Sunday Visitor, July 1, 1945, Religious Section, p. 1.

Romanists still advocates its age-old false doctrine. That the Roman Church from an early date advocated "work-righteousness" is evident from the following decrees:

If any one says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost and is inherent in them; or even that the grace whereby we are justified is only the favor of God: let him be accursed.

If any one saith that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified; let him be accursed. (Council of Trent, sess. VI, can. 11, 12.)⁸

Dr. Martin Luther's earnest rebellion against this false doctrine gives the clue to his attitude toward James. Having found and rejoiced in the freedom outlined in the epistles of Paul, Luther became bewildered when he viewed the Epistle of James. He subsequently wrote that the Epistle of James is

flatly against St. Paul and all the rest of Scripture, it ascribes righteousness to works, and says that Abraham was justified by his works, in that he offered his son Isaac, though St. Paul, on the contrary, teaches, in Romans iv, that Abraham was justified without works, by faith alone, before he offered his son, and proves it by Moses in Genesis xv.⁹

⁸The Concordia Cyclopedia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), "Works, Merits of," p. 823.

⁹Works of Martin Luther, The Philadelphia Edition (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1932), Vol. 6, p. 478.

Salvation by grace through faith was the keynote of Luther's preaching. He was repelled by the thought that works could in any way contribute to salvation. From this rejection of good work, papists draw the inference that Luther must have been a wicked man because he taught that to get to heaven, man should only believe and need not do any good works. However Luther taught that those who would be saved must have a faith "that produces love spontaneously and is fruitful in good works."¹⁰ Luther spoke of the inward man and of the righteousness of faith "which needs neither laws nor good works, nay, is rather injured by them, if a man trusts that he is justified by them."¹¹ But he also spoke of the outward man, saying that he will follow after righteousness.

Now let us turn to the second part, to the outward man. Here we shall answer all those who, misled by the word "faith" and by all that has been said, now say: "If faith does all things and is alone sufficient unto righteousness, why then are good works commanded? We will take our ease and do no works, and be content with faith." I answer, Not so, ye wicked men, not so.¹²

Luther then goes on to explain how good works demonstrate the fullness of faith.

¹⁰C. F. W. Walther, Law and Gospel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), p. 210.

¹¹Works of Martin Luther, The Philadelphia Edition, Vol. 2, p. 327.

¹²Ibid., p. 328 ff.

Luther's bitterness against the disciples of work righteousness, however, explains to a great extent his views concerning James. When he assailed the authority of James the first time, in the Leipzig Resolutions, he declared that "the style of that epistle is far beneath apostolic dignity, and by no means to be compared with that of Paul."¹³ It is significant that at the same time Luther throws up to his opponents the fact that they all hang on to this same authority, in opposition to all the rest of Scripture. From these words it would appear that the words of James had been hurled against Luther repeatedly by his papistical opponents, and that for this reason Luther rebelled against the canonical authority of the book. It was not apparent to Luther why James should write in so different a tone from the apostle Paul.

In his general view toward James, Luther never changed. According to the Tischreden, Luther bound himself to put his cap upon the head of any man who could harmonize the doctrine of James on the subject of justification with that of Paul.¹⁴ Yet at the same time, even in the Preface of A.D. 1522, Luther says: "I Praise it and hold it a good book, because it sets up no doctrine of men and lays great stress

¹³Julius Koestlin, The Theology of Luther (Philadelphia Lutheran Publications Society, 1897), Vol. I, p. 322.

¹⁴Ibid., Vol. II, p. 247.

upon God's law..." and concludes the Preface with these words:

Therefore, I cannot put him among the chief books, though I would not thereby prevent anyone from putting him where he pleases and estimating him as he pleases; for there are many good sayings in him.¹⁵

Actually, the background of legalistic training and the remarkable transformation that evidenced itself in him as a result of his discovery of God's free grace inevitably led Luther to conform closely to the teaching and the preaching of the apostle Paul. For to a large degree the influences in Paul's early life paralleled the later history of Martin Luther. What Pharasaism was to the apostle Paul, Catholic doctrine was to Luther. Both knew the harshness of the Law; both learned the sweetness of the pure Gospel call. In addition both of them had ever to be on guard against any possibility of misleading their converts concerning the fullness of God's grace. Paul among his Gentile converts and Luther among the followers of the Reformation message, both dealt and spoke to those who had "need of milk, and not of strong meat."

For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.¹⁶

¹⁵ Works of Martin Luther, The Philadelphia Edition, Vol. 5, pp. 477, 479.

¹⁶ Hebrews 5, 12-14.

Both Paul and Luther had reason to fear that the recent converts to whom they ministered might not be able to distinguish between that righteousness which is of the flesh, which is an abomination in the sight of God, and that righteousness which is accounted worthy before God as the fruit of faith. As we shall see later in this study, the apostle Paul found it necessary to warn his readers against the dangers of dead orthodoxy. Luther and his successors in the Reformation movement also found that many of their followers were tempted to turn liberty into license, and also had to speak out concerning the necessity of righteous living as the mark of a Christian life.

The problem of the exposition of justification is not, however, the only point on which the Epistle of James and the works of Paul are said to vary. Other difficulties that have been cited include the apostles' supposedly varying concepts of sin, their description of God, and the lack of emphasis regarding Christ in the epistle James wrote as compared to the Christ-centered exposition of doctrine penned by Paul.

On these points, as we shall find in this thesis, the difference lies not so much in the words that are expressed by the apostles, but rather in the scope of the writings of Paul as compared with James. Differences of belief and differences in theology between the two are unjustly adduced from what is left unsaid.

A thorough understanding of the harmony that exists between Paul and James can be achieved only by a broad study of their respective writings. A limited view might seem to indicate a conflict between the two. This thesis will, therefore, explore not only the words of the apostles, but the background of the authors and the purpose and scope of their work in so far as these factors influenced the content of their respective texts. Such a study cannot but reflect the complementary character of the epistles of Paul and that of James.

PART II

THE AUTHORS

In which we consider their life, particularly as it shaped the method and the content of their writing, their work, and the purpose of their epistles.

CHAPTER II

JAMES, THE SHEPHERD OF THE JEWS

As we have said, in order properly to understand and interpret the Epistle of James, it is important to study the identity of its author, and some of the details of the time and circumstances under which he wrote the letter. Very little can be said positively concerning the identity of this James. His only reference to his own person throughout the epistle is found in the greeting, where he identifies himself as "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."¹ The remaining facts must be assembled from the numerous references to various James' in the New Testament and from the interpretation of the early Christian fathers.

Two schools of thought have arisen on the point of the identity of James. Both schools immediately exclude from consideration James the Elder, one of the Twelve, because he had been slain by Herod.² The one school of critics identifies the author of the Epistle of James with James the Less, the son of Alphaeus, also one of the Lord's disciples. The chief reason for their emphasis on this

¹ James 1, 1.

² Acts 12, 2.

point seems to spring from their desire to establish the canonicity of this epistle. The second school identifies this James as one of the "Brethren of Jesus."³ This school holds that the author was converted after Jesus' resurrection and became a leader among the Christians at Jerusalem, even though he never became an apostle.⁴

After reviewing the various arguments in favor of these two views, we are inclined to accept the conclusion of Dr. W. Arndt that James the Less and James, the brother of Jesus, are one and the same person.⁵ This conclusion was first stated (in writings which are extant) by Jerome in the fourth century, and was later accepted by St. Augustine.⁶

Our conclusion that James, the writer of the epistle, is the same James who is called the brother of Christ and is also one of Jesus' disciples is based upon a number of considerations:

1) The expression "brethren of Jesus" does not necessarily imply a uterine relationship. It is frequently

³ Matthew 13, 55-56; Mark 6, 3.

⁴ Arthur C. McGiffert, The Apostolic Age (New York: Chas. Scribner and Sons, 1899), p. 549 ff.

⁵ Introduction to the New Testament (St. Louis: Concordia Himes Co., no date given), cf. The Epistle of James.

⁶ John Davis, Dictionary of the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1942), "Brethren of Jesus."

used in this period to denote cousins, or other close relatives.⁷ James the Less, the son of Alphaeus, may well have held this relationship to Christ. His mother is referred to in the Scripture as Mary, the wife of Clopas,⁸ who has frequently associated with the mother of Jesus and seems to have borne a close relationship to her. In John 19, 25 she is called Jesus' mother's sister.⁹ The fact that Mary should here be called the wife of Clopas and the wife of Alphaeus entails no difficulty. The two names, Alphaeus and Clopas, are derived from the same Hebrew and Aramaic original. In his Lexicon, Thayer says of Alphaeus:

He seems to be the same person who in John 19, 25 (cf. Matthew 27, 55; Mark 15, 40) is called κλωπᾶς after a different pronunciation of the Hebrew "פֶּלֶן" according to which פ was changed to κ, as פֶּלֶן פֶּלֶן κ , II Chronicles 30, 1.¹⁰

2) The fact that James was a cousin of Christ (and not a true brother) would also help to explain the peculiarity that Jesus committed His mother into the care of His disciple John when He hung suspended on the cross.¹¹ If

⁷R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1931), p. 513 ff.

⁸Matthew 27, 55. Cf. also Mark 15, 40; Luke 24, 10.

⁹Compare Matthew 27, 55; Mark 15, 40.

¹⁰R. C. H. Lenski, op. cit., p. 517 f.

¹¹John 19, 25-27.

James had been a uterine brother, it would definitely have been his responsibility to care for his mother Mary. But because of the close spiritual bond that existed between Jesus and John, and since James' own mother was still living, it is understandable that Jesus would entrust His mother to the care of John.

3) It is charged by those who claim that James the Just was the brother of the Lord that James was converted after Jesus' resurrection.¹² In this connection it is interesting to study the passage in the apocryphal Gospel according to the Hebrews, which seems to indicate that James had accepted Christ before the Savior's death and resurrection. James is said to have sworn that "he would not eat bread from that hour qua biberat calicem Domini, until he should see Him rising from the dead."¹³ Schaff uses this passage to demonstrate James' piety even before his conversion. He, however, changes the reading "Domini" to "Dominus" and applies the words "qua biberat calicem Dominus," to the Lord's drinking of the cup of His Passion. Schaff admits, however, that if the earlier reading (Domini) is correct, the writer of this Gospel definitely indicated

¹²Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1920), Vol. I, p. 234 f.

¹³Ibid., p. 235.

that James had partaken of the Lord's Supper on the night before the Savior's death, and that he was already a believer and, undoubtedly, an apostle. If we accept James the Just to be James, the disciple of the Lord, this passage holds no difficulties. In either instance, it would appear that James here gave evidence of his faith. Certainly there would be no reason for an unbeliever or scoffer to make such a serious oath.

Although this Gospel according to the Hebrews cannot be considered as absolute proof, lacking the authority of the Scripture itself, yet it must be accorded respect because of it being one of the oldest and, by far, the least fabulous of the apocryphal writings.

4) The chief difficulty in adopting and upholding the position which we have stated is that after the Lord had called James the Less into the discipleship, Scripture mentions that Jesus' brethren had not accepted Him as the promised Messiah.¹⁴ However neither instance in which the Scripture records this fact gives the names of the "brethren" thus cited. Since it was customary in that day to apply the term "brethren" also to a wider relationship, it is not necessary to hold that James was among these brethren of the Lord who rejected Christ's Messiahship.

¹⁴John 7, 5; Mark 3, 31 compared with 3, 21.

5) The fact that James was one of the twelve apostles as well as a close relative of Christ, according to the flesh, would also help to explain James' immediate ascendancy to a place of authority in the Jerusalem church, and the fact that the Lord's disciple Peter held James as an equal.¹⁵ An acceptance of James as one of the twelve would also simplify the interpretation of Paul's words: "Other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the brother of the Lord."¹⁶ It would certainly seem that the apostle Paul was here referring to James as one of Christ's immediately chosen ones, for as such, it appears, Paul honors him.

Although we accept this position, we do not claim that it can be positively proved to the satisfaction of all. The identity of James has been a question throughout the centuries, and will certainly not be established conclusively now unless new data is discovered on the subject. However, to us the evidence here given is as conclusive as any other possibilities that may have been presented. On these grounds we have endeavored to reconstruct the background of James' life and to study its influence upon his inspired writing.

The story of James' life may be drawn in part from the

¹⁵Acts 12, 17.

¹⁶Galatians 1, 19.

references made to him in the Scripture and in part from the picture of the generally prevailing conditions of his day. Lenski suggests that James and his family lived with Mary, the mother of Jesus. The fact that Joseph is not mentioned in Jesus' later life might indicate that he no longer lived. This would suggest the possibility that the two Mary's made their home together.¹⁷ At least it seems apparent from the Gospel text that these two families were closely associated. Thus James and his brothers grew up in close contact with Jesus. That the boy Savior made a great impression upon these children during their early life cannot be doubted. Already here James undoubtedly developed a great affection and admiration for Jesus.

Concerning James' early life and his education we have no knowledge. Since in this study it is our purpose to show the influence of his background upon the style and the method of James' presentation, the following expression by Eidersheim might be considered irrelevant, but it casts as much light as any source upon the training of the apostle.

If we might venture on a general characterization, we would infer from the Epistle of St. James, that his religious views had originally been cast in the mould of Shammai. Certainly, there is nothing of the Hillelite direction about it, but all to remind us of the earnestness, directness, vigour, and

¹⁷R. C. H. Lenski, op. cit., p. 515.

rigour of Shammai.¹⁸

Without a doubt James was raised in the Old Testament Hebrew philosophy. He was a child of his times.

The crucial period of James' background, however, would seem to center during the period of his discipleship under Christ and his subsequent elevation to leadership in the Church at Jerusalem. James was called with the other disciples early in Jesus' ministry.¹⁹ With them he was instructed by the Savior with divine care. At the same time he was an eye witness of Jesus' wonderful works and an ear-witness of His mighty discourses on varied topics. Like the other disciples, James was moved to faith in Christ's divine nature and mission by Jesus' ministry,²⁰ but he did not understand the full glory of Jesus' Word and work until His resurrection.²¹

The fact that James was a disciple of the Lord and closely related to Him bespeaks an intimate relationship between the two. This relationship was underscored by a special revelation of Christ after His resurrection to this same James, a fact which was noted undoubtedly by

¹⁸Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann's Publishing Company, 1943), Vol. I, p. 251.

¹⁹Matthew 10, 1-4.

²⁰Matthew 16, 16; John 6, 68 f.

²¹Matthew 16, 21 ff., Luke 18, 31 ff., 24, 25ff., 44 ff.

others as well as by Paul.²²

We believe the author of the epistle assumes in his readers both a knowledge of his identity and a recognition of his closeness to the Savior (both in relationship and in thought), beginning his letter with the brief but significant words: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."²³ This, then, explains James' failure to repeat the many Gospel promises in his epistle and his omission of references to the person and life of the Savior. He assumed that his readers would understand his words on the basis of their Gospel faith and that they would interpret them in the light of the author's identity and his devotion to the Christian cause and the Christian life.

Naturally the content and the tone of James' letter was shaped also by his office in the New Testament Church. That James was a loyal believer in Jesus' Messiahship is testified by his presence with the believers in Acts 1, 14. As early as 44 A.D., James assumed a position of prominence in the Church at Jerusalem.²⁴ When Paul appeared before the Council at Jerusalem in 50 A.D., he recognized James as one of the pillars of the Church.²⁵ The account of the

²²I Corinthians 15, 7.

²³James 1, 1.

²⁴Acts 12, 17.

²⁵Galatians, 2, 9.

Council apparently indicates that James was the presiding officer at the conference.²⁵ Again after his third missionary journey, Paul reported formally to James in Jerusalem.²⁷

Hegesippus, cited by Eusebius, acquaints us with the fact that James, who obtained the surname of the Just, governed the church of Jerusalem along with the other apostles. Eusebius adds that James was the first to hold the episcopate of Jerusalem (Jerome says for 30 years); and both he and Josephus give an account of his martyrdom.²⁸ Concerning the character of James during this period this same Christian historian, Hegesippus, who wrote about 170 A.D., is thus quoted by Eusebius:

He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary (of the priests). He never wore woolen, but linen garments. He was in the habit of entering the temple alone, and was often found upon his knees, and interceding for the forgiveness of his people... and indeed, on account of his exceeding great piety, he was called the Just.²⁹

The Talmud concurs: "James was so eminent among the Jews that they designated him to be a mighty man (or, a leader of the people)."³⁰ Summarizing the traditional views of

²⁵Acts 15, 12 ff.

²⁷Acts 21, 18.

²⁸The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Co., 1913), James, Epistle of, p. 902.

²⁹S. L. Bowman, Historical Evidence of the New Testament (New York: Easton and Mains, 1905), pp. 323-324.

³⁰Ibid., p. 324.

James, Dr. Philip Schaff writes:

Legends gather around the memory of great men and reveal the impression they made upon their friends and followers. The character which shines through the James' legends is that of a loyal, zealous, devout, consistent Hebrew Christian, who, by his personal purity and holiness, secured the reverence and affection of all around him.⁵¹

Thus again the identity of the author of the Epistle of James lends understanding to the words he has penned. His personal character and his position of responsibility and leadership among Jewish Christians certainly entitled him to write words of admonition and advice without equivocation. He speaks as a father to children, taking for granted that they remember past instruction and counsel, and proceeds with the definition of those rules for practice which are the essential mark of the Christian life.

Finally, the Epistle of James must be read and evaluated on the basis of the circumstances of its writings, the nature of its readers, and the conditions existing in the world and in Palestine at the time of its authorship. There seems to be no reason to doubt that James addressed his epistle to Christians of Jewish extraction. He refers to them as "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad."⁵² Various critics agree that the letter was addressed

⁵¹Op. cit., pp. 258-259.

⁵²James 1, 1.

particularly to Jewish Christians who lived outside of Palestine, and especially outside of Jerusalem and Judea. John Schaller, in his introduction to the books of the Bible, makes the point that James "is certainly speaking to Christians belonging to well-established churches."³³ Of these there were many thousands,³⁴ who were exposed to many trials of their faith, a fact which imposed upon them the necessity of steadfastness and of patient endurance in the Way of Life. The letter undoubtedly was written from Jerusalem, at that time the center of Christianity. That is attested to by Dr. Schaff, who points out:

The Christian communities appear not as churches, but as synagogues, consisting mostly of poor people, oppressed and persecuted by the rich and powerful Jews. There is no trace of Gentile Christians or of any controversy between them and Jewish Christians. The epistle was perhaps a companion to the original Gospel of Matthew for the Hebrews as the first epistle of John was such a companion to his Gospel. It is probably the oldest of the epistles of the New Testament.³⁵

The latter statement we accept despite the fact that it is challenged by other historians and critics, who see in James' Epistle allusions to various of Paul's

³³The Book of Books (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), p. 230.

³⁴Acts 21, 22.

³⁵Op. cit., p. 270.

writings.⁵⁶ They place the time of writing sometime in the 60's.⁵⁷

As has been said, the times in which James lived and during which he wrote were days of unrest, days that threatened an ominous future. The newly grounded faith of the Jewish Christians was to be severely tried. On the other hand, these were days for the Jewish Christians of enjoyment of their newly found liberty from many of the restraints of the Mosaic law. The danger was ever present that the Jewish Christians would abuse their new-found liberty and turn it into license to commit all manner of evils. Human nature was no different then than now, and it would swing easily as a pendulum from extreme to extreme. May we not adduce that some of the strength of the Judaizers lay in this very fact that they could point out instances of "extremism" in the lives of the Christians? To such a group the apostle James might well address such words regarding the sanctified life as are recorded in his epistle. Taking for granted their knowledge that "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit,"⁵⁸ James might well speak admonishingly to them of

⁵⁶ Compare James 1, 12 and 2 Timothy 4, 8; 2, 5 and I Corinthians 1, 28; and especially 4, 5 and Galatians 5, 17.

⁵⁷ John Schaller, op. cit., p. 251.

⁵⁸ Matthew 7, 17.

the fruits of faith without terming them so, simply hail-
ing them as the necessary manifestations of a living faith.³⁹

This, then, is the background of James' life and of his
epistle which we must consider as we study his inspired
words and search out their divine truths. Even as God led
and inspired St. Paul to define the principals of Christ's
teaching through his epistles to Christians, Gentile as well
as Jew, so the Lord inspired the apostle James to inscribe
these words in His Holy Book as an admonition not only to
Jewish Christians of his day, but to Christians of every
age who are tempted by Satan, the world, and their own
flesh to translate Christian liberty into license, to live
a life devoid of consecration and of Christian piety.

³⁹James 2, 17 ff.

CHAPTER III

PAUL, MISSIONARY TO THE GENTILES

When we have viewed the life and the position in the Church that shaped the writing of St. James, we cannot but see the tremendous contrast as we study the background and the purpose of the epistles of St. Paul.

Compared to the inadequate record of James' life still extant, there is a wealth of material concerning St. Paul's life and his spiritual development. Any brevity that is herein apparent in regard to Paul's life and work is due not to a proper esteem of its importance in the shaping of his exposition of Christian doctrine, but rather it is due to a desire not to elaborate on any subject that is so well-known and understood that it requires no special emphasis.

Paul summarizes his life-history as Saul of Tarsus (to the time of his conversion) in these words:

Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.¹

Particularly significant in Paul's background was his experience as a student of religion and theology in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, who represented Pharassism at its

¹Philippians 3, 5-6.

best.² Paul undoubtedly received the finest instruction possible in the religious education of the Hebrew people. He learned to know the Law from the more spiritual and more sympathetic side. Although Pharasaism in Christian circles is always considered in an evil light in view of the Pharisees' rejection of Christ, the order was considered outstanding in its day.

Eight of the outstanding characteristics of the party of the Pharisees as we see them today were:

1. They constituted the nucleus of the religious and academic aristocracy.
2. They taught that the soul is immortal. Hence there is a resurrection from the dead, and a future reward and punishment.
3. They believed in the existence of angels and spirits, good and bad.
4. They were predestinarians almost to the verge of fatalism. Yet they asserted that man has a free will and that he is morally responsible.
5. They coordinated the Oral Law (Tradition) and the Written Law (Old Testament) as joint rules of faith and practice.
6. They magnified traditional Judaism and made it the basis of a vast system of minute laws which were to regulate all life in Israel. Man was reduced to a legal machinery.
7. They tried to gain salvation by works. This externalized their entire religious and moral life.
8. They confined their activities mostly to the

²Acts 22, 3.

synagogue. They were strong religious and political leaders.³

The young Saul undoubtedly showed the same personal characteristics that marked the later Paul. Intellectually he was highly gifted and a deep thinker. He became ardently devoted to a cause once he had made it his own. His will power was enormous. These very characteristics which later so abetted his ministry evidently caused him deep concern and unhappiness during the period of his Pharasaical training. He was extremely zealous for the Law, but his experience with it, instead of bringing him rich satisfaction, left him restless, impotent, and conscience stricken. For a man consumed by intense zeal and marked by acute moral insight, living "in all good conscience" in the Law, this failure of his faith to bring him peace and contentment must have been a tragedy. His own disheartening battle with the Law is almost universally recognized in Romans 7. The Law, which was his standard of high practice and from which he expected salvation, galled his freedom, convicted his innocence, quenched his power, and denied him peace. Although he kept the Law meticulously with Pharasaical ardor, he could not achieve the feeling of fellowship with

³Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942), p. 27.

God. The Law had made him its slave.⁴

At the same time the essential features of Pharasaism asserted themselves in Paul's mind and life - the dogmatic assurance that the traditions of the fathers was the whole truth and that it was folly to expect any new revelation, its externalizing of a man's duty toward God, its manifest glorying in good works, and its legalistic hardness - these things gripped the young Saul, threatening the very life of his soul.⁵ Thus Paul could later both preach and write of the two dangers inherent in work-righteousness: Callousness and despair.

Such a man the Lord chose as His ambassador to the Gentile nations. Saul, the Pharisee, the spectator at Stephen's death, the persecutor of the Church, became Paul, the chosen vessel of the Lord. The choice was in accord with divine wisdom - excellent. Who in the Jewish nation could better understand and battle the legalism and the work righteousness of the Gentile peoples than Paul, trained in legalistic ways, experienced in the futility of seeking peace and salvation through the Law or through works?

Having seen the hand of God and having heard His voice on the road to Damascus, Paul best summarized the experience

⁴Chester Warren Quimby, Paul for Everyone (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1944), p. 11-14.

⁵James S. Stewart, A Man in Christ (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, no date given), p. 58.

of his conversion in his letter to the Corinthians: "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."⁶ Paul likened his unique experience to the great "Let there be light" of creation's dawn. Without a doubt his conversion was by far the most important and formative experience of Paul's life. A. T. Robertson says:

All sorts of theories have been advanced to explain away the inevitable meaning of the whole story that Paul saw the risen Jesus and heard His voice. No epileptic fit, no sunstroke, no swoon, no flash of lightning can explain what occurred. The career of Saul as persecutor is stopped, and at once. No possible motive for a voluntary change on Saul's part can be imagined. He was seized upon by Jesus, to whom he surrendered on the spot, and his whole life turned about in exactly the opposite direction. It is an epoch in the history of Christianity.⁷

Throughout his life Paul marvelled at the great mercy and love that God showed him in electing and calling him to be numbered with the apostolic missionaries.

But the mark that chiefly influenced Paul's ministry was his confidence that the Gospel he preached was direct from God. In His own divine wisdom and according to His own divine way, the Lord chose to declare the Gospel truths to Paul not through human messengers, but directly. Paul

⁶II Corinthians 4, 6.

⁷A. T. Robertson, Studies in the New Testament (Nashville: Sunday School Board Southern Baptist Convention, 1915), p. 154.

himself testifies to this fact in Galatians 1, 11 - 19:

But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man: for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Paul was a man of volcanic emotions. We can only imagine as the full glory of the Gospel was poured into his heart how he reacted to the memory of his former creed. Certainly his new knowledge of the love of God and the perfect liberty of God's children must have filled him with determination to break in the hearts of others the power of the Law and the legalistic faith of works. Paul did not discard the Law, for he recognized that it had something noble in it. He saw, however, its powerlessness to save. He saw as one of its functions the revelation of sin; he saw though, too, that the Law actually promoted sin in the rebellious human heart. He saw the Law as a temporary

expedient;⁸ he saw as its purpose to prepare the way for the coming of the Christian revelation.⁹ Stewart says:

Hence Paul's working policy was not first a course of the Law and then a course of Christianity - but Christianity straight away for every man. Nothing could be more explicit than the clear-cut alternatives presented to the Galatians: either the law, or Christ - you cannot have both. A Christianity cramped in its action by the accoutrements of legalism was as little fit to face the world as David in Saul's armour was fit to face Goliath. And any Christianity which patterned itself after the law was virtually denying the finality of Jesus... 'Of all the stars,' says Holtzmann, 'which fell to earth in the mighty firmament-shaking experience of Paul's conversion, the law was the greatest.' What need was there of stars, when the full noonday glory had come!¹⁰

Without a doubt Paul's experience under the Law and the pattern of legalism in his youth contributed in great measure to his intense feeling against work-righteousness.

In addition to his personal experience as a man in search of salvation, it was his work as a missionary that gave content to his thought. Paul's preaching and his epistles were delivered by a missionary. He had to speak and write to the needs of the people. The religion of the law had failed when he put it to the test in his own life. The religion of the Gospel met the test when he took it into the Roman world. It is natural, then, that Paul in

⁸Galatians 3, 17 ff.

⁹James S. Stewart, op. cit., p. 108ff.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 118.

his epistles would stress the Gospel truths of grace and mercy and faith and salvation, for he was addressing "new-born babes" who required "the sincere milk of the Word" that they "might grow thereby."¹¹ Harris Franklin Hall says:

The lofty ideals of Christian love and the sublime confidence in what man might become as suggested to the Corinthians were not the products of a visionary dreaming in his ivory tower. His picture of sin drawn for the Romans was not the work of a bankrupt idealist or a misanthropic pessimist. In the parlous of Corinth and Ephesus he had looked into the depths of man's depravity and seen the power of sin; and in the men of these same cities he saw what his Gospel could do.¹²

Paul was called by God as a missionary to the Gentiles while James was the spiritual leader of an established flock. Paul was chosen to outline to men the full truths of the Gospel, James was selected to pen instructions for the Christian life. Paul's letters were read by people who had not been instructed fully or at length in the message of grace, James' epistle was dictated to and read by people in whom he assumed a firm foundation of faith and of Christian knowledge. View, then, the life and experiences of the two men, the one trained gradually over a period of years in the precepts of the Christian faith and the

¹¹ Peter 2, 2.

¹² According to Paul (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1945), p. 17.

Christian life, while the other - with a background of fervent Pharasaism - was suddenly overwhelmed by the power of God and captivated by the mysterious divine revelation of God's abundant grace, and you cannot expect them to pen their epistles from the same perspective. To compare Paul's letters with that of James in a cold, hard manner, isolating their words from their life, their position, and their purpose is to do both apostles an injustice.

Both men were dedicated to the service of God, both penned their messages under the inspiration of God. We do well, then, to study the words of both prayerfully to see "what is that good and gracious will of God" which they declared.

PART III

THE CONCEPTS OF THE EPISTLES

In which we consider the teachings of Paul and James on the various matters in which they have at times been considered "in conflict."

CHAPTER IV

OF SIN

The essential teachings of the Scripture, "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation,"¹ begin with the study of human sin. This presupposes a knowledge of God and a realization of His identity and His eternal will. The picture of salvation is most beautifully developed in a study of Christ and in the doctrine of objective justification. Salvation applied to the human heart leads us finally to study the Scriptural exposition of subjective justification and the resulting sanctification of God's reclaimed children. This is the general order we shall follow, then, in the study of the writings of Paul and James.

What is the origin of sin? For our purposes here, it is not necessary for us to trace the fall of the angels or the downfall of man's first parents. A knowledge of the historical origin of sin among men is presupposed both in the letter penned by James and in the epistles of Paul, who speaks of Adam's fall only briefly. In their writings the two apostles are chiefly concerned with the origin and power of sin in the individual man.

In his opening chapter James says:

¹II Timothy 3, 15.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.²

James properly traces the origin of sin to the depravity of the human heart. Even in the Christian heart (these words were addressed to Christians), the Old Adam lives to draw the soul away from God. Every sin is the outcome of an evil desire, the manifestation of man's complete depravity. To this the apostle testifies again in the fourth chapter:

From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain... Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?³

Matthew Henry comments on these words:

Neither the devil nor any other person or thing is to be blamed so as to excuse ourselves; for the true origin of evil and temptation is in our own hearts. The combustible matter is in us, though the flame may be blown up by some outward causes... And therefore 'if thou scornest, thou shalt bear it,' Proverbs 9, 12.⁴

James continues his exposition of sin with these words:

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin."⁵

Again he speaks of sinners as those "convinced of the Law as transgressors" and adds, "For whosoever shall keep the

²James 1, 13-14.

³James 4, 1-2. 5.

⁴Commentary (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, no date given), Vol VI, Exposition of James, Chap. 1, vv. 13-18.

⁵Chapter 1, 15.

whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."⁵ The concept of sin outlined by James conforms with the whole revelation of the Scriptures on this point, summarized by St. John: "Sin is the transgression of the Law."⁷

That sin takes two forms, sins of commission and sins of omission, is also demonstrated by James. The apostle speaks of sin as "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness" in Chapter 1. He says, "In many things we offend all," James 3, 2. He warns in his epistle against cursing, and swearing, against a false reception of God's Word, against evil thoughts and actions toward one's neighbor, against murder, against adultery, against love of money, against grudging, and against envy and strife, cataloguing the various acts of offense outlined in the Ten Commandments. But on the other hand, James also warns: "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin," James 4, 17.

And what is the result of sin? The apostle says: "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."⁸ He shows emphatically that the friendship of the world (a life of sin)

⁵Chapter 2, 9-10.

⁷I John 3,4.

⁸Chapter 1, 15.

is enmity against God and therefore separates the sinner from God's grace.⁹ The apostle James thus reiterates the ageless teaching of God that sin leads only to greater moral deterioration - and, finally, to the loss of the soul.

How does this compare with the teachings of the apostle Paul? The latter makes frequent references to sin, outlining its origin, its character, and its deadly effect. St. Paul calls sin by various names: disobedience, trespasses, unrighteousness, wrong, etc., but his concept of sin never varies. Like the writings of St. James, the epistles of Paul emphasize the Scriptural concept of sin and of its damning effect.

St. Paul speaks of the depravity of mankind in these words: "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."¹⁰ This is graphically illustrated also by Paul's description of the Gentile world's idolatry, sensuality, and immorality.¹¹ That this depraved nature exists in every child of man, that he felt its power and being in his own body and life, Paul shows when he confesses, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."¹² "As it is written, There is none

⁹ Chapter 4, 4-8.

¹⁰ Ephesians 4, 22.

¹¹ Romans 1, 18-32.

¹² Romans 7, 18.

righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."¹³ "(Ye) were dead in trespasses and sins."¹⁴

The apostle Paul, like James, speaks out against a host of sins in his epistles. Paul spoke more freely than James concerning the relation of the Law to sin. He pointed out that the Law is not the real cause of man's sin, because the Law is essentially "holy, righteous, good." But this holy and righteous, good and spiritual, Law became "the occasion" of sinning. St. Paul insists upon the value of the Law, though, in that it reveals sin and shows its heinousness.¹⁵ Thus, negatively, the Law prepares the way for leading men to Christ as their only Rescuer. Thus the apostle agrees with the testimony of St. James that all men are "convinced of the Law as transgressors." There is no conflict between them on this point.

Nor is there any difference between the two apostles when they speak of sin's horrifying results. Like James, Paul demonstrated that sin is not merely something that man does: it is something "that took possession of him, something the man was, something that turned him into an

¹³Romans 3, 11-12.

¹⁴Ephesians 2, 1.

¹⁵Romans 3, 20. 7, 7.

open enemy of the God who loved him."¹⁶

Paul emphasizes that sin brings a heavy penalty. He pictures an outward penalty: "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,"¹⁷ but points to far worse inward results. Sin torments the conscience: "O wretched man that I am!"¹⁸ It delivers the will into abject slavery: "The good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do."¹⁹ It destroys fellowship with God, so that sinners are "alienated,"²⁰ and "without God in the world."²¹ Sin hardens the heart, blinds the judgment, and warps the moral sense: "God gave them over unto a reprobate mind."²² And finally, sin destroys life itself: "The wages of sin is death."²³

Thus both apostles agree in their estimate of sin's overwhelming gravity. Through it all, even where sin is regarded as an external force waiting to take advantage of human nature in its depravity, there is no blurring

¹⁶James S. Stewart, op. cit., pp 103-107.

¹⁷Galatians 3, 7.

¹⁸Romans 7, 24.

¹⁹Romans 7, 19.

²⁰Colossians 1, 21.

²¹Ephesians 2, 12.

²²Romans 1, 28.

²³Romans 6, 23.

of the fact of personal accountability. Principalities and powers may lie in wait, but in the last resort man's is the choice, man's the responsibility, and man's the doom.²⁴

²⁴James S. Stewart, op. cit., p. 107.

CHAPTER V

OF GOD, CHRIST, AND SALVATION

James' lack of emphasis concerning the person and character of Christ contributed a great deal to the feeling Dr. Martin Luther expressed concerning the Epistle of James. Dr. Luther wrote:

Its purpose is to teach Christism, and in all this long teaching it does not once mention the Passion, the Resurrection, or the Spirit of Christ. He names Christ several times, but he teaches nothing about Him, and only speaks of common faith in God. For it is the duty of a true apostle to preach of the Passion and Resurrection and work of Christ, and thus lay the foundation of faith, as He Himself says, in John xv, 'Ye shall bear witness of me.' All the genuine sacred books agree in this, that all of them preach Christ and deal with Him.¹ That is the true test by which to judge all books.¹

Dr. Luther cannot be proved wrong on his charge that Christ's name and Christ's work lacks emphasis in the Epistle of James. It is apparent that the apostle assumed a thorough knowledge in his readers of the history and of the significance of Jesus' life. Here the understanding of James' identity and background plays an important part in the study of his epistle. In the same degree we must consider the identity of the readers for whom this letter was originally intended, and the purpose of the work. James, "the brother of the Lord," addressed this letter from

¹Works of Martin Luther, Philadelphia Edition, Vol. 6, p. 478.

Jerusalem, where he was a pillar in the church and probably the presiding head.² He addressed the letter to Jews who had left Jerusalem, many of whom were eye-witnesses to the glory of Jesus' life and work; all of whom were well acquainted with the eternal purpose and power of Jesus' life and office. James' work cannot therefore be compared with the Gospel accounts - or with the epistles of Paul - in its scope or purpose. The Epistle of James is often likened to the wisdom books of the Old Testament and has been called the "Book of Proverbs of the New Testament."³ It is a collection of moral precepts, covering most topics which are connected with everyday life.

The apostle Paul, himself a convert to the glorious Gospel of Christ after a period of intense persecution of the Church, addressed his epistles as a missionary to the Gentiles. Therefore he was "determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."⁴ His voluminous writings testify throughout to the love of God in Christ Jesus which has the power to transform the lives of others, even as it had called him from darkness into life.

²J. T. Mueller, Concordia New Testament with notes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), Introduction to the Book of James.

³P. E. Kretzmann, Finding Our Way Into The Bible (St. Louis: Concordia Mineo Company, no date given), p. 55.

⁴I Corinthians 2, 2.

The point of our study is not, however, concerned with the difference in the scope of the two authors' writings, but only with the seeming controversies. Here we will readily see again that there is no conflict, but rather a decided unity.

We may briefly summarize James' references to God by citing those passages which refer to Him as the eternal Father of mankind, the Giver of the Law who is able to destroy, and the Giver of saving Truth who has claimed us as His own. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,"⁵ says James, drawing the ageless picture of God the Father, Creator and Preserver of the human race. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy"⁶ adds to the picture the acknowledgment of God's government of human life. He is the great Lawgiver, who says: "Ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy."⁷ In the light of man's sin and complete depravity, God assumes the magnificent, eternal role of man's sole spiritual Benefactor: "Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth,

⁵James 1, 17.

⁶James 4, 11.

⁷Leviticus 19, 2.

that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."⁸

What then of Christ? That James associates the Savior inseparably with his view of man's salvation is apparent from the two uses he makes of the Savior's name: "A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,"⁹ depicting Jesus as equal with God and as the Lord - the Redeemer and Ruler of His children, and "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ,"¹⁰ placing the acceptance of Christ and His redeeming work squarely in the center of James' concept of faith. The references may seem to be minor - but if the concept of Christ is promoted today in the mind of the Christian reader, must these words not also have sufficed to remind these first-Century believers that the love of God was revealed in Christ Jesus?

The apostle Paul certainly goes far beyond James in his exposition of the person and the glory of God. Paul, too, pictures God as the Lawgiver, whose wrath is aroused by every transgression. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," he says.¹¹ Again he warns: "Thou... treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render... unto

⁸James 1, 1.

⁹James 1, 1.

¹⁰James 2, 1.

¹¹Romans 1, 18.

them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath."¹² To the Galatians, Paul writes: "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all the things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them."¹³

But Paul shines brightest when he pictures the love of God in Christ Jesus, when he depicts the glory of his Savior. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."¹⁴ To the Corinthians Paul also writes: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."¹⁵ The wonder of the realization of Jesus' glory and love, because it was revealed to him in such a spectacular manner, could not cease to flow from Paul's lips and pen. He could not help but rejoice repeatedly over "the love of God in Christ Jesus, my Lord." To Gentile converts who had not seen or known the Savior, Paul's inspired writings were the power for their own recognition of Christ's love; and it was a delight to Paul to draw the full portrait of Jesus' glory. "I am not ashamed of the

¹²Romans 2, 5-8.

¹³Galatians 3, 10.

¹⁴I Corinthians 3, 11.

¹⁵I Corinthians 15, 3.

Gospel of Christ," he said, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."¹⁶ Christ Jesus was always for Paul the center and the heart of his preaching, man's one and only Hope in the battle of life. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"¹⁷ expresses Paul's constant reaction to the knowledge of Jesus' great love.

Here, then, there is a wide divergence in the scope of the writings of the two apostles. The epistles of both, verbally inspired by God, have been shaped by the hand of God. Both have a place in the sacred Text. They may be as unlike in their scope and purpose as the Lamentations of Jeremiah are from the Song of Solomon, but, so long as they compliment one another and show no conflict, they must be studied and expounded side by side as the revelation of Him who said: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."¹⁸

And what of the doctrine of salvation itself (objective justification)? Paul's epistles, which are evangelistic throughout, are filled with the good news of

¹⁶Romans 1, 16.

¹⁷I Corinthians 15, 55-57.

¹⁸Matthew 23, 20.

man's reconciliation with God.¹⁹ The epistle of James is not an evangelistic book, but that does not say that it is not evangelical.

The apostle Paul wrote:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.²⁰

In this reference to the "law of the Spirit of life" we recognize the equivalent of James' usage of the term "law of liberty."²¹ Dr. C. M. Zorn wrote: The law of liberty is the Gospel, through which God has drawn us to His holy will and made us holy. By this "law of liberty" shall the regenerated Christians be judged on the last day; not by the law of Moses, from which they have been released.

Am Gericht des Juengsten Tages sollen wir gerichtet werden nach Massgabe der Regel und Ordnung, in welche Gott uns aus Gnade um Christi willen gesetzt hat: in der will Gott uns finden. Und welches ist diese Regel und Ordnung? Dass wir als buszfertige Suender gerecht sind durch den Glauben an Jesum Christum und unserem Glauben erwiesen haben dadurch, dass das Evangelium unser Denken, Reden und Tun herrschenderweise bestimmt hat, und bestimmt hat also, dem zu folgen, was das von Gott durch Mose gegebene Gesetz als den Willen Gottes uns zeigt. Matt. 23, 31-40; Rom. 5, 31; 7, 22-25; Hebr. 8, 10-12; I John 5, 1-4.²²

¹⁹II Corinthians 5, 18 ff.

²⁰Romans 8, 1-2.

²¹James 1, 25.

²²Der Brief Des Jakobus (Zwickau Saxony: E. Klaerner, 1922), p. 40.

Dr. Zorn sees here, in James' "law of liberty" a definite Gospel, a Gospel that grants liberty through Christ Jesus, just as St. Paul writes: "Ye are called unto liberty."²³

Dr. Zorn also notes James' reference to the Christian's certainty of salvation through the "law of liberty." He interprets James' reference to the Christian:

Dass er ein vor Gott aus Gnaden wiedergeborener gläubiger Christ ist und von dem 'Gesetz der Freiheit' geleitet und regiert wird... dass er also frei ist vom Gericht, welches ueber die Ungläubigen ergehen wird.²⁴

The apostle Paul penned a host of beautiful passages on the subject of objective justification; but no words can depict more briefly or beautifully the glory of God's plan of salvation than this picturesque reference to the "law of liberty." God has broken the power of the old Law, which binds and enslaves; He offers to all men a new law - "the law of liberty" - offering freedom from sin and guilt, freedom from death, and freedom from the power of the devil.

To this concept of salvation the apostle Paul agrees in many passages, saying, for example, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by

²³ Galatians 5, 13.

²⁴ Dr. C. M. Zorn, op. cit., p. 42.

Jesus Christ."²⁵ And again, St. Paul refers to Christians as children of freedom in his analogy of Sara and Agar, where he says: "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."²⁶ In the very first verse of the chapter succeeding this illustration, the apostle Paul repeats this concept of salvation: "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."²⁷ Twelve verses later the same apostle underscores his concept of salvation, saying: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty."²⁸

R. C. H. Lenski says concerning this seeming problem between Paul and James:

The great mistake is to see in this nomos of James only law and no Gospel, and thus to make James a moralist, a preacher of works without faith. We reproduce the anarthrous noun by translating: 'what is complete law,' namely that of liberty. The modifiers should prevent us from making this mistake. The Mosaic code cannot be 'what is law complete,' for this code was done away with (Galatians 3, 17-19); nor was this law connected with 'liberty' (genitive of relation or of quality). The Mosaic law made slaves (Galatians 4, 21-31, Hagar, Ishmael). We must note that James does not use the word "Gospel." Here he wants a comprehensive term that will include the Old Testament Scriptures plus all the preaching of Jesus and of His Apostles and thus he coins this expression: 'what is complete law, namely one of true liberty.' - - To look

²⁵II Corinthians 5, 17-18.

²⁶Galatians 5, 21-31.

²⁷Galatians 5, 1.

²⁸Galatians 5, 13.

closely into this 'law' means to believe in Christ and to live in Christ. The whole business of making James a Jewish legalist in conflict with Paul is deplorable and has helped to produce low opinions about this noble elder and his magnificent letter.²⁹

Dr. Martin Luther's misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the phrase "law of liberty" contributed to his unflattering view concerning the epistle. Dr. Luther plainly understood this as a reference to the Mosaic law, for he says: "(James) calls the law a "law of liberty," though St. Paul calls it a law of slavery, of wrath, of death and of sin."³⁰ We cannot accept Dr. Luther's interpretation and consequent judgment of James, but we can understand it in the light of the fact cited before, that these words of James were so often thrown up to him by his opponents. He was consequently blinded to the real beauty that lies in the apostle's words. Luther was simply introduced to James from the wrong direction, a poor introduction from which he never recovered.

We have here outlined the essence of the mutual exposition of James and of Paul concerning salvation. A far greater and more detailed exposition of Paul's powerful preaching and written declarations on the subject could be

²⁹The Epistle Selections of the Ancient Church (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1936), p. 469.

³⁰Works of Martin Luther, Vol. VI, p. 479.

given here, but the points that have been recorded in this chapter are sufficient to demonstrate the harmony of doctrine that existed between the missionary to the Gentiles and the leader of the church at Jerusalem. That is the purpose of this thesis - to underscore the unity, even the similarity of expression, which actually exists on this point which has been considered a "problem."

James and Paul agree: that God in Christ has freed mankind from the curse of sin and the power of the old Law by Jesus' fulfillment of that Law. The shackles of death have been broken by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ Jesus on Calvary's cross. God has given to all believers the assurance of new and unending life (a life of spiritual peace on earth and of eternal peace in heaven's home) by the Savior's triumphant resurrection to life on Easter morning. Slavery and fear are ended - liberty and freedom are the heritage of all men if they will by faith accept this work of God.

CHAPTER VI

OF INDIVIDUAL JUSTIFICATION

The crux of the apparent conflict between Paul and James lies in the question: how are the merits of Christ imparted to the human heart? The ageless question of the young man in Jesus' day still demands an answer: "What must I do to be saved?" As the words of Scripture answer, we believe and confess that "whosoever believeth in Him (Christ) shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

Faith saves. But that leaves the question: what is faith? Here lies the basis for an understanding of James and of Paul - as we study the characteristics and the marks of saving faith.

James emphatically claims that not all faith saves. There is a difference between faith and faith. First, then, we should study what type of faith it is which does not save.

The apostle says: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone... Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble."¹ This, then, is faith that does not save. It is the type of faith that even the devils have: an intellectual understanding and acceptance of God, a merely mental apprehension

¹James 2, 17. 19.

of the facts about Christ. Such faith involves no acceptance of these facts as a gift of God to one's own soul. Of that type of faith Matthew Henry writes:

If thou contentest thyself with a bare assent to articles of faith, and some speculations upon them, thus far the devils go. And as their faith and knowledge only serve to excite horror, so in a little time will thine.²

On this point Dr. F. Pieper writes:

There are people who believe that they have this (saving) faith; yet their so-called faith is not wrought by the Holy Ghost, but is pure fiction... Since this matter is of such great practical importance, Luther, our Lutheran Confessions, and our Lutheran dogmatists were continually bent on describing the marks of both a fictitious and of the true faith, the work of God in man. They were impelled to do this by the fact that the papists defined faith as a mere knowledge of the history of Christ and stamped a sinner's sincere trust in the forgiveness of sins merited by Christ, that is, in the atonement of Christ, as "presumption" (praesumptio). (Cf. Decrees of the Council of Trent, sixth session.) The Roman theologians declared faith to be merely an act of the intellect and not at all of the will. Indeed they went so far as to assert that faith, considered as an act of the will, is a monstrosity and a chimera (monstrum et chimaera).

Against this error our Lutheran Confessions and all our old Lutheran teachers, from Luther down to Hollaz, contended that true faith, which is wrought by the Holy Ghost, is not merely a matter of the intellect, but also of the heart and will... This truth Luther emphasizes in all his writings when he describes the true faith wrought by the Holy Ghost. Unremittingly does he inveigh against the papistical delusion that faith is not the inward

²Op. cit., James 2, 14-23.

If James had been writing after the terminology had become fixed, what he would have said is that although a man is justified by faith and not at all by works, yet one must be sure that the faith is real faith and not merely intellectual assent like that of the demons who believe and tremble.⁶

At other places in his epistle James likewise speaks of faith which is false. Some scholars have urged the necessity of seeking a definition of faith which is large enough to accommodate all the allusions to faith which are made in James. G. B. Stevens quotes Beyerslag, who summarized James' meaning as "the conviction of the reality of supersensuous facts and blessings (as in Hebrews 11, 1)."⁷ But Stevens contends:

This overlooks the fact that faith has many sides and phases... The use of the word 'faith' varies according to the phase of the subject under consideration and the special aim of the writer in the different passages.⁸

Thus James points to "doubting and wavering faith"⁹ and says that it will not receive anything from the Lord. A double-minded man is "one who halts between faith and unbelief."¹⁰ The Lord Jesus agrees in this matter, saying: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the

⁶Ibid., p. 205.

⁷Theology of the New Testament (New York: Chas Scribner and Sons, 1899), p. 290.

⁸Ibid., p. 290.

⁹James 1, 6.

¹⁰J. T. Mueller, Concordia New Testament with Notes, on James 1-8.

one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."¹¹

A faith which is half-hearted clings still to the lure of Satan and of evil; the heart, then, cannot have been committed in faith to God.

In James 2, 1 the apostle exhorts readers not to join with their faith in Christ partiality to the rich. The passage seems to refer to Christ's warnings concerning the danger of a love of riches. "Faith" here seems to imply fidelity to the principles Jesus had enunciated on this subject. We are reminded of Jesus' saying: "He that is of God heareth God's Words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."¹² Here again is a warning against the danger of an intellectual faith, which involves apprehension of certain facts, but no more. It would seem to imply that if the readers' faith was a saving faith, that that faith would involve a change in the whole nature of a man - a new hatred of sin, a new hunger after righteousness; which change, of course, is not the work of man, but a gift of God.¹³

James speaks clearly on the subject of the application

¹¹Luke 16, 13.

¹²John 8, 47.

¹³J. Gresham Machen, op. cit., p. 203.

of the merits of Christ to the human heart. He speaks of salvation as God's gift to the sinner. "Of His (God's) own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."¹⁴

"Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls."¹⁵ "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."¹⁶ "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."¹⁷

Here, then, is the essence of saving faith, according to James. We were all lost in sin, yet God intended not to leave us in this state but to bring us forth as new creatures by means of His saving Word. That James actually refers to regeneration in the first quoted passage is beyond question, because he adds "by means of the Word of Truth." The Greek genitive makes the expression definite, while the absence of the articles in the Greek text leaves the nouns qualitative. There is only one "Word of Truth," i.e. the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation.¹⁸ That

¹⁴James 1, 18.

¹⁵James 1, 21.

¹⁶James 1, 22.

¹⁷James 1, 25.

¹⁸R. C. H. Lenski, The Epistle Selections of the Ancient Church, p. 445.

God called us to faith and "begat us" to spiritual life by His own choice and not on the basis of our merits is stated in the apostle " " : (God) having willed (it). Thus the Triglotta says:

James has spoken... concerning regeneration, namely, that it occurs through the Gospel... When he says that we have been born again by the Gospel, he teaches that we have been born again and justified by faith. For the promise concerning Christ is apprehended only by faith, when we set it against the terrors of sin and of death. James does not, therefore, think we are born again by our works.¹⁹

Again the apostle refers to the "engrafted (or implanted) Word, which is able to save your souls." The Word is implanted into our hearts by God, there to grow and to bear fruit. It is the "power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth,"²⁰ as Paul calls it. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."²¹ Paul also refers to the Word of God as "the Gospel of salvation"²² and speaks of it as that "by which also you are saved."²³ Here then is another sure reference to the character of saving faith: the wholehearted acceptance of God's Word, "which is able to save your souls."

¹⁹p. 191.

²⁰Romans 1, 16.

²¹Romans 10, 17.

²²Ephesians 1, 13.

²³I Corinthians 15, 2.

When James speaks of the "doers" of the Word, he is often falsely accused of advocating "work-righteousness." When we examine James 1, 22, we cannot but see that here again reference implies faith. "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." R. C. H. Lenski explains:

James is writing to Jewish Christians. They might easily fall a prey to the fault of the Jews. For the Jews were noted for punctiliously attending the synagogue and there hearing the parashas and the haphtharoth of the Old Testament as they were read by the rabbi, but that was all. As to really apprehending the Gospel contained in that Word, embracing it by faith and thus leading a new life, this these hearers missed almost entirely. Their doing of the Word was formal, legalistic, self-righteous, and thus an abomination unto God.

The gravest wrong is constantly done to James, even by evangelistic preachers, when they regard James as a preacher of morals who insists on works to save the soul. They imagine that he follows the teaching of the Jewish rabbis. Yet James has just said: 'Receive the implanted Word!' (v. 21) and no one receives it except by faith. He has just said that this Word saves your souls, and it does that by faith. Moreover, it is the gravest misconception to imagine that being a doer of the Word is to be a doer only of the works. To be a doer of the Word is to do God's will, and His Word and His will is 'that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life' (John 6, 40). To do the Word is to believe it for the saving of the soul. The Word ever asks for faith and intends to implant faith.²⁴

Analyzing the words of James brings understanding. To be a hearer of the Word of God and not a doer does not refer

²⁴R. C. H. Lenski, op. cit., p. 455.

to a believing hearer, but rather to an indifferent listener. It means a person who hears, but does not believe - that is a person without saving faith. With this Paul agrees when he says, as quoted above, that faith must come from the hearing. The concord of Scripture emphasizes Jesus' own definition of saving faith:

"Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it" by accepting and cherishing it in their hearts.²⁵

Finally, we may study James' reference in the first chapter (v. 25) to those who look "into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein." James says: "This man shall be blessed in his deed." We have above (in the previous chapter) referred to the "law of liberty" as the glorious Gospel of Christ, which frees us from the slavery of sin and from the works of the Law. Thus we might paraphrase this verse: "Whoso looketh into the Gospel, and continueth therein... this man shall be blessed in his deed." Here again is the essence of saving faith - that we not merely glance at the Gospel, that we not only attain an intellectual knowledge of God's Word; but that with our whole heart we "continue therein."

Thus we conclude:

James, in his epistle to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, does not teach salvation by

²⁵Luke 11, 28.

works, nor does he proclaim a different way to heaven from that preached by Paul, Romans 3, 24... James, a servant of Jesus Christ, chap. 1, 1, teaches salvation by grace through faith. Chapter 1, 17-18, he speaks of regeneration through the Word by the grace of God. In verse 21 he speaks of the Word as being able to save, which Word must be received, or believed. His object is to show that the faith that justifies is also sanctifying faith and that a faith which does not sanctify does not and cannot justify. As Paul, Romans 6, Galatians 5, 13, and Peter, I Peter 2, 16, and John, I John 3, 1-10, warned against an abuse of the doctrine of justification by faith, so James raises his voice in protest against the same fatal error, that smug self-satisfaction that constantly harps on the fact that one has faith while he is unwilling to follow after that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, Hebrews 12, 14. He has in mind conditions similar to those existing in the congregation at Sardis and Laodicea, Rev. 2, 5, conditions which undoubtedly threatened the very life²⁶ of the congregation to which he addressed his letter.

Paul's epistles, of course, approach the matter of the justification of the sinner by faith from a different viewpoint. While James, who saw the dangers of the abuse of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, was warning Jewish Christians against dead orthodoxy, the apostle Paul, who had experienced the tremendous change from the reactions of a Pharasaical education to the glorious nature of a child of liberty, was addressing Gentile Christians concerning the magnificence of God's gift to men. In his later epistles the apostle Paul also

²⁶Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. III, No. 9, "Sermon Study on James 2, 10-17", pp. 686-687.

had to deal with the opposition and the corruption of the legalistic Judaizers. Therefore his epistles emphasize the freedom of the concept of salvation from the tenets of the Law.

Thus the emphasis of Paul's declarations concerning justification are properly summarized in the passage:

"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."²⁷ And again: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law."²⁸

The basis for true faith rests in the Word of salvation. The apostle wrote to the Corinthians: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."²⁹ James S. Stewart says: "Here we discover the basal belief which Paul shared with the primitive community. Here was the Church's message from the very day of its birth. Christ died for our sins."³⁰ There is no room in the inspired theology of Paul for any merit or worthiness on the part of the sinner redeemed, for God "justifies the ungodly." Faith relies simply upon the Gospel promises, as Paul instructed the

²⁷Ephesians 2, 8.

²⁸Romans 8, 28.

²⁹I Corinthians 15, 3.

³⁰A Man in Christ, p. 228.

jailer at Philippi: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."³¹

The object of justifying and saving faith is therefore the Gospel of Christ. Paul says: "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."³² This conforms with the word of Christ: "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."³³ It in no way conflicts with James' exposition: "Receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls."³⁴

The apostle Paul speaks of this justifying and saving faith as knowledge, assent, and trust or confidence. "By," "through," and "in" such faith, a man is justified.³⁵

In Paul's language there is a sharp antithesis between "works" and "faith." Paul says: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."³⁶ Again he writes: "If by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no

³¹Acts 16, 31.

³²Galatians 2, 20.

³³John 6, 47.

³⁴James 1, 21.

³⁵Romans 3, 22, 28, 30; Galatians 2, 16; Philippians 3, 9; etc.

³⁶Romans 4, 5.

more grace."³⁷ Paul does not differentiate between "good works" and the "works of the Law"; for good works are the works of the Law, having their norm in the Law of God, i.e., the will of God. Works of the Law must correspond with the Law itself, and since the Law requires works of love, therefore the works of the Law are the works of love, i.e., good works.³⁸ This Law Paul definitely excludes from justification: "Apart from the Law the righteousness of God hath been manifested, ... even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe."³⁹ Justification is bestowed "freely,"⁴⁰ or - as Moffatt translates the word: "for nothing." It is an undeserved gift of God.

The basis and the motivation for Paul's emphasis of this theme clearly lies in his own recollection of the damning effect of "work-righteousness" upon his early life. He had tortured and abused himself in the vain hope of winning the favor of an angry God. He knew the torment of conscience and the flagellation of the soul that such a concept created. From this he was determined to spare his

³⁷Romans 11, 6.

³⁸Cf. Theo. Dierks, Reconciliation and Justification, p. 53 f.

³⁹Romans 3, 21. 22. (R.V.)

⁴⁰Romans 3, 24.

readers.⁴¹ That in no way detracts from the certain fact that these words were inspired by God for our learning - God chose Paul to write on the subject so that there could be no basis for any misunderstanding of His free offer of grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

That Paul, however, also knew the dangers of a superficial confession of faith is also evident in his epistles. Romans 6 stresses this fact: that the Christian is dead to sin. Paul thanks God that the Roman Christians "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered unto them," adding, "being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."⁴² In this passage again the term "obedience from the heart" toward "that form of doctrine which was delivered unto you" clearly refers to faith in the Gospel's invitation - reminding us of James' plea to his readers to be "doers of the Word." Again, when Paul wrote to the Galatians that they were "called unto liberty," he warned that they should not "use liberty for an occasion to the flesh."⁴³ The apostle recognized the danger that some of his hearers and readers might see in his proclamation of the Gospel merely an

⁴¹Cf. James S. Stewart, op. cit., Chapter III, p. 81 ff.

⁴²Romans 6, 17-18.

⁴³Galatians 5, 13.

opportunity to greater sin - and from that he wished to guard them.

The harmony of Paul and James to this point cannot be denied. A conclusive study of their teaching concerning justification cannot, however, be made without a word on James 2, 24. There the apostle James writes: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone." At first blush these words would seem to be directly contradictory to the passages of Paul quoted above.

The Triglotta says:

Nor is any other passage supposed to be more contrary to our belief. But the reply is easy and plain. If the adversaries do not attach their own opinions concerning the merits of works, the words of James have in them nothing of disadvantage. Wherever there is mention of works, the adversaries add falsely their own godless opinions, that by means of good works we merit the remission of sins; that good works are a propitiation and price on account of which God is reconciled to us; that good works overcome the terrors of sin and death; that good works are accepted in God's sight on account of their goodness; and that they do not need mercy and Christ as Propitiator. None of all these things came into the mind of James, which the adversaries, nevertheless, defend under the pretext of this passage of James.⁴⁴

Our church fathers rightly accepted the words of James as an exposition of the "distinction between dead and living faith."⁴⁵

44P. 189.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 191.

Saving faith is neither

an easy matter, as the adversaries dream (as they say: Believe, believe, how easy it is to believe! etc.), nor a human power (thought which I can form myself), but a divine power, by which we are quickened, and by which we overcome the devil and death. Just as Paul says to the Colossians, 2, 12, that faith is efficacious through the power of God, and overcomes death: 'Wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God.' Since this faith is a new life, it necessarily produces new movements and works. (Because it is a new light and life in the heart, whereby we obtain another mind and spirit, it is living, productive, and rich in good works.) Accordingly, James is right in denying that we are justified by such a faith as is without works. But when he says that we are justified by faith and works, he certainly does not say that we are born again by works. Neither does he say this, that Christ is partly our Propitiator, and partly our works are our propitiation. Nor does he describe the mode of justification, but only of what nature the just are, after they have already been justified and regenerated... Here to be justified does not mean that a righteous man is made from a wicked man, but to be pronounced righteous in a forensic sense, as also in the passage Romans 2, 13: "The doers of the Law shall be justified." As, therefore, these words, "The doers of the Law shall be justified," contain nothing contrary to our doctrine, so too we believe concerning the words of James.

James commends only such works as faith produces, as he testifies when he says of Abraham, 2, 21: "Faith wrought with his works." In this sense it is said: "The doers of the Law are justified," i.e., they are pronounced righteous who from the heart believe God, and afterwards have good fruits, which please Him on account of faith, and accordingly, are the fulfillment of the Law.

These things, simply spoken, contain nothing erroneous.⁴⁶

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 191-193.

Paul, too, reminds his readers: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."⁴⁷ That is the essence of James' message - that faith makes a man alive to God: that the power of God that saves instills into the human heart also the motivation and power for righteous living. A faith that lacks the latter power is a superficial faith, a faith of the head - but not of the heart, a faith that deceives.

Therefore we conclude that between the teaching of James and that of Paul there is perfect agreement concerning the justification of sinners. When the question is asked: "What is the ground of justification before God?" James answers "the engrafted Word; the law of liberty" and Paul replies: "faith in the Gospel promise." And when the inquiry is asked, as in James 2, "What kind of faith is acceptable to God?" both answer, Not a dead faith, but "faith which worketh by love;"⁴⁸ in other words, operates to produce good fruits through love, which is "the fulfilling of the law."⁴⁹

⁴⁷Romans 6, 11.

⁴⁸Galatians 5, 6.

⁴⁹Romans 13, 10.

CHAPTER VII

OF SANCTIFICATION

In defining James' definition of faith, we have already laid the basis for our study of his exposition on the Christian's sanctified life. This epistle, addressed to Christianized Jews, is chiefly intended to stress the importance of the sanctified life. "So speak ye, and so do ye," says James, "as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty."¹ The core of this apostle's letter is that Christians must give evidence to men by their conduct and speech of the power of faith in Christ Jesus.

To this end, chapter after chapter unfolds this purpose of the Christian life. The first chapter speaks of the believer's cross and urges patient endurance. It warns that Christians should not blame their weaknesses on God, but should rather look to Him for strength and for relief, for "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."² The apostle exhorts to faithfulness to the Word of God as the answer to the Christian's every need. Finally, the apostle lays down three rules of sanctification: bridle your tongue,

¹James 2, 12.

²James 1, 17.

show charity to your fellow men, and keep yourself unspotted from the world.

Chapter two reiterates that a living faith is a faith active in love. True faith must teach us not to be "respecters of persons," but rather to be charitable and respectful of the rights of all men.

The third chapter of the epistle warns Christians against rashly or arrogantly reproving others and again speaks of the great need of guarding against the abuse of the tongue. The closing verses of this chapter outline the characteristics of those who are truly wise: they are pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy, and makers of peace.

James continues his exhortation in chapter four with a warning against covetousness, intemperance, pride, detraction, and rash judgment of others. He warns his readers not to be overly confident in the good success of worldly business; but rather to be mindful of the uncertainty of earthly life, which should prompt them to commit themselves and all their affairs to the providence of God.

In the final chapter of this brief epistle, James rebukes those who oppress the poor, he urges patience in affliction, and he outlines once more the proper behavior both in times of adversity and in times of prosperity. The concluding verses suggest that each man confess his

faults and each be mindful of his opportunities in a spirit of Christian love to help his brother overcome his faults.

It is evident from this brief exposition of the teachings of the epistle why James' writing is often referred to as "the Book of Proverbs of the New Testament." The epistle is filled with the wisdom of a true child of God, the sage advice of a righteous leader of the New Testament Church.

That these works of sanctification are pleasing to God James makes evident throughout. They flow inevitably, James says, from the character of justifying, saving faith. Nowhere in Scripture are works tied more closely to faith than in the epistle of James - who, looking at the faith of Abraham, could not but say: "By works was faith made perfect."³

Dr. P. E. Kretzmann calls James' writing "the Epistle of Holy Living." Great stress, he says, is laid upon works, not apart from faith, but as both the proof and the fruit of faith.⁴

Commenting of James 3, 17-18, Matthew Henry writes:

O that you and I may always be guided by such wisdom as this! that with Paul we may be able to say, "Not with fleshly wisdom, but in simplicity and godly

³James 2, 22.

⁴Popular Commentary, New Testament, Vol. II, Introduction to James.

sincerity, by the grace of God, we have our conversation." And then true wisdom will go on to sow the fruits of righteousness in peace, and thus, if it may be, to make peace in the world. That which is sown in peace will produce a harvest of joys. Let others reap the fruits of contentions, and all the advantages they can propose to themselves by them; but let us go on peaceably to sow the seeds of righteousness, and we may depend upon it our labour will not be lost.⁵

We are reminded of Jesus' words: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."⁶

The Triglotta also refers to the lesson of sanctification in James:

He is speaking of works which should follow faith. There it is well said: He who has faith and good works is righteous; not, indeed, on account of the works, but for Christ's sake, through faith. And as a good tree should bring forth good fruit, and yet the fruit does not make the tree good, so good works must follow the new birth, although they do not make man accepted before God... In this sense it is said: "The doers of the Law are justified," i.e., they are pronounced righteous who from the heart believe God, and afterwards have good fruits, which please Him on account of faith, and, accordingly, are the fulfillment of the Law.⁷

Such works justify the Christian, and the Christian faith, before men. Christ Himself, in speaking of the Final Judgment, refers to the works of the believer in His testimony before all men to the existence of faith in the

⁵Op. cit., Vol. VI, James.

⁶Matthew 5, 16.

⁷P. 191.

heart of the redeemed.⁸ Reminiscent of Jesus' words is James 2, 15-16:

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needed to the body; what doth it profit?

Again James demonstrates his point that works justify before men when he says: "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works."⁹ The marks of the Christian life are the testimony before all men to the power and the glory of the life in Christ.

When he speaks in his epistles of the sanctified life, the apostle Paul shows himself in full accord with the earlier epistle of James. Paul, too, views the sanctification of the Christian as the natural outgrowth (or fruit) of true and saving faith. "We are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life,"¹⁰ Paul writes to the Romans. Later in the same chapter the apostle adds:

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus

⁸Matthew 25, 31-46.

⁹James 2, 18.

¹⁰Romans 6, 4.

Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.¹¹

When Paul uses the word "justify" he means "to pronounce righteous," not "to make righteous." But the very pronouncement of God does, in point of fact, have the effect of making a man something he was not before. It is certain that justification carries life with it. It puts life into the man who receives it. It is life. It is God's justifying verdict itself which sanctifies (for sanctification is the fruit of God's gift of faith). It makes a new creature, with a new heart, in a new world. It translates the soul from the domain of the flesh and all evil spirits into the realm of God in Christ. "To be justified means that a man stands up and lives, really lives at last, erect and clean and in his right mind before God."¹² This is that gift of God known as sanctification. It flows not from the Law, but from faith, the free gift of God. It is the mark of every believer.

While justification is complete and therefore admits of no degrees, the apostle Paul points out in his epistles that sanctification, on account of the remaining sinfulness

¹¹Romans 6, 11-13.

¹²James S. Stewart, op. cit., p. 258.

of the flesh, is never complete or perfect in this life.

Paul writes:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.¹³

Again he speaks of sanctification as gradual and susceptible of constant growth:

... But speaking the truth in love, (we) may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.¹⁴

This truth, which is prominently impressed upon believers throughout the Scriptures, Paul holds to be of the greatest importance for the proper understanding of every Christian's duties.

The fact that sanctification in this life is gradual and incomplete must not be abused by the Christian in such a manner that he makes no effort towards sanctification. On the contrary, it should constantly serve to move the believer, Paul writes, to strive after holiness in the fear of God. While perfect holiness is impossible in this life,

¹³Philippians 3, 12-14.

¹⁴Ephesians 4, 15-16. Cf. also Colossians 2, 19.

it should nevertheless be the Christian's supreme goal.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."¹⁵ It is God's demand that the believer "cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."¹⁶

Negatively, Paul tells his readers, the believer should put off every sin; positively, Paul says, he should put on every virtue; for only a life of perfect holiness becomes him as a saint of God in Christ Jesus, - "that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."¹⁷ The life of faith, according to Paul, means a life of absolute self-denial and of self-mortification.¹⁸

Paul's exposition on the sanctified life, as these words clearly show, dispel the charges that have been levelled against him of "antinomianism."¹⁹ The charge of legalism against James is far better known than the charge of antinomianism laid to the apostle Paul. Yet Bible critics have found occasion to base the latter charge against St. Paul on the grounds of the "anti-legalistic character" of

¹⁵I Thessalonians 4, 3. Cf. also I Cor. 1, 30; II Thess. 2, 13.

¹⁶II Corinthians 7, 1.

¹⁷Colossians 1, 10. Cf. Phil. 4; Col. 3; Eph. 5-6; Romans 12-15.

¹⁸I Corinthians 9, 25. 27.

¹⁹James S. Stewart, op. cit., p. 257.

his epistles. Paul's critics have badly overlooked the power of which Paul speaks in that "faith which worketh by love." They miss his point: Paul says that the power for righteousness of life, for a fulfilling of the Law, does not lie in sinful man; but the fact that such power is lacking does not say that the Law is useless or that it does not apply to human life. Paul says that a life aimed at conforming to the Law does not save; only faith saves - but that is not anti-nomianism. He clearly urges his readers to exercise themselves in righteous living, but by the power of God, by the power and grace the Lord affords to the regenerated heart.

Thus this charge, like all others, against the inspired writings of Paul and James, fails in the light of the apostles' own words. Our study has confined itself to a comparison of the epistles of Paul and James. A further study of all the words of Scripture would show that the exhortations of these two apostles not only agree together, but that they are in perfect accord with the whole will and the commandments of Christ and with the clear message of His revealed Word.

Paul and James warn against the same sins, they urge the same virtues, and they strengthen their readers in righteousness of living. Side by side they warn against weakness and point their readers to the strength which flows from the Word. There is no conflict here, but a beautiful

cohesiveness as these inspired writers outline the path,
noting also the obstacles in the way, of righteousness
of life.

CONCLUSION

"The Scripture cannot be broken!" An army of critics has attacked the inerrancy of Scripture only to find itself confounded by the power of God and the magnificent strength of His Word.

The charges of a conflict between Paul and James are only a small part of the Enemy's master plan to confuse and to deceive the children of men. However the joy of seeing even here the words of God confound the charges of evil men bring joy and comfort to every Bible student's heart. The deep and powerful unity of the Scriptures, no matter how displayed, motivates greater faith and steadfastness in the believing soul.

We cannot pretend that this thesis represents an exhaustive study of every possible charge against Paul and James. It does, however, treat all the major doctrines which are common in their writings. Our study cannot but conclude: "The Scripture cannot be broken!"

James, the brother and disciple of the Lord, the head of the Church of Jerusalem, penned a stirring epistle against dead orthodoxy. His readers' knowledge of his background and of his personal righteousness gave additional power to his call to sanctification through the power of a living faith.

Paul, the mighty convert to Christ, the first and

greatest missionary to the Gentiles, wrote exhaustively of the love of God in Christ Jesus, the saving hope of every sinful man. Paul's experiences, too, were known to the various congregations to whom he wrote and could not but underscore the power and the glory of his epistles.

Together the apostles present the whole panorama of Christian existence. Starting with the depravity of man and God's call to repentance and faith in Christ Jesus, they draw the portrait of the Christian life, dedicated to Christ Jesus, filled with righteousness by the power of God.

May God, who revealed Himself and His will for us in His holy Word in order that "we might believe," strengthen us by His grace that we may show forth in our hearts and lives that we indeed are "the children of light."

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for

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