

Figure: James 2. (RSV).

Text: James 2:26 ... "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead".

Topic: Christian goodness.

Proposition: Regardless of the relationship of salvation to faith and works, to be a christian one must be and is a doer of good and righteous deeds.

Sources: Critical~~ly~~ comments on James based on p. 3-19, Vol. 12, The Interpreter's Bible.

Date written: May 29, 1964.

Dates and places used:

- J-31-64 - 7⁰⁰ am - Anna, Kans. High School Senior Class - ~~Saturday~~
- 11⁰⁰ am - Montross, Colo. worship
- 6-18-64 - Olathe, Colo. 11 am
- 7-11-64 - Wyoming Army National Guard camp, Wyo. (9 people present)
Alamogordo Blanca, Colo.

Handwritten notes at the top of the page, including the date "10-15-2" and other illegible scribbles.

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Introduction:

1. Recently (may 19-21, 1964) I attended the annual convention of The Military Chaplains Association, in Chicago. At one of the evening banquets we presented a citation to comedian-actor Bob Hope, in recognition and honor of his service to the armed forces. For over 25 years he has traveled extensively throughout the world, during war and peace, accepting no pay, to entertain and lift the morale of men and women in uniform. The chaplains considered this type of patriotism worthy of recognition. In response to the presentation speech, Bob Hope made several characteristic humorous cracks. He said that he really didn't deserve the award, because he had been very lucky. Almost ever since television has been in use, he has had a show. Other comedians have come and gone, but he was among the first and has been able to stay on. To the chaplain's group which included a high percentage of catholics, he said, "On TV I've outlasted or started before such comedians as Red Skelton, George Gobel, Dean

Martin, Jerry Lewis, Jackie Gleason, Bishop Sheen..."

2. One of Hope's jokes can serve well to introduce our topic for today. "Out in Los Angeles where I live", he said, "we have two ball teams, the Dodgers and the Angels. The way people drive out there, it's a sure thing that you're going to be one or the other".

3. Hope's crack points out that just to keep alive when you're around a heavy-traffic area you've got to do something active and decisive: get out of the way. The ~~something~~ Biblical book of James, from which we read our Scripture for today, also points out how necessary it is to do something if you're going to be a christian. For the writer of this book being christian is not just ~~xxxxxxx~~ a matter of attitude, of pious prayer, of holy phrases, of acts of worship. For James, a christian lives an active life, a positive one, in which he does something good and worthwhile whenever he can.

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4. To become more familiar with James, the circumstances of its writing, its structure, purpose and lasting message; and to let something of its spirit enter and inspire our lives, are our purposes today. First, we look at

I. The pertinent facts about James.

Our facts here are actually a resume on the subject of the findings of a majority of the world's full-time New Testament scholars.

1. An ambitious but still-struggling and poor young business man at a banquet happened to be seated next to the head of the wealthy Rockefeller family. Seeking to impress Mr. Rockefeller, he turned to him, introduced himself, and said, "It happens, Sir, that our combined wealth is very impressive".

2. The writer of The New Testament book of James was convinced that the life of a christian should be very impressive. He wanted each christian so to live that any one who met him would recognize this person as a

could recognize this person as a
so to the fact that she was not
intelligent. He wanted even
this of a certain amount of
book of records was consulted that the
The matter of the New Testament

could recognize
and that she continued married to
and said "If perhaps
husband, he turned to him
looking for a person
to the head of the married
person happened to be seated next
to her and both looking at each other
in a suspicious way

New Testament schools
history of the world, a little
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The following facts about James

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a christian. If the author who wrote such a message were James the brother of Jesus, who was recognized by Peter, Paul and most all of the first-generation christians as the head of the early christian church, his views and advice naturally would have great weight with christians.

3. The traditional viewpoint for centuries has been that the author of James was indeed the brother of Jesus, the original head of the mother-church in Jerusalem. The majority of Biblical scholars of the past century and of today disagree with this view, and say that our Scripture was not written by James the Lord's brother, nor by any other James known to us by name in The New Testament. The opening words of the book are: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ". The scholars say that the name of James at the beginning of the letter should be regarded as the use after the death of James the brother of Jesus by an unknown author of the name of a great figure of the apostolic church to present and get a hearing for his views. Feeling that

results for his work. Results that
could be used to benefit and help
many of the poor children of the
years of an unknown nation of the
the heart of James the prophet of
should be regarded as the new spirit
James at the beginning of the letter
the apostle and that the name of
God and of the Holy Spirit.
The book is: "James" a servant of
God and of the Holy Spirit.
The apostle James known to us by name in the
the Holy Spirit, a prophet, not only other
scripture and not written by James
with this name and say that only
the Holy Spirit and of God's grace
method of virtuous actions of
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James the servant and brother of
of James was indeed the prophet of
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3. The traditional atmosphere

name "James" and the apostle James.
his name and grace primarily would
name of the Holy Spirit and
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of Peter, Paul and most of the
prophet of James, who has recognized
more than a message more James the
a scripture. In the apostle and

his message fitted the spirit of James, he did not hesitate to use the name of James. At the time, ~~of~~ such usage was considered neither a forgery nor dishonest, and was a fairly-common literary device.

4. Even if James, Jesus' brother, perhaps did not write this book, it does seem to reflect something of his spirit. James was known as a staunch advocate of the rites and customs of Judaism as being important for all christians. It was he whom Paul had to defeat in debate to get the church council at Jerusalem to allow Gentiles, non-Jews, to become christian without first becoming Jews. Even after this, the followers of James often seemed to look down upon non-Jewish christians as being somewhat second-rate christians. This book of James does not impart quite such a sense of the importance of being a Jewish-Christian, but it is similar to writings of the rabbis in its insistence on the details of righteous living.

5. In a sense, James is a book more in keeping with the spirit of

more to keeping with the ability of
2. It is a sense, rather than a book

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importance on the details of instructions
to managers of the reports in the
a. "manager-superior" part of the organization
also a sense of the importance of being
book of sense does not include other
colleagues second-line superiors. It is
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of sense often seems to look down
them. Even if they find the organization
superior manager that is possible.
It is a sense, not a book, to receive
the superior's consent as a condition for
that they do not have to depend on the
for any superiors. It is not a book
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the ability. It is a sense, not a book,
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2. It is a sense, rather than a book

a. "manager-superior" part of the organization
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Roman Catholicism than of Protestantism. In catholicism there is a great deal of emphasis on the necessity of good works, of merits, of living righteously, of participating in specific acts of worship, as being things necessary to being an acceptable christian. Not to do these things is perhaps to be doomed to long ages in purgatory, or even to eternal hell. In protestantism, the emphasis is on faith as the one condition of salvation. This is called "justification by faith", and means that God freely gives forgiveness and eternal life to the repentant person who puts his faith in God through Christ. The Protestant is interested in doing good things, in righteous living, in acts of worship, too; but he doesn't trade off certain amounts of these things for forgiveness, for stated years or ages in heaven. Rather, the Protestant motivation for doing good is his love for God. He desires to please God because he is grateful to and loves God. ^{Because he is} Seeking ways to please and serve God, the Protestant does acts of goodness, worship and service. Both catholicism

and protestantism are together, though, in considering the distinct, good, sacrificial, loving christian life as characteristic of the sincere christian.

6. James was written to help the christian understand what was christian in some very specific instances. Here was a small guidebook, as it were, to christians for some very specific and common circumstances of life. This was not a theological book, so few theories about God and Christ are in it. This letter probably was written somewhere between 80 and 100 a.d.. There is no indication where it was written.

7. The form of James is not that of a logical discourse which builds up an argument to a conclusion. It is diffuse and repetitious. It is often a diatribe--a frank and vigorous rebuttal against opposing views. The language of James is simple and direct so that it needs little comment by way of explaining it further. In fact some ministers have for a sermon simply read the full book in the service on a Sunday. James contains

a great deal of pre-christian Jewish material, which suggests that early Christianity and Judaism were not so far apart as they became in later history. The Jewish Scriptures were the only Bible the christians had when this was written. The Jewish Scriptures spell out a lot of the detail expected in the life of the pious Jews. James does this in a limited way for the christian. The passage which is

II. Our Scripture, James 2, gives something of the spirit and method of James, and points out a permanent message for us and for mankind through out time.

1. You've probably heard stories about inebriated gentlemen wandering home at night, taking shortcuts and falling into open graves, where the experience of seeming to be dead quickly frightened them into sobriety. A slightly different twist to this old theme is given in a story going the rounds these days. The Irishman was on his way home, happily fortified within by ample amounts of strong spirits. It was a moonlight night,

and as a good Irish tenor is apt to do, he lifted his eyes to the moon and sang. As he so wended his way home with eyes aloft, he began to cross a bridge, and about in the middle of it bumped into the railing. This ~~caused~~ him to bring his gaze from aloft to the water below the bridge. There the moon was reflected so beautifully that in his bemused condition the Irishman, looking at what seemed to be the moon below him, was heard to mutter, "How the divil did I get up here?"

2. ~~James~~ The writer of James seemed afraid that his christian readers were trying to get to heaven without quite knowing how. He set himself the task of showing them some of the particulars. "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead", he wrote in the words of what we consider our text. His book is full of advice as to just what are good works and what are not.

3. The second chapter of James, for instance (our Scripture) points to the necessity of impartiality because

the necessity of... (faint text)

3. The second chapter of... (faint text)

... (faint text) ... the second chapter of... (faint text) ...

4. ... (faint text)

... (faint text) ... the second chapter of... (faint text) ...

ones wealth or poverty, as ~~that~~ ^{the} person comes into the christian fellowship. Treat the rich person the same as you treat the poor one, he means. The chapter uses this as an illustration of a good christian attitude, ^{and} many ^{of which are defined} of which are defined in the book. Verse 14 is: "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him?" An illustration of what he means follows: "If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead".

4. There is the chief message of James, again, and the chief message of the Bible for us for this hour.

Conclusion:

1. Regardless of whether you believe good deeds are necessary before you are saved by God, or whether you think good deeds should be done mainly because you love God,

are grateful to him, and want to please him, they are characteristic of christians.

2. We rightly despise overt hypocrits, people who say they are christian but seem to make little attempt at the practice of righteousness and goodness.

3. We believe that if you would be a christian you must do your best to be a doer of good and righteous deeds. It's fun. It's safer, It's more satisfactory. It's after the example of Jesus.

example of Jesus.
more satisfactory. It's after the
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be a Christian you must do some good
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and goodness.
a prayer of the blessing of righteous-
Christianity and good to make little
habits. Goodie who say they are
5. Do righteously observe

of Christianity.
bless him, they are righteousness
are blessed to him, and want to