

Chapter 65

James and Paul not contradicting each other

"We conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law." (Paul, in Romans 3:28) "You see, then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (James, in James 2:24).

Does not the apostle James say that faith alone cannot save a man, and that faith without works is dead? Let us look at his words a moment.

Too many have with honest intent perverted them to a dead legalism. He does say that faith without works is dead, and this agrees most fully with what we have just quoted and written [from Paul]. For if faith without works is dead, the absence of works shows the absence of faith, for that which is dead has no existence.

If a man has faith, works will necessarily appear, and by faith boasting is excluded. Boasting is done only by those who trust wholly in dead works, or whose profession of faith is a hollow mockery.

"If someone says he has faith but does not have works ... can faith save him?" (James 2:14) The answer is of course, that it cannot. Why not? Because he hasn't it. Must we decry the power of faith simply because it does nothing for the man who makes a false profession of it? The fact that he has no good works--no fruit of the Spirit--shows that he has no faith, despite his loud profession. Faith has no power to save a man who does not possess it. [1]

Justification, first, last, and all the time, is by faith alone. The Christian cannot be justified by works any more than the sinner can be.

But this is not to say that works have nothing to do with faith. Faith which justifies is a faith which makes the man a doer of the law. One is not

justified by faith and works, but by faith alone which works." [2]

Notes:

1. Waggoner, Bible Echo, August 1, 1890.
2. Waggoner, Waggoner on Romans, p. 76.