extent, but absolutely, in itself: has no  
living root whereby it energizes).

**18.]** **But** (in any case of faith withont  
works, analogous to that supposed above,  
of one of you having dismissed the naked  
and hungry with mere words) **some one will  
say** (he will be liable to this reproach from  
any one who takes the more effectual and  
sensible method, of uniting faith with works),  
**Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew  
me** (not, ‘*prove to me*,’ but ‘exhibit to me’)  
**thy faith without the works** (which ought  
to accompany it), **and I will shew thee  
my faith by** (from the evidence of, out of,  
as the ground of the manifestation) **my  
works.** The whole difficulty found in this  
verse by Commentators has arisen from  
overlooking the fact that it continues the  
argument from the previous verses, and  
does not begin a new portion of the

subject. And the reason why this has been  
overlooked, is, the occurrence between the  
two of the general clause in ver. 17. The  
same mistaken person is in the Apostle’s  
view throughout, down to ver. 22: and it  
is as addressed to him, on the part of a  
chance objector to his inconsistency, that  
this saying is introduced: the **but** conveying

the opposition of an objection not  
to the Apostle himself, but to him whom  
the Apostle is opposing.

**19.]** Still  
addressed to the same advocate of faith  
only, but now directly, and not in the  
person of the speaker just introduced.  
This is better than to suppose this last  
still speaking; on account of the length  
of argumentation before, the second person

singular is dropped, and the analogy  
of the two arguments drawn from Abraham

and Rahab, both of which most  
naturally come, as the latter on any view  
does, from the Apostle himself. **Thou believest**

(better without an interrogation :  
see John xvi. 31, note) **that God is one**  
(or, ‘that there is one God.’ The Apostle  
selects, from all points of dogmatic belief,  
that one which stands at the head of  
the creed of Jews and Christians alike.  
Compare especi:l!y Deut. vi. 4; Neh. ix.  
6; Mark xii. 29, 32; Rom. iii. 30; 1 Cor.  
viii. 4, 6; ch. iv. 12); **thou doest well**  
(i.e. ‘so far is well:’ ‘it is a good faith,  
as far as it goes’): **the demons also**  
(not, the *dæmoniacs*, nor *demons in the  
possessed*, who trembled at the sacred  
Name: but simply, as usually, the evil  
spirits) **believe** (the verb is purposely used  
absolutely: not merely, ‘believe this truth,’  
but, ‘*thus far, are believers* in common  
with thyself’), **and shudder** (the word is  
used properly of the hair standing on end  
with terror. Their belief does nothing for  
them but certify to them their own misery  
“This particular, inserted beyond the  
expectation of the reader, has immense  
force.” Bengel).

**20–23.]** *Proof of the uselessness of  
faith without works, from the example of  
Abraham; introduced by a severe ant  
triumphant appeal to the objector.*  
**But** (passing on to another example which  
is to prove it even more certainly) **wilt  
thou know** (the use of **wilt thou, dost  
thou, consent to, know,** serves to shew that  
the knowledge itself is plain and palpable,  
and the resisting it can only arise from  
perversity), **O empty** (void of knowledge  
and seriousness: content with a dead and  
bootless notion) **man** (so in Rom. ix. 20),  
**that faith** (here abstract: all faith, faith  
by itself: not merely faith, in any supposed  
case) **separate from works** (here again,  
abstract; and therefore, in subordination  
to the former abstract noun, the works  
which belong to it, which might be expected  
from it) **is idle** (bootless, without result)**?**

**21.]** *The example of Abraham*. **Was  
not Abraham our father** (the Apostle and