

THE WESLEYAN HERITAGE LIBRARY
COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON
JAMES

by Adam Clarke.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

Wesleyan Heritage Publications

© 2002

A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

HOLY BIBLE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. 15:4.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments
A derivative of Adam Clarke's Commentary for the Online Bible

produced by

Sulu D. Kelley
1690 Old Harmony Dr.
Concord, NC 28027-8031
(704) 782-4377

© 1994, 1995, 1997

© 1997 Registered U.S. Copyright Office

PREFACE TO THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

THERE have been more doubts, and more diversity of opinion, concerning the author of this epistle, and the *time* in which it was written, than about most other parts of the New Testament. To enter at large into a discussion of the opinions of ancient and modern writers on this subject would tend but little to the establishment of truth, or to the edification of the reader. Lardner, Michaelis, and Macknight, have entered considerably into the controversy relative to the author, the time, and the canonical authority of this book; and to them the reader who wishes to see the difficulties with which the subject is pressed may have recourse.

This epistle, with those of Peter, John, and Jude, is termed *catholic*, καθολικη, from κατα, *through*, and ολος, *the whole*; for the application of which term Œcumenius, in cap. i. Jacobi, gives the following reason: καθολικαι λεγονται αυται, οιονει εγκυκλιοι. ου γαρ αφωρισμενος εθνει ενι η πολει, αλλα καθολου τοις πιστοις “These epistles are called catholic, universal, or *circular*, because they were not written to one nation or city, but to believers *everywhere*.”

Yet, as these epistles had some difficulty at first to get into general circulation, but at last were everywhere received, it is more likely that they obtained the term *catholic* from the circumstance of their being at last *universally* acknowledged as *canonical*; so that the word *catholic* is to be understood here in the same sense as *canonical*.

Who the writer of the epistle in question was, is difficult to say; all that we know *certainly* is, from his own words, that his name was *James*, and that he was a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus. *Two* persons of this name are mentioned in the New Testament; James the son of Zebedee, called also James the elder; and James του μικρου, *the less* or the *little one*, called the *son of Alpheus*, and *brother of our Lord*: but whether one of these, or if one of them, *which*, or whether one of the same name different from both, are points that cannot be satisfactorily determined. Michaelis, who has examined the subject with his usual ability, leaves the matter in doubt; but leans to the opinion that *James the son of Zebedee* was the author, and that this epistle was written *before* any of those in the New Testament. Other great authorities ascribe it to *James*, called the *brother of our Lord*, who was president, or bishop, of the Church in Jerusalem. Even

allowing this opinion to be correct, it is not agreed in what sense James is called our *Lord's brother*, there being *four* or *five* different opinions concerning the meaning of this term. From ^{<0135>}**Matthew 13:55, 56**, we learn that there were four persons called brethren of our Lord: “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren *James*, and *Joses*, and *Simon*, and *Judas*? And his sisters, are they not all with us?” Now, it is generally allowed that the James here is the author of this epistle, and the *Jude* or *Judas*, mentioned with him, the author of that which stands last in this collection. But with respect to the meaning of the term *brother*, as here used, it will be necessary to state the opinions of learned men:—

1. It is supposed that these were children of Joseph, by a former marriage; this is a very ancient opinion; as there is nothing improbable in the supposition that Joseph was a *widower* when he married the blessed virgin.
2. They are supposed to have been children of Joseph and his wife Mary; all born after the birth of our Lord. This is an opinion extremely probable: see some reasons for it in the note on ^{<0136>}**Matthew 13:56**; see also on ^{<0125>}**Matthew 1:25**.
3. That they were called our *Lord's brethren*, because children of Joseph by the wife of one of his brothers, who had died childless, and whose widow Joseph took, according to the Mosaic law, to raise up seed to his deceased brother. This is very unlikely, because, in this case, it would have been only requisite for Joseph to have had one male by his brother’s wife; but here we find *four*, besides several *sisters*.
4. That Cleophas, called also Alpheus, married a sister of the blessed virgin, called also *Mary*, by whom he had the above issue; and that these were called brethren of our Lord, from the common custom among the Hebrews, to term all the more immediately cognate branches of the same family, *brothers' and sisters' children*, i.e. cousins-german, *brethren*. These, therefore, being aunt’s children of our Lord, are, according to this usage, called his *brethren*. The first and second of these opinions appear to me the most probable; though most modern writers are of the latter opinion.

That of the two James’s, *James the less* was the author of this epistle, Dr. Macknight thinks, following Lardner and others, is incontestable: I shall

quote his abridgment of Lardner's arguments; but the point in question is not, in my opinion, made out by any of these writers.

“In the catalogue of the apostles, ^{<40102>}**Matthew 10:2**; ^{<40187>}**Mark 3:17**; ^{<40164>}**Luke 6:14**; ^{<40113>}**Acts 1:13**; we find two persons of the name of James; the first was the son of *Zebedee*, ^{<40102>}**Matthew 10:2**; the second in all the catalogues is called the son of *Alpheus*: one of these apostles is called, ^{<40119>}**Galatians 1:19**, *the Lord's brother*. Wherefore, as there were only *twelve* apostles, and as *James* the son of *Zebedee*, so far as we know, was in no respect related to our Lord, the apostle called *James, the Lord's brother*, must have been *James the son of Alpheus*, called also *James the less or younger*, whose relation to Christ will appear by comparing ^{<41154>}**Mark 15:40**, with ^{<41925>}**John 19:25**. In the former passage, *Mark*, speaking of the women who were present at the crucifixion, says: ‘There were also women looking on afar off, among whom were *Mary Magdalen*, and *Mary* the mother of *James the less* and of *Joses*, and *Salome*.’ In the latter passage, *John*, speaking of the same women, says: ‘There stood by the cross of *Jesus*, his mother, and his mother's sister, *Mary*, the wife of *Cleophas*, and *Mary Magdalen*:’ wherefore, *our Lord's mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas*, mentioned by *John*, is in all probability the person whom *Mark* calls *Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses*; consequently, her sons, *James* and *Joses*, were our Lord's cousins-german by his mother. And as the Hebrews called all near relations *brethren*, it is more than probable that *James* the son of *Alpheus*, who was our Lord's cousin-german, is *James the Lord's brother*, mentioned ^{<40119>}**Galatians 1:19**. Three circumstances confirm this opinion: 1. *James* and *Joses*, the sons of *Mary*, our Lord's mother's sister, are expressly called *the brethren* of *Jesus*, ^{<40135>}**Matthew 13:55**; ^{<40187>}**Mark 6:3**. 2. *James*, the son of our Lord's mother's sister, being distinguished from another *James* by the appellation of *the less*, ^{<41154>}**Mark 15:40**, there is good reason to suppose that he is the *James* whom *Mark*, in his catalogue, distinguishes from *James the son of Zebedee*, by the appellation of the *son of Alpheus*. It is true, *Mary* the mother of *James* and of *Joses*, is called the *wife of Cleophas*, ^{<41925>}**John 19:25**: but *Cleophas* and *Alpheus* are the same name differently pronounced; the one according to the Hebrew, and the other according to the Greek, orthography. 3. Of the persons called the *brethren of Jesus*, ^{<40135>}**Matthew 13:55**, there are three mentioned in the catalogue as APOSTLES: *James*, and *Simon*, and *Judas*. They, I suppose, are the brethren of the Lord, who are said, as apostles, to have had a right to lead about a

sister or a wife, &c.; ^{<4006>}**1 Corinthians 9:5**. Jerome likewise thought *James the Lord's brother* was so called because he was the son of Mary, our Lord's mother's sister; Art. *Jacobus*. Lardner, Canon., vol. iii. p. 63, says: 'Jerome seems to have been the *first* who said our Lord's brethren were the sons of his mother's sister; and this opinion was at length embraced by *Augustine*, and has prevailed very much of late, being the opinion of the *Romanists* in general, and of Lightfoot, Witsius, Lampe, and many of the *Protestants*. On the other hand, *Origen*, *Epiphanius*, and other ancient writers, both Greeks and Latins, were of opinion that James, the Lord's brother, was not the son of the virgin's sister, but of Joseph, our Lord's reputed father, by a *former wife*, who died before he espoused the virgin. Of the same opinion were *Vossius*, *Basnage*, and *Cave*, among the Protestants; and *Valesius* among the Romanists. Epiphanius and Theophylact supposed that Joseph's first wife was the widow of Alpheus, who, being Joseph's brother, Joseph married her to raise up seed to him; and therefore James, the issue of that marriage, was fitly called the *won of Alpheus*, and *brother of our Lord*.' But these suppositions might have been spared, if the ancients and moderns had recollected that near *relations* were called *brethren* by the Hebrews, and that Alpheus and Cleophas are the same names differently written; James the less, the son of Alpheus, being not only the Lord's near relation, but an *apostle*, whom, as is generally supposed, he honoured in a particular manner, by appearing to him *alone*, after his resurrection; ^{<4650>}**1 Corinthians 15:7**. These circumstances, together with his own personal merit, rendered him of such note among the apostles that they appointed him to reside at Jerusalem, and to superintend the Church there. This appointment, Lardner says, was made soon after the martyrdom of Stephen; and, in support of this opinion, observes, 'that Peter always speaks first, as president among the apostles, until after the choice of the seven deacons. Every thing said of St. James, after that, implies his presiding in the Church at Jerusalem.' Canon., vol. iii. p. 28. For example, when the apostles and elders at Jerusalem came together to consider whether it was needful to circumcise the Gentiles, after there had been much disputing, Peter spake, ^{<4450>}**Acts 15:7**, then Barnabas and Paul, ^{<4452>}**Acts 15:12**. And when they had ended, James summed up the whole, and proposed the terms on which the Gentiles were to be received into the Church, ^{<4459>}**Acts 15:19-21**; to which the whole assembly agreed, and wrote letters to the Gentiles, conformably to the opinion of James, ^{<4452>}**Acts 15:22-29**. From this it is inferred, that James

presided in the council of Jerusalem, because he was president of the Church in that city.

“Chrysostom, in his Homily on Acts 15, says: ‘James was bishop of Jerusalem, and therefore spoke last.’ In the time of this council, Paul communicated the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles to three of the apostles, whom he calls *pillars*; and tells us that, when they perceived the inspiration and miraculous powers which he possessed, they gave him the right hand of fellowship, mentioning James first, ^{<800>}**Galatians 2:9**: ‘And knowing the grace that was bestowed on me, James, Cephas, and John, who were pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.’ This implies that James, whom, in the first chapter, he had called *the Lord’s brother*, was not only an *apostle*, but the presiding apostle in the Church at Jerusalem. In the same chapter, Paul, giving an account of what happened after the council, says, ^{<801>}**Galatians 2:11**: ‘When Peter was come to Antioch, before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision.’ This shows that James resided at Jerusalem, and presided in the Church there, and was greatly respected by the Jewish believers. The same circumstance appears from ^{<4217>}**Acts 21:17**, where, giving an account of Paul’s journey to Jerusalem, with the collections from the saints in Judea, Luke says, ^{<4218>}**Acts 21:18**: ‘Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.’ Farther, the respect in which James was held by the apostles appears from two facts recorded by Luke: the first is, when Paul came to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, Barnabas took him, and brought him Peter and James, as the chief apostles. Compare ^{<44927>}**Acts 9:27** with ^{<8019>}**Galatians 1:19**. The second fact is, after Peter was miraculously delivered out of prison, about the time of the passover, in the year 44, ‘he came to the house of Mary-where many were gathered together praying; (^{<4412>}**Acts 12:12**;) and when he had declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison, he said, Go, show these things to James, and to the brethren;’ ^{<44217>}**Acts 12:17**. These particulars are mentioned by Lardner, and before him by Whitby and Cave, to show that James, the Lord’s brother, was really an *apostle*, in the strict acceptation of the word; consequently, that Eusebius was mistaken when he placed him among the seventy disciples; E. H., lib. vii. c. 12.

“That the Epistle of James was early esteemed an inspired writing, is evident from the following fact: that while the Second Epistle of Peter, the

second and third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation, are omitted in the first Syriac translation of the New Testament, (the *Peshito*,) which was made in the beginning of the second century for the use of the converted Jews; the Epistle of James has found a place in it, equally with the books which were never called in question. This is an argument of great weight; for certainly the Jewish believers, to whom that epistle was addressed and delivered, were much better judges of its authenticity than the converted Gentiles, to whom it was not sent, and who perhaps had no opportunity of being acquainted with it till long after it was written. Wherefore its being received by the Jewish believers is an undeniable proof that they knew it to be written by James the apostle; whereas the ignorance of the Gentile believers, concerning this epistle, is not even a presumption against its authenticity.

“That the converted Gentiles had little knowledge of the Epistle of James in the first ages, may have been owing to various causes; such as, that it was addressed to the *Jews*, and that the matters contained in it were personal to the Jews. For on these accounts the Jewish believers may have thought it not necessary to communicate it to the Gentiles. And when it was made known to them, they may have scrupled to receive it as an inspired writing for the following reasons: 1. The writer does not, in the inscription, take the title of an apostle, but calls himself simply *James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ*. 2. Many of the ancients, by calling the writer of this epistle *James the Just*, have rendered his apostleship doubtful. 3. As they have done, likewise, by speaking of him commonly as *bishop of Jerusalem*, and not as an apostle of Christ. It is little wonder, therefore, that this epistle was not received generally by the converted Gentiles; consequently that it was not often quoted by them in their writings. But afterwards, when it was considered that this epistle was from the beginning received by the Jewish believers, and that it was translated into the Syriac language for their use; and that Paul, though an apostle, sometimes contented himself with the appellation of *a servant of Christ*, **Philippians 1:1**; **Philemon 1:1**; and sometimes took no appellation but his own name; **1 Thessalonians 1:1**; **2 Thessalonians 1:1**; and that the apostle John did not, in any of his epistles, call himself an *apostle*; the title which the author of the Epistle of James had to be an apostle was no longer doubted, but he was generally acknowledged to be *James, the son of Alphaeus, and the Lord’s brother*; and his epistle, after an accurate examination, was received as an inspired

writing. So *Estius* tells us, who affirms that after the *fourth century* no Church nor ecclesiastical writer is found who ever doubted of the authority of this epistle; but, on the contrary; all the catalogues of the books of Scripture published, whether by general or provincial councils, or by Roman bishops, or other orthodox writers, since the fourth century, constantly number it among the *canonical* Scriptures.

“With respect to what is remarked by Eusebius, that there are not many ancient writers who have quoted the Epistle of James, learned men have observed that *Clement* of Rome has quoted it four several times; and so does *Ignatius* in his genuine Epistle to the Ephesians, sec. 10, 12, 17, 30; and *Origen* in his thirteenth Homily on Genesis, sec. 5. That it was not more generally quoted by the ancients, besides the things already mentioned, may have been owing to the following reasons: 1. Being written to the whole Jewish nation to correct the errors and vices which prevailed among them, the Gentiles may have thought themselves little concerned with it, and may have been at no pains to procure copies of it; by which means it was not so generally known among them as some other books of Scripture. 2. The seeming opposition of the doctrine of this epistle to the doctrine of Paul, concerning *justification by faith without the works of the law*, may have occasioned it to be less regarded by the most ancient writers; just as it was in later times, on the same account, rejected by Luther, who, to show his contempt of it, called it (*epistola straminea*) a *strawy* or *chaffy epistle*.

“To conclude, the authority of the Epistle of James, as an inspired writing, is abundantly established, in Mill’s opinion, by the Apostles Paul and Peter, who have in their writings many sentiments and expressions similar to those contained in this epistle; for example:—

<50103> **1 Peter 1:3:** Who hath begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

<45103> **Romans 5:3, 4:** Knowing that affliction worketh out patience; and patience experience.

<45213> **Romans 2:13:** That the hearers of the law are not just before God, but

<50118> **James 1:18:** Having willed it, he hath begotten us by the word.

<50103> **James 1:3:** Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh out patience.

<50122> **James 1:22:** And be ye doers of the law, and not hearers only,

the doers of the law shall be justified.

<5723> **Romans 7:23:** I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.

<6121> **1 Peter 2:11:** Lusts which war against the soul.

<6158> **1 Peter 5:8, 9:** Your adversary the devil; whom resist, steadfast in the faith.

<6166> **1 Peter 5:6:** Be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you.

<6140> **Romans 14:4:** Who art thou that condemnest another man's household servant?

<6148> **1 Peter 4:8:** Love covereth a multitude of sins.

deceiving yourselves by false reasoning.

<5001> **James 4:1:** Come they not hence, even from your lusts, which war in your members?

<5007> **James 4:7:** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

<5040> **James 4:10:** Be humbled in the presence of God, and he will lift you up.

<5042> **James 4:12:** Thou, who art thou that condemnest another?

<5053> **James 5:20:** Will cover a multitude of sins."

See *Macknight's* preface.

That James the less may have been our Lord's cousin-german, or even our Lord's brother by a former wife of Joseph, or even by the virgin, is perfectly possible; and that he was an *apostle*, and an eminent man among both Jews and Christians, may be readily credited; and that he was author of this epistle, is also possible: but I must still assert that we have neither decisive nor satisfactory evidence on this subject; and that it is arguing in a circle to deduce the evidence of its authenticity from the apostleship of James the less, because this person is not proved to be its author. The chief and proper evidence of its being *canonical* must be taken from the fact that it was universally received by the Church of Christ, and without scruple incorporated with those writings, which were, on all hands, allowed to have been given by the inspiration of God.

Before I conclude, I shall mention the opinion of *Michaelis* relative to the author of this epistle. "All things considered," says he, "I see no ground for the assertion that James, the son of Zebedee, was not the author of this epistle. One circumstance affords, at least, a presumptive argument in favour of the opinion that it was really written by the elder James, and at a time when the Gospel had not been propagated among the Gentiles;

namely, that it contains no exhortations to harmony between the Jewish and Gentile converts, which, after the time that the Gentiles were admitted into the Church, became absolutely necessary. Had it been written after the apostolic council of Jerusalem, mentioned Acts 15, and by the younger James, we might have expected that, at least, some allusion would be made in it to the decree of that council, which was propounded by the younger James in favour of the Gentile converts; and that the epistle would contain an admonition to the Jewish converts, to consider the Gentile converts as their brethren.”-*Introduction to the New Testament*.

The epistle itself is entirely different in its complexion from all those in the sacred canon; the style and manner are more that of a Jewish prophet than a Christian apostle. It scarcely touches on any subject purely Christian. Our blessed Lord is only mentioned twice in it, ~~scarcely~~ **James 1:1; 2:1**; but it has nothing of his miracles or teaching, of his death or resurrection, nor of any redemption by him. It begins without any apostolical salutation, and ends without any apostolical benediction. In short, had it not been for the two slight notices of our blessed Lord, we had not known it was the work of any Christian writer. It may be considered a sort of connecting link between Judaism and Christianity, as the ministry of John Baptist was between the old covenant and the new. There is neither plan nor arrangement in it; but it contains many invaluable lessons which no serious person can read without profit.

James the less was martyred at Jerusalem about A. D. 62: and the epistle is supposed to have been written a short time before his death. Though I believe it to be the work of an unknown author, not long after the ascension of our Lord, I shall follow the usual chronology, and date it in the year 61; not because I think that to be the true date, but because it is what is generally adopted.

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5569.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5563.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5553.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4065.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4289.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3821.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4420.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2409.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3163.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1001.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 810.
- Year of the CCXth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 808.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 813.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 814. -Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 373.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 109.
- Year of the Julian era, 106.
- Year of the Spanish era, 99.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 65.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 61.
- Year of Porcius Festus, governor of the Jews, 1.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 12.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 2.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews.

- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 62.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 5; or the second embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 2, or the year before the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 14.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, D.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the XIth of the calends of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the twenty-second of March, which happened in this year on the day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the IVth of the Calends of April, named by the Jews the 22d of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 29th of March.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 14.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 22.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 22, 24, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 28, 0, 0.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 1.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Cæsar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Cæsar, properly the first Roman emperor, 8.
- Roman Consuls, C. Cæsonius Pætus and C. Petronius Turpilianus.

CHAPTER 1.

He addresses the dispersed of the twelve tribes, 1. Shows that they should rejoice under the cross, because of the spiritual good which they may derive from it, especially in the increase and perfecting of their patience, 2-4. They are exhorted to ask wisdom of God, who gives liberally to all, 5. But they must ask in faith, and not with a doubting mind, 6-8. Directions to the rich and the poor,

9-11. *The blessedness of the man that endures trials*, 12. *How men are tempted and drawn away from God*, 13-15. *God is the Father of lights, and all good proceeds from him*, 16-18. *Cautions against hasty words and wrong tempers*, 19-21. *We should be doers of the word, and not hearers merely, lest we resemble those who, beholding their natural face in a glass, when it is removed forget what manner of persons they were*, 22-24. *We should look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein*, 25. *The nature and properties of pure religion*, 26, 27.

NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

Verse 1. James, a servant of God] For an account of this person, or rather for the conjectures concerning him, see the *preface*. He neither calls himself an *apostle*, nor does he say that he was the *brother of Christ*, or *bishop of Jerusalem*; whether he was *James the elder*, son of Zebedee, or *James the less*, called our Lord's brother, or some other person of the same name, we know not. The assertions of writers concerning these points are worthy of no regard. The Church has always received him as an *apostle* of Christ.

To the twelve tribes-scattered abroad] To the Jews, whether converted to Christianity or not, who lived out of Judea, and sojourned among the Gentiles for the purpose of trade or commerce. At this time there were Jews partly *travelling*, partly *sojourning*, and partly *resident* in most parts of the civilized world; particularly in Asia, Greece, Egypt, and Italy. I see no reason for restricting it to Jewish believers only; it was sent to all whom it might concern, but particularly to those who had received the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; much less must we confine it to those who were scattered abroad at the persecution raised concerning Stephen, ^{<480>}**Acts 8:1**, &c.; ^{<4119>}**Acts 11:19**, &c. That the twelve tribes were in actual existence when James wrote this epistle, Dr. Macknight thinks evident from the following facts: "1. Notwithstanding Cyrus allowed all the Jews in his dominions to return to their own land, many of them did not return. This happened agreeably to God's purpose, in permitting them to be carried captive into Assyria and Babylonia; for he intended to make himself known among the heathens, by means of the knowledge of his being and perfections, which the Jews, in their dispersion, would communicate to them. This also was the reason that God determined that the ten tribes should never return to their own land, ^{<20106>}**Hosea 1:6; 8:8; 9:3, 15-17**. 2.

That, comparatively speaking, few of the twelve tribes returned in consequence of Cyrus's decree, but continued to live among the Gentiles, appears from this: that in the days of Ahasuerus, one of the successors of Cyrus, who reigned from India to Æthiopia, over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, ^{<1788>} **Esther 3:8**, *The Jews were dispersed among the people in all the provinces of his kingdom, and their laws were diverse from the laws of all other people, and they did not keep the king's laws; so that, by adhering to their own usages, they kept themselves distinct from all the nations among whom they lived.* 3. On the day of pentecost, which happened next after our Lord's ascension, ^{<4105>} **Acts 2:5, 9**, *There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven; Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, &c.;* so numerous were the Jews, and so widely dispersed through all the countries of the world. 4. When Paul travelled through Asia and Europe, he found the Jews so numerous, that in all the noted cities of the Gentiles they had synagogues in which they assembled for the worship of God, and were joined by multitudes of proselytes from among the heathens, to whom likewise he preached the Gospel. 6. The same apostle, in his speech to King Agrippa, affirmed that the twelve tribes were then existing, and that they served God day and night, in expectation of the promise made to the fathers, ^{<4205>} **Acts 26:6**. 6. Josephus, Ant. i. 14, cap. 12, tells us that one region could not contain the Jews, but they dwelt in most of the flourishing cities of Asia and Europe, in the islands and continent, not much less in number than the heathen inhabitants. From all this it is evident that the Jews of the dispersion were more numerous than even the Jews in Judea, and that James very properly inscribed this letter to the *twelve tribes which were in the dispersion*, seeing the twelve tribes really existed then, and do still exist, although not distinguished by separate habitations, as they were anciently in their own land.

Greeting.] **χαίρειν.** *Health*; a mere expression of benevolence, a wish for their prosperity; a common form of salutation; see ^{<4152>} **Acts 15:23; 23:26;** ^{<3011>} **2 John 1:11.**

Verse 2. Count it all joy] The word **πειρασμός**, which we translate *temptation*, signifies affliction, persecution, or *trial* of any kind; and in this sense it is used here, not intending diabolic suggestion, or what is generally understood by the word temptation.

Verse 3. The trying of your faith] Trials put religion, and all the graces of which it is composed to *proof*; the man that *stands* in such trials gives proof that his religion is sound, and the evidence afforded to his own mind induces him to take courage, bear *patiently*, and *persevere*.

Verse 4. Let patience have her perfect work] That is, Continue faithful, and your patience will be *crowned* with its full reward; for in this sense is *εργον*, which we translate *work*, to be understood. It is any *effect* produced by a cause, as *interest* from *money*, *fruit* from *tillage*, *gain* from *labour*, a *reward* for *services performed*; the *perfect work* is the *full reward*. See many examples in *Kypke*.

That ye may be perfect and entire] *τελειοι*, *Fully instructed*, in every part of the doctrine of God, and in his whole will concerning you. *ὀλοκληροι*, having all your *parts*, *members*, and *portions*; that ye may have *every grace* which constitutes the mind that was in Christ, so that your knowledge and holiness may be complete, and bear a proper proportion to each other. These expressions in their present application are by some thought to be borrowed from the Grecian games: the man was *τελειος*, *perfect*, who in any of the athletic exercises had got the victory; he was *ολοκληρος*, *entire*, having *every thing complete*, who had the victory in the *pentathlon*, in each of the *five* exercises. Of this use in the last term I do not recollect an example, and therefore think the expressions are borrowed from the *sacrifices* under the law. A victim was *τελειος*, *perfect*, that was perfectly sound, having no *disease*; it was *ολοκληρος*, *entire*, if it had *all its members*, having nothing *redundant*, nothing *deficient*. Be then to the Lord what he required his sacrifices to be; let your whole heart, your body, soul, and spirit, be sanctified to the Lord of hosts, that he may fill you with all his fulness.

Verse 5. If any of you lack wisdom] Wisdom signifies in general *knowledge of the best end*, and *the best means of attaining it*; but in Scripture it signifies the same as *true religion*, the thorough practical knowledge of God, of one's self, and of a Saviour.

Let him ask of God] Because God is the only teacher of this wisdom.

That giveth to all men liberally] Who has all good, and gives all necessary good to every one that asks fervently. He who does not ask thus does not feel his need of Divine teaching. The ancient Greek maxim appears at first view strange, but it is literally true:—

αρχη γνωσεως της αγνοιας η γνωσις.

“The knowledge of ignorance is the beginning of knowledge.”

In knowledge we may distinguish these four things:—

1. INTELLIGENCE, the object of which is *intuitive truths*.
2. WISDOM, which is employed in finding out the *best end*.
3. PRUDENCE, which *regulates* the whole *conduct* through life.
4. ART, which provides infallible rules to reason by.

Verse 6. Let him ask in faith] Believing that God IS; that he has all good; and that he is ever ready to impart to his creatures whatever they need.

Nothing wavering.] μηδεν διακρινομενος. *Not judging otherwise;* having no doubt concerning the truth of these grand and fundamental principles, never supposing that God will permit him to ask in vain, when he asks sincerely and fervently. Let him not hesitate, let him not be *irresolute*; no man can believe too much good of God.

Is like a wave of the sea] The man who is not thoroughly persuaded that if he ask of God he shall receive, resembles a wave of the sea; he is in a state of continual agitation; driven by the wind, and tossed: now *rising by hope*, then *sinking by despair*.

Verse 7. Let not that man think] The man whose mind is divided, who is not properly persuaded either of his own wants or God’s sufficiency. Such persons may pray, but having no faith, they can get no answer.

Verse 8. A double-minded man] *ανηρ διψυχος.* The man of two souls, who has one for earth, and another for heaven; who wishes to secure both worlds; he will not give up earth, and he is loth to let heaven go. This was a usual term among the Jews, to express the man who attempted to worship God, and yet retained the love of the creature. Rabbi *Tanchum*, fol. 84, on ^{<12617>}**Deuteronomy 26:17**, said: “Behold, the Scripture exhorts the Israelites, and tells them when they pray, *ytv p̄hl hyhy al twbbi lo yiyeh lahem shetey lebaboth*, that they should not have two hearts, one for the holy blessed God, and one for something else.” A man of this character is continually distracted; he will neither let earth nor heaven go, and yet he can have but *one*. Perhaps St. James refers to those Jews who were endeavoring to incorporate the law with the Gospel, who were divided in their minds and affections, not willing to give up the Levitical

rites, and yet unwilling to renounce the Gospel. Such persons could make no progress in Divine things.

Verse 9. Let the brother of low degree] The poor, destitute Christian may *glory* in the cross of Christ, and the blessed hope laid up for him in heaven; for, being a child of God, he is an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.

Verse 10. But the rich, in that he is made low] *εν τη ταπεινωσει.* *In his humiliation*-in his being brought to the foot of the cross to receive, as a poor and miserable sinner, redemption through the blood of the cross: and especially let him rejoice in this, because all outward glory is only as the flower of the field, and, like that, will wither and perish.

Verse 11. For the sun is no sooner risen] We need not pursue this metaphor, as St. James' meaning is sufficiently clear: All human things are transitory; *rise* and *fall*, or *increase* and *decay*, belong to all the productions of the earth, and to all its inhabitants. This is unavoidable, for in many cases the very cause of their growth becomes the cause of their decay and destruction. The sun by its genial heat nourishes and supports all plants and animals; but when it arises with a *burning heat*, the atmosphere not being tempered with a sufficiency of moist vapours, the juices are exhaled from the plants; the earth, for lack of moisture, cannot afford a sufficient supply; vegetation becomes checked; and the plants soon wither and die. Earthly possessions are subject to similar mutations. God gives and resumes them at his pleasure, and for reasons which he seldom explains to man. He shows them to be uncertain, that they may never become an object of confidence to his followers, and that they may put their whole trust in God. If for righteousness' sake any of those who were in affluence suffer loss, or spoiling of their goods, they should consider that, while they have gained that of infinite worth, they have lost what is but of little value, and which in the nature of things they must soon part with, though they should suffer nothing on account of religion.

Verse 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation] This is a mere Jewish sentiment, and on it the Jews speak some excellent things. In *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. 31, fol. 129, and in Rab. *Tanchum*, fol. 29, 4, we have these words: "Blessed is the man *wnwysnb dnmw [hyhv shehayah omed benisyono* who stands in his temptation; for there is no man whom God does not *try*. He tries the *rich*, to see if they will open their hands to

the poor. He tries the *poor*, to see if they will receive affliction and not murmur. If, therefore, the rich *stand in his temptation*, and give alms to the poor, he shall enjoy his riches in this world, and his horn shall be exalted in the world to come, and the holy blessed God shall deliver him from the punishment of hell. If the poor *stand in his temptation*, and do not repine, (kick back,) he shall have double in the world to come.” This is exactly the sentiment of James. Every man is in this life in a state of temptation or trial, and in this state he is a candidate for another and a better world; he that *stands* in his trial shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. It is only *love to God* that can enable a man to endure the trials of life. Love feels no loads; all practicable things are possible to him who loveth.

There may be an allusion here to the contests in the Grecian games. He is crowned who conquers; and none else.

Verse 13. Let no man say] Lest the former sentiment should be misapplied, as the word *temptation* has two grand meanings, *solicitation to sin*, and trial from *providential situation or circumstances*, James, taking up the word in the former sense, after having used it in the latter, says: *Let no man say, when he is tempted, (solicited to sin,) I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he (thus) any man.* Thus the author has explained and guarded his meaning.

Verse 14. But every man is tempted] Successfully solicited to sin, when *he is drawn away of his own lust*-when, giving way to the evil propensity of his own heart, he does that to which he is solicited by the enemy of his soul.

Among the rabbins we find some fine sayings on this subject. In *Midrash hanaalam*, fol. 20, and *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 17, it is said: “This is the custom of evil concupiscence, [rh rxy yetser hara: To-day it saith, Do this; to-morrow, Worship an idol. The man goes and worships. Again it saith, Be *angry*.”

“Evil concupiscence is, at the beginning, like the thread of a spider’s web; afterwards it is like a cart rope.” *Sanhedrim*, fol. 99.

In the words, *drawn away by his own lust and enticed*, **υπο της ιδιας επιθυμιας εξελκομενος και δελεαζομενος**, there is a double metaphor; the first referring to the *dragging a fish* out of the water by a

hook which it had swallowed, because *concealed by a bait*; the second, to the *enticements* of impure women, who draw away the unwary into their snares, and involve them in their ruin. Illicit connections of this kind the writer has clearly in view; and every word that he uses refers to something of this nature, as the following verse shows.

Verse 15. When lust hath conceived] When the evil propensity works unchecked, *it bringeth forth sin*-the evil act between the parties is perpetrated.

And sin, when it is finished] When this breach of the law of God and of innocence has been a sufficient time completed, *it bringeth forth death*-the spurious offspring is the fruit of the criminal connection, and the evidence of that *death* or *punishment* due to the transgressors.

Any person acquainted with the import of the verbs **συλλαμβανειν**, **τικτειν**, and **αποκυειν**, will see that this is the metaphor, and that I have not exhausted it. **συλλαμβανω** signifies concipio sobolem, *quæ comprehenditur utero*; concipio fœtum;- **τικτω**, pario, genero, efficio;-**αποκυεω** *ex απο et κυω*, *prægnans sum*, in utero gero. *Verbum proprium prægnantium, quæ fœtum maturum emittunt. Interdum etiam gignendi notionem habet.*-MAIUS, *Obser. Sacr.*, vol. ii., page 184. *Kypke* and *Schleusner*.

Sin is a small matter in its commencement; but by indulgence it grows great, and multiplies itself beyond all calculation. To use the rabbinical metaphor lately adduced, *it is, in the commencement, like the thread of a spider's web*-almost *imperceptible* through its extreme *tenuity* or *fineness*, and as *easily broken*, for it is as yet but a *simple irregular imagination*; afterwards it becomes like a *cart rope*-it has, by being indulged produced *strong desire and delight*; next *consent*; then, time, place, and opportunity serving, that which was *conceived* in the *mind*, and *finished* in that *purpose*, is consummated by *act*.

“The *soul*, which the Greek philosophers considered as the seat of the appetites and passions, is called by *Philo το θηλυ*, the *female* part of our nature; and the *spirit το αρρεν*, the *male* part. In allusion to this notion, James represents men's *lust* as a *harlot*; which entices their understanding and will into its impure embraces, and from that conjunction *conceives* sin. Sin, being *brought forth*, immediately acts, and is nourished by frequent repetition, till at

length it gains such strength that in its turn it *begets* death. This is the true *genealogy* of sin and death. *Lust* is the *mother* of sin, and *sin* the *mother* of *death*, and the *sinner* the *parent* of both." See *Macknight*.

Verse 16. Do not err] By supposing that God is the author of sin, or that he impels any man to commit it.

Verse 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above]

Whatever is good is from God; whatever is evil is from man himself. As from the *sun*, which is the *father* or fountain of *light*, all light comes; so from GOD, who is the infinite Fountain, Father, and *Source* of *good*, all good comes. And whatever can be called *good*, or *pure*, or *light*, or *excellence* of any kind, must necessarily spring from him, as he is the only source of all goodness and perfection.

With whom is no variableness] The *sun*, the fountain of light to the whole of our system, may be obscured by clouds; or the different bodies which revolve round him, and particularly the earth, may from time to time suffer a diminution of his light by the intervention of other bodies *eclipsing* his splendour; and his apparent *tropical variation*, *shadow of turning*; when, for instance, in our winter, he has declined to the *southern tropic*, the tropic of Capricorn, so that our days are greatly shortened, and we suffer in consequence a great diminution both of *light* and *heat*. But there is nothing of this kind with God; he is never affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed. He occupies no *one* place in the universe; he fills the *heavens* and the *earth*, is *everywhere present*, sees all, pervades all, and shines upon all; dispenses his blessings equally to the universe; hates nothing that he has made; is loving to every man; and his tender mercies are over all his works: therefore he is not *affected with evil*, nor does he *tempt*, or influence to sin, *any man*. The sun, the source of light, rises and sets with a continual *variety* as to the *times* of both, and the *length* of the time in which, in the course of three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and forty-eight seconds, it has its revolution through the ecliptic, or rather the earth has its revolution round the sun; and by which its light and heat are, to the inhabitants of the earth, either constantly *increasing* or *decreasing*: but God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, is eternally the same, dispensing his *good* and *perfect gifts*-his *earthly* and *heavenly* blessings, to all his creatures, ever unclouded in himself, and ever *nilling* EVIL and *willing* GOOD. Men may

hide themselves from his light by the works of darkness, as owls and bats hide themselves in dens and caves of the earth during the prevalency of the solar light: but his good will to his creatures is permanent; he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may come unto him and live; and no man walks in wretchedness or misery but he who *will not come unto God that he may have life*. See diagram and notes at the end of this chapter. See Clarke “^{<30127>}James 1:27”.

Verse 18. Of his own will begat he us] *God’s will* here is opposed to the *lust of man*, ^{<30115>}James 1:15; his *truth*, the means of human salvation, to the *sinful means* referred to in the above verse; and the *new creatures*, to the *sin conceived and brought forth*, as above. As the *will* of God is essentially *good*, all its productions must be *good* also; as it is infinitely *pure*, all its productions must be *holy*. The *word* or *doctrine* of *truth*, what St. Paul calls *the word of the truth of the Gospel*, ^{<51005>}Colossians 1:5, is the means which God uses to convert souls.

A kind of first fruits] By *creatures* we are here to understand the *Gentiles*, and by *first fruits* the *Jews*, to whom the Gospel was first sent; and those of them that believed were the *first fruits* of that astonishing *harvest* which God has since reaped over the whole Gentile world. See Clarke’s notes on “^{<4819>}Romans 8:19”, &c. There is a remarkable saying in *Philo* on this subject, *Deuteronomy Allegoris*, lib. ii. p. 101: *God begat Isaac, for he is the father of the perfect nature, σπειρων εν ταις ψυχαις*, sowing seed in souls, and begetting happiness.

Verse 19. Swift to hear] *Talk little and work much*, is a rabbinical adage.-*Pirkey Aboth*, cap. i. 15.

The righteous speak little, and do much; the wicked speak much, and do nothing.-*Bava Metzia*, fol. 87.

The son of Sirach says, cap. v. 11: *γινου ταχυς εν τη ακροσει σου, και εν μακροθυμια φθεγγου αποκρισιν*. “Be swift to hear, and with deep consideration give answer.”

Slow to wrath] “There are *four* kinds of dispositions,” says the *Midrash hanaalam*, cap. v. 11: “*First*, Those who are easily incensed, and easily pacified; these *gain* on one hand, and *lose* on the other. *Secondly*, Those who are not easily incensed, but are difficult to be appeased; these *lose* on the one *hand*, and *gain* on the *other*. *Thirdly*, Those who are difficult to be

incensed, and are easily appeased; these are the *good*. *Fourthly*, Those who are easily angered, and difficult to be appeased; these are the *wicked*.”

Those who are hasty in speech are generally of a peevish or angry disposition. A person who is careful to consider what he says, is not likely to be soon angry.

Verse 20. The wrath of man] A furious zeal in matters of religion is detestable in the sight of God; he will have no sacrifice that is not consumed by fire from his own altar. The zeal that made the Papists persecute and burn the Protestants, was kindled in hell. This was *the wrath of man*, and did not work any *righteous act for God*; nor was it the means of working righteousness in others; the bad fruit of a bad tree. And do they still vindicate these cruelties? Yes: for still they maintain that no faith is to be kept with heretics, and they acknowledge the *inquisition*.

Verse 21. All filthiness] *πασαν ροπαριαν*. This word signifies any impurity that cleaves to the body; but applied to the mind, it implies all impure and unholy affections, such as those spoken of ^{<3015>}**James 1:15**, which pollute the soul; in this sense it is used by the best Greek writers.

Superfluity of naughtiness] *περισσειαν κακιας*. The *overflowing of wickedness*. Perhaps there is an allusion here to the part cut off in circumcision, which was the emblem of impure desire; and to lessen that propensity, God, in his mercy, enacted this rite. Put all these evil dispositions aside, for they blind the soul, and render it incapable of receiving any good, even from that ingrafted word of God which otherwise would have saved their souls.

The ingrafted word] That doctrine which has already been *planted among you*, which has brought forth fruit in all them that have *meekly* and humbly received it, and is as *powerful to save your souls* as the souls of those who have already believed. I think this to be the meaning of *εμφυτον λογον*, the *ingrafted word* or *doctrine*. The seed of life had been sown in the land; many of them had received it to their salvation; others had partially credited it, but not so as to produce in them any saving effects. Besides, they appear to have taken up with other doctrines, from which they had got no salvation; he therefore exhorts them to receive the doctrine of Christ, which would be the means of saving them unto eternal life. And when those who were Jews, and who had been originally planted by God as altogether a right vine, received the faith of the Gospel, it is represented as

being ingrafted on that right stock, the pure knowledge of the true God and his holy moral law. This indeed was a good stock on which to implant *Christianity*. This appears to be what the apostle means by the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul.

Verse 22. But be ye doers of the word] They had heard this doctrine; they had believed it; but they had put it to no practical use. They were downright *Antinomians*, who put a sort of stupid, inactive faith in the place of all moral righteousness. This is sufficiently evident from the second chapter.

Deceiving your own selves.] παραλογιζομενοι εαυτους. Imposing on your own selves by sophistical arguments; this is the meaning of the words. They had reasoned themselves into a state of carnal security, and the object of St. James is, to awake them out of their sleep.

Verse 23. Beholding his natural face in a glass] This metaphor is very simple, but very expressive. A man wishes to see his own face, and how, in its natural state, it appears; for this purpose he looks into a mirror, by which his real face, with all its blemishes and imperfections, is exhibited. He is affected with his own appearance; he sees deformities that might be remedied; spots, superfluities, and impurities, that might be removed. While he *continues to look* into the mirror he is affected, and wishes himself different to what he appears, and forms purposes of doing what he can to render his countenance agreeable. On going away he soon forgets what manner of person he was, because the mirror is now removed, and his face is no longer reflected to himself; and he no longer recollects how disagreeable he appeared, and his own resolutions of improving his countenance. The *doctrines of God*, faithfully preached, are such a *mirror*; he who hears cannot help discovering his own character, and being affected with his own deformity; he sorrows, and purposes amendment; but when the preaching is over, the mirror is removed, and not being careful to examine the records of his salvation, the *perfect law of liberty*, ⁵⁰¹²⁵ **James 1:25**, or *not continuing to look therein*, he soon forgets what manner of man he was; or, reposing some unscriptural trust in God's mercy, he reasons himself out of the necessity of repentance and amendment of life, and thus deceives his soul.

Verse 25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law] The word παρακυψας, which we translate *looketh into*, is very emphatic, and signifies that deep and attentive consideration given to a thing or subject

which a man cannot bring up to his eyes, and therefore must *bend his back and neck, stooping down*, that he may see it to the greater advantage. The *law of liberty* must mean the *Gospel*; it is a *law*, for it *imposes obligations* from God, and prescribes a *rule of life*; and it *punishes* transgressors, and *rewards* the obedient. It is, nevertheless, a law that gives *liberty* from the guilt, power, dominion, and influence of sin; and it is *perfect*, providing a *fulness of salvation* for the soul: and it may be called *perfect* here, in opposition to the *law*, which was a system of types and representations of which the *Gospel* is the sum and substance. Some think that the word **τελειον**, *perfect*, is added here to signify that the *whole* of the *Gospel* must be considered and received, not a *part*; all its threatenings with its promises, all its precepts with its privileges.

And continueth] **παραμεινας** Takes time to see and examine the state of his soul, the grace of his God, the extent of his duty, and the height of the promised glory. The metaphor here is taken from those females who spend much time at their glass, in order that they may decorate themselves to the greatest advantage, and not leave one hair, or the smallest ornament, out of its place.

He being not a forgetful hearer] This seems to be a reference to ^{<504>}**Deuteronomy 4:9**: “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.” *He who studies and forgets is like to a woman who brings forth children, and immediately buries them.* *Aboth R. Nathan*, cap. 23.

Shall be blessed in his deed.] In *Pirkey Aboth*, cap. v. 14, it is said: “There are four kinds of men who visit the synagogues, 1. He who enters but does not work; 2. He who works but does not enter. 3. He who enters and works. 4. He who neither enters nor works. The first two are indifferent characters; the *third* is the righteous man; the *fourth* is wholly evil.”

As the path of duty is the way of *safety*, so it is the way of *happiness*; he who obeys God from a loving heart and pure conscience, will infallibly find continual blessedness.

Verse 26. Seem to be religious] The words **θησκευος** and **θησκευια**, which we translate *religious* and *religion*, (see the next verse,) are of very uncertain etymology. *Suidas*, under the word **θησκευει**, which he

translates θεοσεβει, υπηρετει τοις θεοις, *he worships or serves the gods*, accounts for the derivation thus: “It is said that Orpheus, a *Thracian*, instituted the mysteries (or religious rites) of the Greeks, and called the worshipping of God θρησκευειν *threskeuein*, as being a *Thracian* invention.” Whatever its derivation may be, the word is used both to signify *true religion*, and *superstition* or *heterodoxy*. See Hesychius, and see Clarke on “³⁰¹²⁷James 1:27”.

Bridleth not his tongue] He who speaks not according to the oracles of God, whatever pretences he makes to religion, only shows, by his want of scriptural knowledge, that his religion is *false*, ματαιος, or *empty* of solid truth, profit to others, and good to himself. Such a person should *bridle his tongue*, put the *bit in his mouth*; and particularly if he be a professed *teacher* of religion; ho matter where he has studied, or what else he has learned, if he have not learned *religion*, he can never teach it. And religion is of such a nature that no man can learn it but by *experience*; he who does not feel the doctrine of God to be the power of God to the salvation of his soul, can neither teach religion, nor act according to its dictates, because he is an unconverted, unrenewed man. If he be *old*, let him retire to the desert, and pray to God for light; if he be in the *prime of life*, let him turn his attention to some honest calling; if he be *young*, let him tarry at Jericho till his beard grows.

Verse 27. Pure religion, and undefiled] Having seen something of the etymology of the word θρησκεια, which we translate *religion*, it will be well to consider the etymology of the word *religion* itself.

In the 28th chapter of the 4th book of his *Divine Instructions*, LACTANTIUS, who flourished about A. D. 300, treats of *hope*, *true religion*, and *superstition*; of the two latter he gives Cicero’s definition from his book *Deuteronomy Natura Deorum*, lib. ii. c. 28, which with his own definition will lead us to a correct view, not only of the *etymology*, but of the *thing* itself.

“*Superstition*,” according to that philosopher, “had its name from the custom of those who offered daily prayers and sacrifices, that their children might SURVIVE THEM; *ut sui sibi liberi* superstites essent. Hence they were called *superstitiosi*, superstitious. On the other hand, religion, *religio*, had its name from those who, not satisfied with what was commonly spoken concerning the nature and worship of the gods, searched into the whole matter, and

perused the writings of past times; hence they were called religiosi, from re, again, and lego, I read."

This definition Lactantius ridicules, and shows that religion has its name from *re*, intensive, and *ligo*, I bind, because of that *bond of piety* by which it *binds* us to God, and this he shows was the notion conceived of it by *Lucretius*, who laboured to *dissolve* this bond, and make men atheists.

*Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus, et ARCTIS
RELIGIONUM animos NODIS EXSOLVERE pergo.*

*For first I teach great things in lofty strains,
And loose men from religion's grievous chains.
Lucret., lib. i., ver. 930, 931*

As to *superstition*, he says it derived its name from those who paid religious veneration to the memory of the dead, (*qui superstitem memoriam defunctorem colunt,*) or from those who, *surviving* their parents, worshipped their images at home, as household gods; *aut qui, parentibus suis superstites, colebant imagines eorum domi, tanquam deos penates.* *Superstition*, according to others, refers to novel rites and ceremonies in religion, or to the worship of new gods. But by *religion* are meant the *ancient forms* of worship belonging to those gods, which had long been received. Hence that saying of Virgil:—

Vana superstitione veterumque ignara deorum.

"Vain superstition not knowing the ancient gods."

Here Lactantius observes, that as the ancient gods were consecrated precisely in the same way with *these new ones*, that therefore it was nothing but *superstition* from the beginning. Hence he asserts, the *superstitious* are those who worship many and false gods, and the *Christians* alone are *religious*, who worship and supplicate the one true God only. St. James' definition rather refers to the *effects* of *pure religion* than to its *nature*. The *life of God in the soul of man*, producing *love to God* and *man*, will show itself in the acts which St. James mentions here. It is *pure* in the *principle*, for it is Divine truth and Divine love. It is *undefiled* in all its operations: it can produce nothing *unholy*, because it ever acts in the *sight of God*; and it can produce no *ungentle* word nor *unkind* act, because it comes from the *Father*.

The words καθαρα και αμικαντος, *pure and undefiled*, are supposed to have reference to a *diamond* or *precious stone*, whose perfection consists in its being *free from flaws*; not *cloudy*, but of a *pure water*. True religion is the *ornament* of the soul, and its *effects*, the ornament of the *life*.

To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction] Works of *charity* and *mercy* are the proper fruits of religion; and none are more especially the objects of charity and mercy than the *orphans* and *widows*. False religion may perform acts of mercy and charity; but its *motives* not being *pure*, and its principle being *defiled*, the *flesh*, self, and hypocrisy, *spot* the man, and *spot* his acts. True religion does not merely *give* something for the *relief* of the distressed, but it *visits them*, it takes *the oversight of them*, it takes them under its care; so επισκεπτεσθαι means. It goes to their houses, and speaks to their hearts; it relieves their wants, sympathizes with them in their distresses, instructs them in Divine things and recommends them to God. And all this it does for the Lord's sake. This is the religion of Christ. The religion that does not prove itself by works of charity and mercy is not of God. Reader, what religion hast thou? Has thine ever led thee to cellars, garrets, cottages, and houses, to find out the distressed? Hast thou ever fed, clothed, and visited a destitute representative of Christ?

The subject in ^{<5011>}**James 1:11** suggests several reflections on the mutability of human affairs, and the end of all things.

1. Nature herself is subject to mutability, though by her secret and inscrutable exertions she effects her renovation from her decay, and thus *change* is prevented from terminating in *destruction*. Yet nature herself is tending, by continual mutations, to a final destruction; or rather to a fixed state, when *time*, the place and sphere of mutability, shall be absorbed in eternity. Time and nature are coeval; they began and must terminate together. All *changes* are efforts to arrive at destruction or renovation; and destruction must be the *term* or bound of all created things, had not the Creator purposed that his works should endure for ever. According to his promise, we look for a new heaven and a new earth; a fixed, permanent, and endless state of things; an everlasting sabbath to all the works of God.

I shall confirm these observations with the last verses of that incomparable poem, the *Faery Queene*, of our much neglected but unrivalled poet, *Edmund Spenser*:—

*“When I bethink me on that speech whylear,
Of mutability, and well it weigh;
Me seems, that though she all unworthy were
Of the heaven’s rule; yet very sooth to say,
In all things else she bears the greatest sway;
Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,
And love of things so vain to cast away;*

*Whose flow’ring pride, so fading and so fickle,
Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.
Then gin I think on that which Nature said,
Of that same time when no more change shall be,
But stedfast rest of all things, firmly stayd
Upon the pillours of eternity,
That is contrayr to mutability:
For all that moveth, doth in change delight:
But thenceforth all shall rest eternally
With him that is the God of Sabaoth hight:
O that great Sabaoth God, grant me that Sabaoth’s sight!”*

When this is to be the glorious *issue*, who can regret the speedy lapse of time? Mutability shall end in permanent perfection, when time, the destroyer of all things, shall be absorbed in eternity. And what has a righteous man to fear from that “wreck of matter and that crush of worlds,” which to him shall usher in the glories of an eternal day? A moralist has said, “Though heaven shall vanish like a vapour, and this firm globe of earth shall crumble into dust, the righteous man shall stand unmoved amidst the shocked depredations of a crushed world; for he who hath appointed the heavens and the earth to fail, hath said unto the virtuous soul, Fear not! for *thou* shalt neither perish nor be wretched.”

Dr. *Young* has written most nervously, in the spirit of the highest order of poetry, and with the knowledge and feeling of a sound divine, on this subject, in his *Night Thoughts*. Night vi. *in fine*.

Of man *immortal* hear the lofty style:—

*“If so decreed, th’ Almighty will be done.
Let earth dissolve, yon ponderous orbs descend
And grind us into dust: the soul is safe;
The man emerges; mounts above the wreck,*

*As towering flame from nature's funeral pyre;
 O'er desolation, as a gainer, smiles;
 His charter, his inviolable rights,
 Well pleased to learn from thunder's impotence,
 Death's pointless darts, and hell's defeated storms."*

After him, and borrowing his *imagery* and *ideas*, another of our poets, in *canticis sacris facile princeps*, has expounded and improved the whole in the following hymn on the *Judgment*.

*"Stand the Omnipotent decree,
 Jehovah's will be done!
 Nature's end we wait to see,
 And hear her final groan.*

*Let this earth dissolve, and blend
 In death the wicked and the just;
 Let those ponderous orbs descend
 And grind us into dust.*

*Rests secure the righteous man;
 At his Redeemer's beck,
 Sure to emerge, and rise again,
 And mount above the wreck.*

*Lo! the heavenly spirit towers
 Like flames o'er nature's funeral pyre;
 Triumphs in immortal powers,
 And claps her wings of fire.*

*Nothing hath the just to lose
 By worlds on worlds destroy'd;
 Far beneath his feet he views,
 With smiles, the flaming void;*

*Sees the universe renew'd;
 The grand millennial reign begun;
 Shouts with all the sons of God
 Around th' eternal throne."*

WESLEY

One word more, and I shall trouble my reader no farther on a subject on which I could wear out my pen and drain the last drop of my ink. The learned reader will join in the wish.

*“Talia saecla suis dixerunt, currite, fusis
 Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.
 Aggredere O magnos (aderit jam tempus!) honores,
 Cara Deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.
 Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,
 Terrasque, tractusque maris, cælumque profundum:
 Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia saeclo.
 O mihi tam longæ maneat pars ultima vitæ,
 Spiritus, et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta!”*
 VIRG. Eclog. iv.

There has never been a translation of this, worthy of the poet; and to such a piece I cannot persuade myself to append the hobbling verses of Mr. Dryden.

2. Taken in every point of view, ^{<5017>}**James 1:17** is one of the most curious and singular in the New Testament. It has been well observed, that the first words make a regular *Greek hexameter verse*, supposed to be quoted from some Greek poet not now extant; and the last clause of the verse, with a very little change, makes another hexameter:—

πασα δοσις αγαθη, και παν δωρημα τελειον,
 εσταπο των φωτων πατρος καταβαινον ανωθεν.

*“Every goodly gift, and every perfect donation,
 Is from the Father of lights, and from above it descendeth.”*

The first line, which is incontestably a *perfect hexameter*, may have been designed by St. James, or in the course of composition may have originated from accident, a thing which often occurs to all good writers; but the sentiment itself is immediately from heaven. I know not that we can be justified by sound criticism in making any particular distinction between **δοσις** and **δωρημα**. our translators have used the same word in rendering both. They are often synonymous; but sometimes we may observe a shade of difference, **δοσις** signifying a *gift* of any kind, here probably meaning *earthly blessings* of all sorts, **δωρημα** signifying a *free gift*—one that comes without constraint, from the mere *benevolence* of the giver; and here it may signify all *spiritual and eternal blessings*. Now all these *come from above*; God is as much the *AUTHOR* of our *earthly good*, as he is of our *eternal salvation*. Earthly blessings are simply *good*; but they are *imperfect*, they perish in the using. The blessings of *grace* and *glory* are supreme goods, they are permanent and perfect; and to the *gift* that

includes these the term *τελειον*, *perfect*, is here properly added by St. James. There is a sentiment very similar to this in the ninth Olympic Ode of Pindar, l. 41:—

-----αγαθοι δε
και σοφοι κατα δαιμονάνδρες.

*Man, boast of naught: whate'er thou hast is given;
Wisdom and virtue are the gifts of Heaven.*

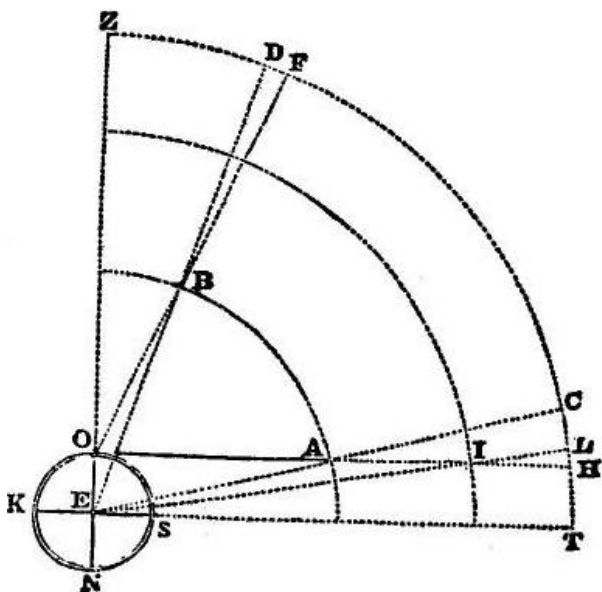
But how tame is even Pindar's verse when compared with the energy of James!

3. In the latter part of the verse, *παρ ω ουκ ενι παραλλαγη, η τροπησ αποσκιασμα*, which we translate, *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, there is an allusion to some of the most abstruse principles in astronomy. This is not accidental, for every word in the whole verse is astronomical. In his *πατηρ των φωτων*, *Father of lights*, there is the most evident allusion to the SUN, who is the *father, author, or source* of all the *lights* or luminaries proper to our system. It is not only his light which *we* enjoy by day, but it is his light also which is reflected to us, from the moon's surface, by *night*. And it is demonstrable that all the *planets-Mercury, Venus, the Earth, the Moon, Mars, Ceres, Pallas, Juno, Vesta, Jupiter, Saturn, Saturn's Rings, and Herschel, or the Georgium Sidus*, with the *four* satellites of Jupiter, the *seven* satellites of Saturn, and the *six* satellites of the Georgium Sidus, thirty-one bodies in all, besides the *comets*, all derive their light from the sun, being perfectly *opaque* or *dark* in themselves; the sun being the only luminous body in our system; all the rest being *illuminated* by him.

The word *παραλλαγη*, which we translate *variableness*, from *παραλλαττω*, *to change alternately, to pass from one change to another*, evidently refers to *parallax* in astronomy. To give a proper idea of what astronomers mean by this term, it must be premised that all the diurnal motions of the heavenly bodies from east to west are only *apparent*, being occasioned by the rotation of the earth upon its axis in an opposite direction in about twenty-four hours. These diurnal motions are therefore performed *uniformly* round the axis or polar diameter of the earth, and not round the place of the spectator, who is upon the earth's surface. Hence every one who observes the apparent motion of the heavens from this surface will find that this motion is not even, equal arches being described

in unequal times; for if a globular body, such as the earth, describe equally the circumference of a circle by its rotatory motion, it is evident the equality of this motion can be seen in no other points than those in the axis of the circle, and therefore any object viewed from the centre of the earth will appear in a different place from what it does when observed from the surface. This difference of place of the same object, seen at the same time from the earth's centre and surface, is called its *parallax*.

As I shall make some farther use of this point, in order to make it plain to those who are not much acquainted with the subject, to which I am satisfied St. James alludes, I shall introduce the following diagram:—



Let the circle OKNS. in the annexed figure, represent the *earth*, E its *centre*, O the *place* of an *observer* on its surface, whose *visible* or *sensible horizon* is OH, and the line EST, parallel to OH, the *rational, true, or mathematical horizon*. Let ZDFT be considered a portion of a *great circle* in the heavens, and A the *place* of an *object* in the visible horizon. Join EA by a line produced to C: then C is the *true* place of the object, and H is its *apparent* place; and the angle CAH is its *parallax*; and, because the object is in the horizon, it is called its *horizontal parallax*. As OAE, the angle which the earth's radius or semidiameter subtends to the object, is necessarily equal to its opposite angle CAH, hence the *horizontal parallax* of an object is defined to be the angle which the earth's semidiameter subtends at that object.

The whole effect of parallax is in a *vertical* direction; for the parallactic angle is in the *plane* passing through the *observer* and the *earth's centre*, which plane is necessarily *perpendicular* to the *horizon*, the earth being considered as a *sphere*. The more *elevated* an object is above the horizon, the *less* the *parallax*, the distance from the earth's centre continuing the same. To make this sufficiently clear, let B represent an object at any given altitude above the visible horizon OAH; then the angle DBF, formed by the straight lines OB and EB produced to F and D, will be the parallax of the object at the given altitude, and is less than the parallax of the same object when in the visible horizon OAH, for the angle DBF is less than the angle CAH. Hence the horizontal parallax is the greatest of all diurnal parallaxes; and when the object is in the *zenith*, it has no *parallax*, the visual ray passing perpendicularly *from* the *object* through the *observer* to the earth's *centre*, as in the line ZOE.

The quantity of the horizontal parallax of any object is in proportion to its distance from the place of observation, being greater or less as the object is nearer to or farther removed from the spectator. In illustration of this point, let I be the place of an object in the sensible horizon; then will LIH be its horizontal parallax, which is a smaller angle than CAH, the horizontal parallax of the nearer object A.

The horizontal parallax being given, the distance of the object from the earth's centre, EA or EI, may be readily found in semidiameters of the earth by the resolution of the right-angled triangle OEA, in which we have given the angle OAE, the horizontal parallax, the side OE, the semidiameter of the earth, considered as unity, and the right angle AOE, to find the side EA, the distance of the object from the earth's centre. The proportion to be used in this case is: The sine of the horizontal parallax is to unity, the semidiameter of the earth, as radius, *i.e.* the right angle AOE, the sine of ninety degrees being the radius of a circle, is to the side EA. This proportion is very compendiously wrought by logarithms as follows: Subtract the logarithmic sine of the horizontal parallax from 10, the radius, and the remainder will be the logarithm of the answer.

Example. When the moon's horizontal parallax is a degree, what is her distance from the earth's centre in semidiameters of the earth?

From the radius, — 10.0000000

Subtract the sine of 1 degree — 8.2418553

Remainder the logarithm of 57.2987 — 1.7581447

Which is the distance of the moon in semidiameters of the earth, when her horizontal parallax amounts to a degree. If 57.2987 be multiplied by 3977 , the English miles contained in the earth's semidiameter, the product, 227876.9 , will be the moon's distance from the earth's centre in English miles.

The sun's horizontal parallax is about *eight seconds* and *three-fifths*, as is evident from the phenomena attending the transits of Venus, of 1761 and 1769, as observed in different parts of the world: a method of obtaining the solar parallax abundantly less liable to be materially affected by error of observation than that of Hipparchus, who lived between the 154th and 163d Olympiad, from lunar eclipses; or than that of Aristarchus the Samian, from the moon's dichotomy; or even than that of modern astronomers from the parallax of Mars when in opposition, and, at the same time, in or near his perihelion. The sun's horizontal parallax being scarcely the four hundred and eighteenth part of that of the moon given in the preceding example, if 227876.9 , the distance of the moon as found above, be multiplied by 418.6 , (for the horizontal parallax decreases nearly in proportion as the distance increases,) the product will be the distance of the sun from the earth's centre, which will be found to be upwards of *ninety-five millions* of English miles.

When we know the horizontal parallax of any object, its magnitude is easily determined. The apparent diameter of the sun, for example, at his mean distance from the earth, is somewhat more than *thirty-two minutes of a degree*, which is at least a hundred and eleven times greater than the double of the sun's horizontal parallax, or the apparent diameter of the earth as seen from the sun; therefore, the real solar diameter must be at least a *hundred and eleven* times greater than that of the earth; *i.e.* upwards of $880,000$ English miles. And as spherical bodies are to each other as the cubes of their diameters, if 111 be cubed, we shall find that the magnitude of the sun is more than *thirteen hundred thousand* times greater than that of the earth.

The whole effect of parallax being in a *vertical circle*, and the circles of the sphere not being in this direction, the parallax of a star will evidently change its true place with respect to these different circles; whence there are *five* kinds of diurnal parallaxes, *viz.* the parallax of *longitude*, parallax

of *latitude*, parallax of *ascension* or *descension*, parallax: of *declination*, and parallax of *altitude*, the last of which has been already largely explained; and the meaning of the first four, simply, is the *difference* between the *true* and *visible* longitude, latitude, right ascension, and declination of an object. Besides these, there is another kind of parallax, called by modern astronomers the *parallax* of the *earth's ANNUAL ORBIT*, by which is meant the difference between the places of a planet as seen from the sun and the earth at the same time, the former being its *true* or *heliocentric* place, and the latter its *apparent* or *geocentric* place. The ancient astronomers gave the term *parallax* only to the diurnal apparent inequalities of motion in the moon and planets; Ptolemy, who lived in the second century, calling *prosphaeresis orbis* what is now named the *parallax* of the *great* or *annual orbit*. This parallax is more considerable than the diurnal parallax, as the earth's annual orbit is more considerable than the earth's semidiameter. This parallax, when greatest, amounts in Mars, the nearest superior planet, to upwards of *forty-seven* degrees; in Jupiter to near *twelve* degrees; in Saturn to more than *six* degrees, &c. In the region of the nearest fixed stars, *i.e.* those new ones of 1572 and 1604, *double* the *radius* of the earth's orbit does not subtend an angle of a single *minute* of a degree; whence it is evident the nearest fixed stars are at least *hundreds of times* more distant from us than the Georgium Sidus is, whose greatest annual parallax amounts to upwards of *three* degrees. The annual parallaxes of the fixed stars are, in general, *too minute* to be measured; hence their distances from the earth must be inconceivably great.

Any farther description of parallax would be useless in reference to the subject to be illustrated.

The words τροπης αποσκιασμα, *shadow of turning*, either refer to the darkness in which the earth is involved in consequence of its *turning round its axis* once in every twenty-four hours, by means of which one hemisphere, or half of its surface, is involved in darkness, being hidden from the sun by the opposite hemisphere; or to the different portions of the earth which come gradually into the solar light by its revolution round its *orbit*, which, in consequence of the pole of the earth being inclined nearly twenty-three degrees and a half to the plane of its orbit, and keeping its *parallelism* through every part of its revolution, causes all the *vicissitudes of season*, with all the increasing and decreasing proportions of light and darkness, and of cold and heat.

Every person who understands the images will see with what propriety St. James has introduced them; and through this his great object is at once discernible. It is evident from this chapter that there were persons, among those to whom he wrote, that held very erroneous opinions concerning the Divine nature; *viz.* that God tempted or influenced men to sin, and, consequently, that he was the author of all the evil that is in the world; and that he withholds his light and influence when necessary to convey truth and to correct vice. To destroy this error he shows that though the sun, for its *splendour, genial heat, and general utility* to the globe and its inhabitants, may be a fit emblem of God, yet in several respects the metaphor is very *imperfect*; for the sun himself is liable to repeated obscurations; and although, as to his mass, he is the *focus of the system*, giving light and heat to all, yet he is not everywhere present, and both his light and heat may be intercepted by a great variety of opposing bodies, and other causes. St. James refers particularly to the Divine *ubiquity* or omnipresence. Wherever his light and energy are, there is he *himself*; neither his *word* nor his *Spirit* gives false or inconsistent views of his nature and gracious purposes. He has no *parallax*, because he is equally present everywhere, and intimately *near* to all his creatures; HE is never *seen where he is not*, or *not seen where he is*. *He is the God and Father of all; who is ABOVE all, and THROUGH all, and IN all*; “in the wide waste, as in the city full;” nor can any thing be hidden from his light and heat. There can be no opposing bodies to prevent him from sending forth his light and truth, because he is everywhere *essentially* present. He suffers no *eclipses*; he *changes* not in his nature; he varies not in his designs; he is ever a full, free, and eternal fountain of mercy, goodness, truth, and good will, to all his intelligent offspring. Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen.

IN concluding these observations, I think it necessary to refer to Mr. Wakefield’s translation of this text, and his vindication of that translation: *Every good gift, and every perfect kindness, cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no parallax, nor tropical shadow.* “Some have affected,” says he, “to ridicule my translation of this verse, if it be obscure, the author must answer for that, and not the translator. Why should we impoverish the sacred writers, by *robbing* them of the learning and science they display? Why should we *conceal* in *them* what we should *ostentatiously point out* in *profane authors*? And if any of these wise, learned, and judicious critics think they understand the phrase *shadow of turning*, I wish they would condescend to explain it.” Yes, if such a

sentiment were found in *Aratus*, or in any other *ancient* astronomical writer, whole pages of commentary would be written on it, and the subtle doctrine of the parallactic angle proved to be well known in itself, and its use in determining the distances and magnitudes of the heavenly bodies, to the ancients some hundreds of years before the Christian era.

The sentiment is as elegant as it is just, and forcibly points out the *unchangeableness* and *beneficence* of God. He is the Sun, not of a system, but of all worlds; the great Fountain and Dispenser of light and heat, of power and life, of order, harmony, and perfection. In him all live and move, and from him they have their being. There are no *spots* on his disk; all is unclouded splendour. Can he who dwells in this unsufferable and unapproachable light, in his own eternal self-sufficiency, concern himself with the affairs of mortals? Yes, *for we are his offspring*; and it is one part of his perfection to delight in the welfare of his intelligent creatures. He is loving to every man: he hates nothing that he has made; and his praise endureth for ever!

JAMES

CHAPTER 2.

We should not prefer the rich to the poor, nor show any partiality inconsistent with the Gospel of Christ, 1-4. God has chosen the poor, rich in faith, to be heirs of his kingdom, even those whom some among their brethren despised and oppressed, 5, 6. They should love their neighbour as themselves, and have no respect of persons, 7-9. He who breaks one command of God is guilty of the whole, 10, 11. They should act as those who shall be judged by the law of liberty; and he shall have judgment without mercy, who shows no mercy, 12, 13. Faith without works of charity and mercy is dead; nor can it exist where there are no good works, 14-20. Abraham proved his faith by his works, 21-24. And so did Rahab, 25. As the body without the soul is dead, so is faith without good works, 26.

NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

Verse 1. My brethren, have not] This verse should be read interrogatively: *My brethren, do ye not make profession of the faith or religion of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with acceptance of persons?* That is, preferring the rich to the poor merely because of their riches, and not on account of any moral excellence, personal piety, or public usefulness. **πιστις**, *faith*, is put here for religion; and **της δοξης**, *of glory*, should, according to some critics, be construed with it as the Syriac and Coptic have done. Some connect it with *our Lord Jesus Christ-the religion of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ*. Others translate thus, *the faith of the glory of our Lord Jesus*. There are many various readings in the MSS. and versions on this verse: the meaning is clear enough, though the connection be rather obscure.

Verse 2. If there come unto your assembly] **εις την συναγωγην**. *Into the synagogue*. It appears from this that the apostle is addressing *Jews* who frequented their synagogues, and carried on their worship there and judicial proceedings, as the Jews were accustomed to do. Our word *assembly* does not express the original; and we cannot suppose that these synagogues were at this time occupied with Christian worship, but that the Christian

Jews continued to frequent them for the purpose of hearing the law and the prophets read, as they had formerly done, previously to their conversion to the Christian faith. But St. James may refer here to proceedings in a court of justice.

With a gold ring, in goodly apparel] The ring on the finger and the splendid garb were proofs of the man's opulence; and his *ring* and his *coat*, not his *worth*, moral good qualities, or the righteousness of his cause, procured him the respect of which St. James speaks.

There come in also a poor man] In ancient times petty courts of judicature were held in the synagogues, as *Vitringa* has sufficiently proved, *Deuteronomy Vet. Syn.* l. 3, p. 1, c. 11; and it is probable that the case here adduced was one of a judicial kind, where, of the two *parties*, one was *rich* and the other *poor*; and the master or ruler of the synagogue, or he who presided in this court, paid particular deference to the rich man, and neglected the poor man; though, as *plaintiff* and *defendant*, they were equal in the eye of justice, and should have been considered so by an impartial judge.

Verse 3. Sit here under my footstool] Thus evidently prejudging the cause, and giving the poor man to see that he was to expect no impartial administration of justice in his cause.

Verse 4. Are ye not then partial] ου διεκριθητε. *Do ye not make a distinction*, though the case has not been heard, and the law has not decided?

Judges of evil thoughts?] κριται διαλογισμων πονηρων. *Judges of evil reasonings*; that is, *judges who reason wickedly*; who, in effect, say in your hearts, we will espouse the cause of the *rich*, because they can befriend us; we will neglect that of the *poor*, because they cannot help us, nor have they power to hurt us.

Verse 5. Hath not God chosen the poor of this world] This seems to refer to ^{<40105>} **Matthew 11:5:** *And the poor have the Gospel preached to them*. These believed on the Lord Jesus, and found his salvation; while the *rich* despised, neglected, and persecuted him. These had that faith in Christ which put them in possession of the *choicest spiritual blessings*, and gave them a *right* to the *kingdom of heaven*. While, therefore, they were despised of men, they were highly prized of God.

Verse 6. Do not rich men oppress you] The administration of justice was at this time in a miserable state of corruption among the Jews; but a *Christian* was one who was to expect no justice any where but from his God. The words **καταδυναστευουσιν**, *exceedingly oppress*, and **ελκουσιν εις κριτηρια**, *drag you to courts of justice*, show how grievously oppressed and maltreated the Christians were by their countrymen the Jews, who made *law* a pretext to afflict their bodies, and spoil them of their property.

Verse 7. Blaspheme that worthy name] They took every occasion to asperse the *Christian* name and the Christian faith, and have been, from the beginning to the present day, famous for their blasphemies against Christ and his religion. It is evident that these were *Jews* of whom St. James speaks; no *Christians* in these early times could have acted the part here mentioned.

Verse 8. The royal law] **νομον βασιλικον**. This epithet, of all the New Testament writers, is peculiar to James; but it is frequent among the Greek writers in the sense in which it appears St. James uses it. **βασιλικος**, *royal*, is used to signify any thing that is of general concern, is suitable to all, and necessary for all, as brotherly love is. This commandment; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, is a *royal law*, not only because it is ordained of God, and proceeds from his *kingly* authority over men, but because it is so *useful, suitable, and necessary* to the present state of man; and as it was given us particularly by Christ himself, ^{<B13>}**John 13:34; 15:12**, who is our *King*, as well as Prophet and Priest, it should ever put us in mind of his *authority* over us, and our *subjection* to him. As the *regal state* is the most excellent for secular dignity and civil utility that exists among men, hence we give the epithet *royal* to whatever is excellent, noble, grand, or useful.

Verse 9. But if ye have respect to persons] In judgment, or in any other way; *ye commit sin* against God, and against your brethren, and are *convinced*, **ελεγχομενοι**, and are *convicted*, by the law; by this royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; *as transgressors*, having shown this sinful acceptance of persons, which has led you to refuse *justice* to the *poor man*, and uphold the *rich* in his oppressive conduct.

Verse 10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, &c.] This is a rabbinical form of speech. In the tract *Shabbath*, fol. 70, where they

dispute concerning the thirty-nine works commanded by Moses, Rabbi Yochanan says: *But if a man do the whole, with the omission of one, he is guilty of the whole, and of every one.* In *Bammidar rabba*, sec. 9, fol. 200, and in *Tanchum*, fol. 60, there is a copious example given, how an *adulteress*, by that one crime, *breaks all the ten commandments*, and by the same mode of proof any one sin may be shown to be a breach of the whole decalogue. The truth is, any sin is against the Divine authority; and he who has committed one transgression is guilty of death; and by his one deliberate act dissolves, as far as he can, the sacred connection that subsists between all the Divine precepts and the obligation which he is under to obey, and thus casts off in effect his allegiance to God. For, if God should be obeyed in any one instance, he should be obeyed in all, as the authority and reason of obedience are the same in every case; he therefore who breaks one of these laws is, in effect, if not in fact, guilty of the whole. But there is scarcely a more *common form of speech* among the rabbins than this, for they consider that any one sin has the seeds of all others in it. See a multitude of examples in *Schoettgen*.

Verse 11. For he that said] That is, the authority that gave one commandment gave also the rest; and he who breaks one resists this authority; so that the breach of any one commandment may be justly considered a breach of the whole law. It was a maxim also among the Jewish doctors that, if a man kept any one commandment carefully, though he broke all the rest, he might assure himself of the favour of God; for while they taught that “He who transgresses all the precepts of the law has broken the yoke, dissolved the covenant, and exposed the law to contempt, and so has he done who has broken even one precept,” (*Mechilta*, fol. 5, *Yalcut Simeoni*, part 1, fol. 59,) they also taught, “that he who observed any *principal* command was equal to him who kept the whole law;” (*Kiddushin*, fol. 39;) and they give for example, “If a man abandon idolatry, it is the same as if he had fulfilled the whole law,” (*Ibid.*, fol. 40.) To correct this false doctrine James lays down that in the 11th verse. {^{אמרי}**James 2:11**} Thus they *did* and *undid*.

Verse 12. So speak ye, and so do] Have respect to every commandment of God, for this the *law of liberty*-the Gospel of Jesus Christ, particularly requires; and this is the law by which all mankind, who have had the opportunity of knowing it, shall be judged. But all along St. James particularly refers to the precept, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*.

Verse 13. For he shall have judgment] He who shows no mercy to man, or, in other words, he who does not exercise himself in works of charity and mercy to his needy fellow creatures, shall receive no mercy at the hand of God; for he hath said, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*. The unmerciful therefore are *cursed*, and they shall obtain no mercy.

Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.] These words are variously understood. 1. *Mercy*, the merciful man, the abstract for the concrete, exults over judgment, that is, he is not afraid of it, having acted according to the law of liberty, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. 2. Ye shall be exalted by mercy above judgment. 3. For he (God) exalts mercy above judgment. 4. A merciful man rejoices rather in opportunities of showing mercy, than in acting according to strict justice. 5. In the great day, though justice might condemn every man according to the rigour of the law, yet God will cause mercy to triumph over justice in bringing those into his glory who, for his sake, had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, ministered to the sick, and visited the prisoners. See what our Lord says,

◀123▶ **Matthew 25:31-46.**

In the MSS. and versions there is a considerable variety of readings on this verse, and some of the senses given above are derived from those readings. The spirit of the saying may be found in another scripture, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*-I prefer works of charity and mercy to every thing else, and especially to all acts of worship. The ROYAL LAW, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, should particularly prevail among *men*, because of the miserable state to which all are reduced by sin, so that each particularly needs the help of his brother.

Verse 14. What doth it profit-though a man say he hath faith] We now come to a part of this epistle which has appeared to some eminent men to contradict other portions of the Divine records. In short, it has been thought that James teaches the doctrine of *justification by the merit of good works*, while Paul asserts this to be insufficient, and that man is *justified by faith*. Luther, supposing that James did actually teach the doctrine of justification by works, which his good sense showed him to be absolutely insufficient for salvation, was led to condemn the epistle *in toto*, as a production unauthenticated by the Holy Spirit, and consequently worthy of no regard; he therefore termed it *epistola straminea*, a chaffy epistle, an *epistle of straw*, fit only to be burnt. Learned men have spent

much time in striving to reconcile these two writers, and to show that St. Paul and St. James perfectly accord; one teaching the pure doctrine, the other guarding men against the abuse of it. Mr. *Wesley* sums the whole up in the following words, with his usual accuracy and precision: “From ^{<3012>}**James 1:22** the apostle has been enforcing Christian practice. He now applies to those who neglect this under the pretence of faith. St. Paul had taught that *a man is justified by faith without the works of the law*. This some already began to wrest to their own destruction. Wherefore St. James, purposely repeating, ^{<3012>}**James 1:21, 23, 25**, the same phrases, testimonies, and examples which St. Paul had used, ^{<3013>}**Romans 4:3**; ^{<3017>}**Hebrews 11:17, 31**, refutes not the doctrine of St. Paul, but the error of those who abused it. There is therefore no contradiction between the apostles; they both delivered the truth of God, but in a different manner, as having to do with different kinds of men. This verse is a summary of what follows: *What profiteth it*, is enlarged on, ^{<3015>}**James 2:15-17**; *though a man say*, ^{<3018>}**James 2:18, 19**; *can that faith save him?* ^{<3021>}**James 2:20**. It is not *though he have faith*, but *though he say, I have faith*. Here therefore true living faith is meant. But in other parts of the argument the apostle speaks of a dead imaginary faith. He does not therefore teach that true faith *can*, but that it *cannot*, subsist without works. Nor does he oppose *faith* to *works*, but that empty name of faith to real faith working by love. *Can that faith which is without works save him?* No more than it can profit his neighbour.”-*Explanatory notes*.

That St James quotes the same scriptures, and uses the same phrases, testimonies, and examples which St. Paul has done, is fully evident; but it does not follow that he wrote *after* St. Paul. It is *possible* that one had seen the epistle of the other; but if so, it is strange that neither of them should quote the other. That St. Paul might write to correct the abuses of St. James’ doctrine is as possible as that James wrote to prevent St. Paul’s doctrine from being abused; for there were *Antinomians* in the Church in the time of St. James, as there were *Pharisaic persons* in it at the time of St. Paul. I am inclined to think that James is the elder writer, and rather suppose that neither of them had ever seen the other’s epistle. Allowing them both to be inspired, God could teach each what was necessary for the benefit of the Church, without their having any knowledge of each other. See the preface to this epistle.

As the Jews in general were very strenuous in maintaining the *necessity of good works* or *righteousness* in order to justification, wholly neglecting the

doctrine of *faith*, it is not to be wondered at that those who were converted, and saw the absolute necessity of *faith* in order to their justification, should have gone into the contrary extreme.

Can faith save him?] That is, his profession of faith; for it is not said that he *has faith*, but that *he says*, I have faith. St. James probably refers to that faith which simply took in the being and unity of God. See on ^{<30219>}**James 2:19, 24, 25.**

Verse 15. If a brother or sister be naked] That is, ill-clothed; for *γυμνος*, *naked*, has this meaning in several parts of the New Testament, signifying bad clothing, or the want of some particular article of dress. See ^{<40236>}**Matthew 25:36, 38, 43, 44**, and ^{<432107>}**John 21:7**. It has the same *comparative* signification in most languages.

Verse 16. Be ye warmed and filled] Your saying so to them, while you give them nothing, will just profit them as much as your professed faith, without those works which are the genuine fruits of true faith, will profit you in the day when God comes to sit in judgment upon your soul.

Verse 17. If it hath not works, is dead] The faith that does not produce works of charity and mercy is without the living principle which animates all true faith, that is, *love to God* and *love to man*. They had faith, such as a man has who credits a well-circumstanced relation because it has all the appearance of truth; but they had nothing of that faith that a sinner, convinced of his sinfulness, God's purity, and the strictness of the Divine laws, is obliged to exert in the Lord Jesus, in order to be saved from his sins.

Verse 18. Show me thy faith without thy works] Your pretending to have faith, while you have no works of charity or mercy, is utterly vain: for as *faith*, which is a principle in the mind, cannot be discerned but by the *effects*, that is, *good works*; he who has no good works has, presumptively, no faith.

I will show thee my faith by my works.] My works of charity and mercy will show that I have faith; and that it is the living tree, whose root is love to God and man, and whose fruit is the good works here contended for.

Verse 19. Thou believest that there is one God] This is the faith in which these persons put their hope of pleasing God, and of obtaining eternal life. Believing in the *being and unity of God* distinguished them from all the

nations of the world; and having been circumcised, and thus brought into the covenant, they thought themselves secure of salvation. The insufficiency of this St. James immediately shows.

The devils also believe, and tremble.] It is well to believe there is one only true God; this truth universal nature proclaims. Even the *devils* believe it; but far from *justifying* or *saving them*, it leaves them in their damned state, and every act of it only increases their torment; **φορισσοῦσι**, *they shudder with horror*, they believe and tremble, are increasingly tormented; but they can neither *love* nor *obey*.

Verse 20. But wilt thou know] Art thou willing to be instructed in the nature of true saving faith? Then attend to the following examples.

Verse 21. Was not Abraham our father] Did not the conduct of Abraham, in offering up his son Isaac on the altar, sufficiently prove that *he believed in God*, and that it was his *faith* in him that led him to this extraordinary act of obedience?

Verse 22. Seest thou how faith wrought] Here is a proof that faith cannot exist without being active in works of righteousness. His faith in God would have been of no avail to him, had it not been manifested by works; for *by works*-by his obedience to the commands of God, *his faith was made perfect*-it dictated obedience, he obeyed; and thus faith **ετελειωθη**, *had its consummation*. Even *true faith* will soon die, if its possessor do not live in the spirit of *obedience*.

Verse 23. The scripture was fulfilled] He believed God; this faith was never inactive, it was accounted to him for righteousness: and being justified by thus believing, his life of obedience showed that he had not received the grace of God in vain. **See Clarke's notes on "^{<011306>}Genesis 15:6"; "^{<004B>}Romans 4:3"; "^{<0046>}Galatians 3:6";** where this subject is largely explained.

The friend of God.] The highest character ever given to man. As among friends every thing is in common; so God took Abraham into intimate communion with himself, and poured out upon him the choicest of his blessings: for as God can never be in want, because he possesses all things; so Abraham his friend could never be destitute, because God was his friend.

Verse 24. Ye see then how] It is evident from this example that Abraham's faith was not merely *believing that there is a God*; but a principle that led him to credit God's promises relative to the future Redeemer, and to implore God's mercy: this he received, and was justified by faith. His faith now began to work by love, and therefore he was found ever obedient to the will of his Maker. He brought forth the fruits of righteousness; and his works *justified*-proved the genuineness of his faith; and he continued to enjoy the *Divine approbation*, which he could not have done had he not been thus obedient; for the Spirit of God would have been grieved, and his principle of faith would have perished. Obedience to God is essentially requisite to maintain faith. Faith lives, under God, by works; and works have their being and excellence from faith. Neither can subsist without the other, and this is the point which St. James labours to prove, in order to convince the Antinomians of his time that their faith was a delusion, and that the hopes built on it must needs perish.

Verse 25. Rahab the harlot] See Clarke's notes on "⁰⁰⁰⁰Joshua 2:1", &c., and "⁸¹¹³Hebrews 11:31", &c. Rahab had the *approbation* due to genuine faith, which she actually possessed, and gave the fullest proof that she did so by her conduct. As justification signifies, not only the pardon of sin, but receiving the *Divine approbation*, James seems to use the word in this latter sense. God *approved* of them, because of their obedience to his will; and he *approves* of no man who is not *obedient*.

Verse 26. For as the body without the spirit is dead] There can be no more a *genuine faith* without *good works*, than there can be a living human body without a soul.

WE shall never find a series of disinterested godly living without true faith. And we shall never find true faith without such a life. We may see works of apparent benevolence without faith; their principle is *ostentation*; and, as long as they can have the reward (human applause) which they seek, they may be continued. And yet the experience of all mankind shows how *short-lived* such works are; they want both *principle* and *spring*; they endure for a time, but soon wither away. Where true faith is, there is God; his *Spirit* gives *life*, and his *love* affords *motives* to righteous actions. The *use* of any Divine principle leads to its *increase*. The more a man exercises faith in Christ, the more he is enabled to believe; the more he believes, the more he receives; and the more he receives, the more able he is to work for God. Obedience is his delight, because love to God and man is the element

in which his soul lives. Reader, thou professest to believe; show thy faith, both to God and man, by a life conformed to the *royal law*, which ever gives *liberty* and confers *dignity*.

“Some persons, known to St. James, must have taught that men are justified by merely believing in the one true God; or he would not have taken such pains to confute it. Crediting the unity of the Godhead, and the doctrine of a future state, was that faith through which both the Jews in St. James’ time and the Mohammedans of the present day expect justification. St. James, in denying this faith to be of avail, if unaccompanied with good works, has said nothing more than what St. Paul has said, in other words, Rom. 2, where he combats the same Jewish error, and asserts that not the hearers but the doers of the law will be justified, and that a knowledge of God’s will, without the performance of it, serves only to increase our condemnation.”-*Michaelis*.

JAMES

CHAPTER 3.

They are exhorted not to be many masters, 1. And to bridle the tongue, which is often an instrument of much evil, 2-12. The character and fruits of true and false wisdom, 13-18.

NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

Verse 1. Be not many masters] Do not affect the *teacher's* office, for many wish to be teachers who have more need to learn. There were many teachers or *rabbins* among the Jews, each affecting to have THE truth, and to draw disciples after him. We find a caution against such persons, and of the same nature with that of St. James, in *Pirkey Aboth*, c. i. 10: *Love labour, and hate the rabbin's office.*

This caution is still necessary; there are multitudes, whom God has never called, and never can call, because he has never qualified them for the work, who earnestly wish to get into the priest's office. And of this kind, in opposition to St. James, *we have many masters*-persons who undertake to show us the way of salvation, who know nothing of that ways and are unsaved themselves. These are found among *all descriptions* of Christians, and have been the means of bringing the ministerial office into contempt. Their case is awful; *they shall receive greater condemnation* than common sinners; they have not only sinned in thrusting themselves into that office to which God has never called them, but through their *insufficiency* the flocks over whom they have assumed the mastery perish for lack of knowledge, and their blood will God require at the watchman's hand. A man may have this *mastery* according to the *law* of the land, and yet not have it according to the *Gospel*; another may affect to have it according to the *Gospel*, because he dissents from the religion of the *state*, and not have it according to Christ. Blockheads are common, and knaves and hypocrites may be found everywhere.

Verse 2. In many things we offend all.] *πταιομεν απαντες.* *We all stumble* or *trip*. Dr. Barrow very properly observes: "As the general course of life is called a *way*, and particular actions *steps*, so going on in a regular course of right action is *walking uprightly*; and acting amiss, *tripping* or

stumbling.” There are very few who walk so closely with God, and inoffensively with men, as never to stumble; and although it is the privilege of every follower of God *to be sincere and without offence to the day of Christ*, yet few of them are so. Were this *unavoidable*, it would be useless to make it a subject of regret; but as every man may receive grace from his God to enable him to walk in every respect *uprightly*, it is to be deplored that so few live up to their privileges. Some have produced these words as a *proof* that “no man can live without sinning against God; for James himself, a holy apostle speaking of himself, all the apostles, and the whole Church of Christ, says, *In many things we offend all.*” This is a very bad and dangerous doctrine; and, pushed to its consequences, would greatly affect the credibility of the whole Gospel system. Besides, were the doctrine as true as it is dangerous and false, it is foolish to ground it upon such a text; because St. James, after the common mode of all teachers, includes himself in his addresses to his hearers. And were we to suppose that where he appears by the use of the plural pronoun to include himself, he means to be thus understood, we must then grant that himself was one of those many *teachers* who were to *receive a great condemnation*, ^{<SQR>}**James 3:1**; that he was a *horse-breaker*, because he says, “we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us,” ^{<SQR>}**James 3:3**; that *his tongue* was a world of iniquity, and set on fire of hell, for he says, “so is the tongue among *our* members,” ^{<SQR>}**James 3:6**; that he cursed men, “wherewith curse *we* men,” ^{<SQR>}**James 3:9**. No man possessing common sense could imagine that James, or any man of even tolerable morals, could be guilty of those things. But some of those were thus guilty to whom he wrote; and to soften his reproofs, and to cause them to enter the more deeply into their hearts, he appears to include himself in his own censure; and yet not one of his readers would understand him as being a brother delinquent.

Offend not in word, the same is a perfect man] To understand this properly we must refer to the caution St. James gives in the preceding verse: *Be not many masters or teachers*-do not affect that for which you are not qualified, because in your *teaching*, not knowing the heavenly doctrine, ye may *sin* against the *anology of faith*. But, says he, *if any man offend not*, ου πταιει, *trip not*, εν λογω, *in doctrine*, teaching the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, *the same is τελειος ανηρ*, a *man fully instructed* in Divine things: How often the term λογος, which we render *word*, is used to express *doctrine*, and the *doctrine of the Gospel*,

we have seen in many parts of the preceding comment. And how often the word **τέλειος**, which we translate *perfect*, is used to signify *an adult Christian*, one *thoroughly instructed* in the doctrines of the Gospel, may be seen in various parts of St. Paul's writings. See among others, ^{<4006>}**1 Corinthians 2:6; 14:20;** ^{<4043>}**Ephesians 4:13;** ^{<5085>}**Philippians 3:15;** ^{<51042>}**Colossians 4:12;** ^{<8064>}**Hebrews 5:14.** The man, therefore, who advanced no false doctrine, and gave no imperfect view of any of the great truths of Christianity; that man proved himself thereby to be *thoroughly instructed* in Divine things; to be no novice, and consequently, among the *many teachers*, to be a *perfect master*, and worthy of the sacred vocation.

Able also to bridle the whole body.] Grotius, by *body*, believed that the Church of Christ was intended; and this the view we have taken of the preceding clauses renders very probable. But some think the *passions* and *appetites* are intended; yet these persons understand *not offending in word* as referring simply to well guarded speech. Now how a man's cautiousness in *what he says* can be a proof that he has *every passion and appetite under control*, I cannot see. Indeed, I have seen so many examples of a contrary kind, that I can have no doubt of the impropriety of this exposition. But it is objected "that **χαλιναγωγέω** signifies to *check, turn, or rule with a bridle*; and is never applied to the government of the Church of Christ." Probably not: but St. James is a very peculiar writer; his phraseology, metaphors, and diction in general, are different from all the rest of the New Testament writers, so as to have scarcely any thing in common with them, but only that he writes in Greek. The sixth verse {^{<5086>}**James 3:6**} is supposed to be a proof against the opinion of *Grotius*; but I conceive that verse to belong to a different subject, which commences ^{<5083>}**James 3:3.**

Verse 3. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths] In order to show the necessity of regulating the tongue, to which St. James was led by his exhortation to them who wished to thrust themselves into the teacher's office, supposing, because they had the *gift of a ready flow of speech*, that therefore they might commence teachers of Divine things; he proceeds to show that the tongue must be bridled as the horse, and governed as the ships; because, though it is small, it is capable of ruling the whole man; and of irritating and offending others.

Verse 5. Boasteth great things.] That is, *can do great things*, whether of a *good* or *evil* kind. He seems to refer here to the powerful and all commanding eloquence of the Greek orators: they could carry the great

mob whithersoever they wished; calm them to peaceableness and submission, or excite them to furious sedition.

Behold, how great a matter] See what a flame of discord and insubordination one man, merely by his persuasive tongue, may kindle among the common people.

Verse 6. The tongue is a fire] It is often the instrument of producing the most desperate contentions and insurrections.

A world of iniquity] This is an unusual form of speech, but the meaning is plain enough; WORLD signifies here a *mass*, a *great collection*, an *abundance*. We use the term in the same sense—a *world of troubles*, a *world of toil*, a *world of anxiety*; for *great troubles*, *oppressive toil*, *most distressing anxiety*. And one of our lexicographers calls his work a *world of words*; i.e. a vast collection of words: so we also say, a *deluge of wickedness*, a *sea of troubles*; and the Latins, *oceanus malorum*, an ocean of evils. I do not recollect an example of this use of the word among the Greek writers; but in this sense it appears to be used by the Septuagint, ^{<201706>}**Proverbs 17:6:** του πιστου ολος ο κοσμος των χρηματων, του δε απιστου ουδε οβολος, which may be translated, “The faithful has a *world of riches*, but the unfaithful not a penny.” This clause has nothing answering to it in the *Hebrew* text. Some think that the word is thus used, ^{<6026>}**2 Peter 2:5:** And brought the flood, κοσμω ασεβων, on the multitude of the ungodly. Mr. Wakefield translates the clause thus: The tongue is the *varnisher of injustice*. We have seen that *κοσμος* signifies adorned, elegant, beautiful, &c., but I can scarcely think that this is its sense in this place. The *Syriac* gives a curious turn to the expression: *And the tongue is a fire; and the world of iniquity is like a wood*. Above, the same version has: *A little fire burns great woods*. So the world of iniquity is represented as inflamed by the wicked tongues of men; the world being *fuel*, and the tongue a *fire*.

So is the tongue among our members] I think St. James refers here to those well known speeches of the rabbins, *Vayikra Rabba*, sec. 16, fol. 159. “Rabbi Eleazar said, Man has one hundred and forty-eight members, some confined, others free. The tongue is placed between the jaws; and from under it proceeds a fountain of water, (the great sublingual salivary gland,) and it is folded with various foldings. Come and see *what a flame the tongue kindles!* Were it one of the unconfined members, what would it not do?” The same sentiment, with a little variation, may be found in

Midrash, Yalcut Simeoni, par. 2, fol. 107; and in *Erachin*, fol. xv. 2, on ^{<SCIB>}**Psalm 120:3**: *What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?* “The holy blessed God said to the tongue: All the rest of the members of the body are *erect*, but thou *liest down*; all the rest are *external*, but thou art *internal*. Nor is this enough: I have built *two walls* about thee; the one *bone*, the other *flesh*: *What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done unto thee, O thou false tongue?*”

Setteth on fire the course of nature] φλογιζουσα τον τροχον της γενεσεως. *And setteth on fire the wheel of life.* I question much whether this verse be in general well understood. There are three different interpretations of it: 1. St. James does not intend to express the whole circle of human affairs, so much affected by the tongue of man; but rather the *penal wheel* of the Greeks, and not unknown to the Jews, on which they were accustomed to extend criminals, to induce them to confess, or to punish them for crimes; under which *wheels*, *fire* was often placed to add to their torments. In the book, *Deuteronomy Maccabæis*, attributed to Josephus, and found in *Haverkamp’s* edition, vol. ii., p. 497-520, where we have the account of the martyrdom of seven Hebrew brothers, in chap. ix, speaking of the death of the eldest, it is said: ανεβαλον αυτον επι τον τροχου-περι ον κατατεινομενος. “They cast him on the *wheel*, over which they extended him; πυρ υπεστρωσαν και διηρθισαν τον τροχον προσεπικατατεινοντες. they put *coals* under it, and strongly agitated the wheel.” And of the martyrdom of the sixth brother it is said, cap. 11: παρηγον επι τον τροχον, εφου κατατεινομενος εκμελως και εκσφονδυλιζομενος υπεκαιετο. και οβελισκους δε οξεις πυρωσαντες, τοις νοτοις προσεφερον, και τα πλευρα διαπειραντες αυτου, και τα σπλαγγνα διεκαιον. They brought him to the *wheel*, on which, having distended his limbs, and broken his joints, they *scorched* him with the *fire* placed underneath; and with sharp spits *heated in the fire*, they pierced his sides, and burned his bowels.

The *fire* and the *wheel* are mentioned by *Achilles Tatius*, lib. 7, p. 449. “Having stripped me of my garments, I was carried aloft, των μεν μαστιγας κομιζοντων, των δε πυρ και τροχον, some bringing scourges, others the *fire* and the *wheel*.” Now as *γενεσις* often signifies *life*, then the *wheel of life* will signify the miseries and torments of life. To *set on fire the wheel of life* is to increase a man’s torments; and to be *set on fire from hell* implies having these miseries rendered more active by diabolic agency; or, in other words, bad men, instigated by the devil,

through their *lies* and *calumnies*, make life burdensome to the objects of their malicious tongues. The *wheel* and the *fire*, so pointedly mentioned by St. James, make it probable that this sort of punishment might have suggested the idea to him. See more in *Kypke*.

2. But is it not possible that by the *wheel of life* St. James may have the *circulation of the blood* in view? Angry or irritating language has an astonishing influence on the circulation of the blood: the heart beats high and frequent; the blood is hurried through the arteries to the veins, through the veins to the heart, and through the heart to the arteries again, and so on; an extraordinary degree of *heat* is at the same time engendered; the eyes become more prominent in their sockets; the capillary vessels suffused with blood; the face flushed; and, in short, the whole *wheel of nature is set on fire of hell*. No description can be more natural than this: but it may be objected that this intimates that the *circulation of the blood* was known to St. James. Now supposing it does, is the thing impossible? It is allowed by some of the most judicious medical writers, that Solomon refers to this in his celebrated *portraiture of old age*, particularly in ²¹¹²⁶**Ecclesiastes 12:6**: “Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.” Here is the very *wheel of life* from which St. James might have borrowed the idea; and the different times evidently refer to the *circulation of the blood*, which might be as well known to St. James as the doctrine of the *parallax of the sun*. See Clarke on ³⁰¹⁷“**James 1:17**”.

3. It is true, however, that the rabbins use the term *twll wt l gl g gilgal toledoth*, “the wheel of generations,” to mark the successive generations of men: and it is possible that St. James might refer to this; as if he had said: “The tongue has been the instrument of confusion and misery through all the ages of the world.” But the other interpretations are more likely.

Verse 7. Every kind of beasts] That is, every *species* of wild beasts, *πασα φυσις θηριων*, *is tamed*, i.e. brought under man’s power and dominion. Beasts, birds, serpents, and some kinds of fishes have been *tamed* so as to be domesticated; but every kind, particularly *των εναλιων*, of *sea monsters*, has not been *thus* tamed; but all have been subjected to the power of man; both the *shark* and *whale* become an easy prey to the skill and influence of the human being. I have had the most credible information, when in the Zetland Isles, of the *seals* being domesticated, and

of one that would pass part of his time on shore, receive his allowance of milk, &c., from the servants, go again to sea, and return, and so on.

Verse 8. But the tongue wan no man tame] No cunning, persuasion, or influence has ever been able to silence it. Nothing but the grace of God, *excision*, or *death*, can bring *it* under subjection.

It is **an unruly evil]** *ακατασχετον κακον*. An *evil* that *cannot* be *restrained*; it cannot be *brought* under any kind of government; it breaks all bounds.

Full of deadly poison.] He refers here to the tongues of serpents, supposed to be the means of conveying their poison into wounds made by their teeth. Throughout the whole of this poetic and highly declamatory description, St. James must have the tongue of the *slanderer*, *calumniator*, *backbiter*, *whisperer*, and *tale-bearer*, particularly in view. Vipers, basilisks; and rattlesnakes are not more dangerous to *life*, than these are to the peace and reputation of men.

Verse 9. Therewith bless we God] The tongue is capable of rehearsing the praises, and setting forth the glories, of the eternal King: what a pity that it should ever be employed in a contrary work! It can proclaim and vindicate the truth of God, and publish the Gospel of peace and good will among men: what a pity that it should ever be employed in falsehoods, calumny, or in the cause of infidelity!

And therewith curse we men] In the true Satanic spirit, many pray to God, the *Father*, to destroy those who are objects of their displeasure! These are the *common swearers*, whose mouths are generally full of direful imprecations against those with whom they are offended.

The consideration that *man is made after the image of God* should restrain the tongue of the swearer; but there are many who, while they pretend to *sing the high praises of God*, are ready to wish the direst imprecations either on those who offend them, or with whom they choose to be offended.

Verse 10. Out of the same mouth] This saying is something like that, ^{<201821>}**Proverbs 18:21:** *Death and life are in the power of the tongue*; and on this, for an illustration of St. James' words, hear *Vayikra Rabba*, sec. 33: "Rabbi Simeon, the son of Gamaliel, said to his servant Tobias, Go and bring me some *good food* from the market: the servant went, and he

bought *tongues*. At another time he said to the same servant, Go and buy me some *bad food*: the servant went, and bought *tongues*. The master said, What is the reason that when I ordered thee to buy me *good* and *bad* food, thou didst bring *tongues*? The servant answered, From the *tongue* both *good* and *evil* come to man: if it be *good*, there is nothing *better*; if *bad*, there is nothing *worse*.”

A saying very like that of St. James as found in *Rabbi Tanchum*, fol. 10, 4: “The mouth desires to study in the law, and to speak good words; to praise God, to glorify him, and to celebrate him with hymns: but it can also slander, blaspheme, reproach, and swear falsely.” See *Schoettgen*.

To find a man who officiates in sacred things to be a common swearer, a slanderer, &c., is truly monstrous; but there have been many cases of this kind, and I have known several. Let me say to all such, *My brethren, these things ought not so to be*.

Verse 11. Doth a fountain send forth-sweet water and bitter?] In many things *nature* is a sure guide to man; but no such inconsistency is found in the natural world as this blessing and cursing in man. No fountain, at the same opening, sends forth sweet water and bitter; no fig tree can bear olive berries; no vine can bear figs; nor can the sea produce salt water and fresh from the same place. These are all contradictions, and indeed impossibilities, in nature. And it is depraved man alone that can act the monstrous part already referred to.

Verse 12. So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.] For the reading of the common text, which is οὕτως οὐδεμία πηγή αλυκον και γλυκυ ποιησαι υδωρ, *so no fountain can produce salt water and sweet*, there are various other readings in the MSS. and versions. The word οὕτως, *so*, which makes this a continuation of the comparison in ^{<S011>}James 3:11, is wanting in ABC, one other, with the *Armenian* and ancient *Syriac*; the later *Syriac* has it in the margin with an asterisk. ABC, five others, with the *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, one copy of the *Itala*, and *Cyril*, have ουτε αλυκον γλυκυ ποιησαι υδωρ, *neither can salt water produce sweet*. In the *Syriac* and the *Arabic* of Erpen, it is, *So, likewise, sweet water cannot become bitter; and bitter water cannot become sweet*. The true reading appears to be, *Neither can salt water produce sweet, or, Neither can the sea produce fresh water*; and this is a new comparison, and not an inference from that in ^{<S011>}James 3:11. This reading *Griesbach* has admitted into the text; and of it Professor *White*, in his *Crisews*, says,

Lectio indubie genuina, “a reading undoubtedly genuine.” There are therefore, *four* distinct comparisons here: 1. A fountain cannot produce sweet water and bitter. 2. A fig tree cannot produce olive berries. 3. A vine cannot produce figs. 4. Salt water cannot be made sweet. That is, according to the ordinary operations of nature, these things are impossible. Chemical analysis is out of the question.

Verse 13. Who is a wise man] One truly religious; who, although he can neither bridle nor tame other men’s tongues, can restrain his own.

And endued with knowledge] *καὶ ἐπιστημῶν*. And qualified to teach others.

Let him show] Let him by a holy life and chaste conversation show, through meekness and gentleness, joined to his Divine information, that he is a Christian indeed; his works and his spirit proving that God is in him of a truth; and that, from the fulness of a holy heart, his feet walk, his hands work; and his tongue speaks. We may learn from this that *genuine wisdom* is ever accompanied with *meekness* and *gentleness*. Those *proud, overbearing, and disdainful men*, who pass for *great scholars* and *eminent critics*, may have *learning*, but they have not *wisdom*. Their learning implies their correct knowledge of the *structure of language*, and of *composition in general*; but *wisdom* they have none, nor any *self-government*. They are like the blind man who carried a lantern in daylight to keep others from jostling him in the street. That *learning* is not only *little worth*, but *despicable*, that does not teach a man to *govern his own spirit*, and to be humble in his conduct towards others.

Verse 14. If ye have bitter envying and strife] If ye be under the influence of an *unkind, fierce, and contemptuous* spirit, even while attempting or pretending to defend true religion, *do not boast* either of your *exertions* or *success* in silencing an adversary; ye have *no religion*, and no *true wisdom*, and to profess either is *to lie against the truth*. Let all writers on what is called *polemic* (fighting, warring) *divinity* lay this to heart. The pious Mr. Herbert gives excellent advice on this subject:—

*“Be calm in arguing, for fierceness makes
Error a fault, and truth discourtesy;
Why should I feel another man’s mistakes
More than his sickness or his poverty?
In love I should; but anger is not love,
Nor wisdom neither; therefore g-e-n-t-l-y m-o-d-e.”*

Verse 15. This wisdom descendeth not from above] God is not the author of it, because it is *bitter-not meek*. See at the end of this chapter.
“^{<3018>}James 3:18”

Is earthly] Having *this life* only in view.

Sensual] ψυχικη. *Animal*-having for its object the *gratification* of the *passions* and *animal propensities*.

Devilish] δαμονιωδης. *Demoniacal*-inspired by demons, and maintained in the soul by their indwelling influence.

Verse 16. For where envying and strife is] ζηλος και εριθεια. *Zeal*-fiery, inflammatory passion, and *contention*-altercations about the different points of the law, of no use for edification, such as those mentioned, ^{<3019>}Titus 3:9. The *Jews* were the most intolerant of all mankind; it was a maxim with them to kill those who would not conform to their law; and their salvation they believed to be impossible. This has been the spirit of *Popery*, and of the Romish Church at large; in vain do they attempt to deny it; they have written it in characters of *blood* and *fire* even in this country, (England,) when they were possessed of political power. With them it is still an established maxim, that out of their Church there is no redemption; and fire and faggot have been in that Church legal means of *conversion* or *extinction*. In the short popish reign of *Mary* in this country, besides multitudes who suffered by fine, imprisonment, confiscation, &c., two hundred and seventy-seven were *burnt alive*, among whom were *one* archbishop, *four* bishops, *twenty-one* clergymen, *eight* lay gentlemen, *eighty-four* tradesmen, *one hundred* husbandmen, *fifty-five* women, and *four* children! O earth! thou hast not drunk their *blood*; but their *ashes* have been strewed on the face of the field.

Verse 17. The wisdom that is from above] The pure religion of the Lord Jesus, bought by his blood, and infused by his Spirit. See the rabbinical meaning of this phrase at the end of this chapter.

Is first pure] ἄγνη. *Chaste, holy, and clean.*

Peaceable] εἰρηνικη. *Living in peace with others, and promoting peace among men.*

Gentle] ἐπιεικης. *Meek, modest, of an equal mind, taking every thing in good part, and putting the best construction upon all the actions of others.*

Easy to be entreated] εὐπειθης. *Not stubborn nor obstinate; of a yielding disposition in all indifferent things; obsequious, docile.*

Full of mercy] Ready to pass by a transgression, and to grant forgiveness to those who offend, and performing every possible act of kindness.

Good fruits] Each temper and disposition producing fruits suited to and descriptive of its nature.

Without partiality] ἀδιακριτος. *Without making a difference-rendering to every man his due; and being never swayed by self-interest, worldly honour, or the fear of man; knowing no man after the flesh. One of the *Itala* has it *irreprehensible*.*

Without hypocrisy.] ἀνυποκριτος. *Without dissimulation; without pretending to be what it is not; acting always in its own character; never working under a mask. Seeking nothing but God's glory, and using no other means to attain it than those of his own prescribing.*

Verse 18. And the fruit of righteousness is sown] The whole is the *principle* of righteousness in the soul, and all the above virtues are the *fruits* of that righteousness.

Is sown in peace] When the peace of God rules the heart, all these virtues and graces grow and flourish abundantly.

Of them that make peace.] The peace-makers are continually recommending this wisdom to others, and their own conduct is represented as a *sowing of heavenly seed*, which brings forth Divine fruit. Perhaps *sowing in peace* signifies *sowing prosperously*-being very successful. This is not only the proper disposition for every *teacher* of the Gospel, but for every professed follower of the Lord Jesus.

Some render this verse, which is confessedly obscure, thus: *And the peaceable fruits of righteousness are sown for the practisers of peace. He who labours to live peaceably shall have peace for his reward.*

1. ALMOST the whole of the preceding chapter is founded on maxims highly accredited in the *rabbinical* writings, and without a reference to those writings it would have been impossible, in some cases, to have understood St. James' meaning. There is one phrase, the rabbinical meaning and use of which I have reserved for this place, viz.. *The wisdom that is from above*. This is greatly celebrated among them by the terms *hnwyl* [*hmkj*] *chocmah elyonah*, the *supernal wisdom*. This they seem to understand to be a *peculiar inspiration of the Almighty*, or a teaching communicated immediately by the angels of God. In *Sohar*, *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 19, *Rabbi Chiya* said: "*The wisdom from above* was in Adam more than in the supreme angels, and he knew all things."

In *Sohar Chadash*, fol. 35, it is said concerning *Enoch*, "That the angels were sent from heaven, and taught him the *wisdom that is from above*." *Ibid.* fol. 42, 4: "Solomon came, and he was perfect in all things, and strongly set forth the praises of the *wisdom that is from above*." See more in *Schoettgen*. St. James gives us the *properties* of this wisdom, which are not to be found in such detail in any of the rabbinical writers. It is another word for the *life of God in the soul of man*, or *true religion*; it is the *teaching of God in the human heart*, and he who has this not is not a *child of God*; for it is written, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord*.

2. To enjoy the peace of God in the conscience, and to live to promote peace among men, is to answer the end of our creation, and to enjoy as much happiness ourselves as the present state of things can afford. They who are in continual broils live a wretched life; and they who *love* the life of the salamander must share no small portion of the demoniacal nature. In *domestic society* such persons are an *evil disease*; therefore a *canker* in the *Church*, and a pest in the *state*.

JAMES

CHAPTER 4.

The origin of wars and contentions, and the wretched lot of those who are engaged in them, 1, 2. Why so little heavenly good is obtained, 3. The friendship of the world is enmity with God, 4, 5. God resists the proud, 6. Men should submit to God, and pray, 7, 8. Should humble themselves, 9, 10. And not speak evil of each other, 11, 12. The impiety of those who consult not the will of God, and depend not on his providence, 13-15. The sin of him who knows the will of God, and does not do it, 16, 17.

NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

Verse 1. From whence come wars and fightings] About the time in which St. James wrote, whether we follow the *earlier* or the *later date* of this epistle, we find, according to the accounts given by Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. c. 17, &c., that the Jews, under pretence of defending their religion, and procuring that liberty to which they believed themselves entitled, made various insurrections in Judea against the Romans, which occasioned much bloodshed and misery to their nation. The *factions* also, into which the Jews were split, had violent contentions among themselves, in which they massacred and plundered each other. In the provinces, likewise, the Jews became very turbulent; particularly in Alexandria, and different other parts of Egypt, of Syria, and other places, where they made war against the heathens, killing many, and being massacred in their turn. They were led to these outrages by the opinion that they were bound by their law to extirpate idolatry, and to kill all those who would not become proselytes to Judaism. These are probably the *wars* and *fightings* to which St. James alludes; and which they undertook rather from a principle of *covetousness* than from any sincere desire to convert the heathen. See *Macknight*.

Come they not hence-of your lusts] This was the principle from which these Jewish contentions and predatory wars proceeded, and the principle from which all the wars that have afflicted and desolated the world have proceeded. One nation or king *covets* another's *territory* or *property*; and, as *conquest* is supposed to give right to all the possessions gained by it,

they kill, slay, burn, and destroy, till one is overcome or exhausted, and then the other makes his own terms; or, several neighbouring potentates fall upon one that is weak; and, after murdering one half of the people, partition among themselves the fallen king's territory; just as the *Austrians*, *Prussians*, and *Russians* have done with the kingdom of *Poland!*-a stain upon their justice and policy which no lapse of time can ever wash out.

These *wars* and *fightings* could not be attributed to the Christians in that time; for, howsoever fallen or degenerate, they had no power to raise *contentions*; and no political consequence to enable them to resist their enemies by the edge of the sword, or resistance of any kind.

Verse 2. Ye lust, and have not] Ye are ever covetous, and ever poor.

Ye kill, and, desire to have] Ye are constantly engaged in insurrections and predatory wars, and never gain any advantage.

Ye have not, because ye ask not.] Ye get no especial blessing from God as your fathers did, because ye do not pray. Worldly good is your god; ye leave no stone unturned in order to get it; and as ye ask nothing from God but to *consume it upon your evil desires and propensities*, your prayers are not heard.

Verse 3. Ye ask, and receive not] Some think that this refers to their prayers for the conversion of the heathen; and on the pretence that they were not converted thus; they thought it lawful to extirpate them and possess their goods.

Ye ask amiss] *κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε*. *Ye ask evilly, wickedly*. Ye have not the proper *dispositions* of prayer, and ye have an improper *object*. Ye ask for worldly prosperity, that ye may employ it in riotous living. This is properly the meaning of the original, *ἵνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε*, *That ye may expend it upon your pleasures*. The rabbins have many good observations on *asking amiss* or *asking improperly*, and give examples of different kinds of this sort of prayer; the phrase is *Jewish* and would naturally occur to St. James in writing on this subject. Whether the *lusting* of which St. James speaks were their desire to make proselytes, in order that they might increase their power and influence by means of such, or whether it were a desire to cast off the Roman yoke, and become independent; the *motive* and the *object* were the same, and the prayers were such as God could not *hear*.

Verse 4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses] The Jews, because of their *covenant* with God, are represented as being *espoused* to him; and hence their idolatry, and their iniquity in general, are represented under the notion of *adultery*. And although they had not since the Babylonish captivity been guilty of *idolatry*; according to the *letter*; yet what is intended by idolatry, having their hearts estranged from God, and seeking their portion in this life and out of God, is that of which the Jews were then notoriously guilty. And I rather think that it is in this sense especially that St. James uses the words. “Lo! they that are far from thee shall perish; thou hast destroyed all them that *go a whoring* from thee.” But perhaps something more than spiritual adultery is intended. See ~~5049~~ **James 4:9**.

The friendship of the world] The world was their god; here they committed their *spiritual adultery*; and they cultivated this friendship in order that they might gain this end.

The word **μοιχαλιδες**, *adulteresses*, is wanting in the *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and one copy of the *Itala*.

Whosoever-will be a friend of the world] How strange it is that people professing Christianity can suppose that with a worldly spirit, worldly companions, and their lives governed by worldly maxims, they can be in the favour of God, or ever get to the kingdom of heaven! When the *world* gets into the *Church*, the Church becomes a painted sepulchre; its spiritual vitality being extinct.

Verse 6. But he giveth more grace] **μειζονα χαριν**, *A greater benefit*, than all the goods that the world can bestow; for he gives genuine happiness, and this the world cannot confer. May this be St. James’ meaning?

God resisteth the proud] **αντιτασεται**. *Sets himself in battle array* against him.

Giveth grace unto the humble.] The sure way to please God is to submit to the dispensation of his grace and providence; and when a man acknowledges him in all his ways, he will direct all his steps. The covetous man grasps at the *shadow*, and loses the *substance*.

Verse 7. Submit-to God] Continue to bow to all his decisions, and to all his dispensations.

Resist the devil] He cannot conquer you if you continue to resist. Strong as he is, God never permits him to conquer the man who continues to resist him; he cannot *force* the human will. He who, in the *terrible name* of JESUS, opposes even the devil himself, is sure to have a speedy and glorious conquest. He flees from that *name*, and from his conquering blood.

Verse 8. Draw nigh to God] Approach HIM, in the name of Jesus, by faith and prayer, and *he will draw nigh to you*-he will *meet* you at your coming. When a soul sets out to seek God, God sets out to meet that soul; so that while we are drawing near to him, he is drawing near to us. The *delicacy* and *beauty* of these expressions are, I think, but seldom noted.

Cleanse your hands, ye sinners] This I think to be the beginning of a new address, and to different persons; and should have formed the commencement of a new verse. Let your whole conduct be changed; cease to do evil learn to do well. *Washing or cleansing the hands* was a token of innocence and purity.

Purify your hearts] *Separate* yourselves from the world, and consecrate yourselves to God: this is the true notion of sanctification. We have often seen that to sanctify signifies to separate a thing or person from profane or common use, and consecrate it or him to God. This is the true notion of **vdq** *kadash*, in Hebrew, and **αγιαζω** in Greek. The person or thing thus consecrated or separated is considered to be *holy*, and to be God's property; and then God hallows it to himself. There are, therefore, two things implied in a man's sanctification: 1. That he separates himself from evil ways and evil companions, and devotes himself to God. 2. That God separates guilt from his conscience, and sin from his soul, and thus makes him internally and externally *holy*.

This double sanctification is well expressed in Sohar, Levit. fol. 33, col. 132, on the words, *be ye holy, for I the Lord am holy*: **hl [ml m wtw** **˘vyqm hcml m wmx[vdqm sra**, *a man sanctifies himself on the earth, and then he is sanctified from heaven*. As a man is a *sinner*, he must have his *hands cleansed* from wicked works; as he is *double-minded*, he must have his *heart sanctified*. *Sanctification* belongs to the *heart*, because of *pollution of mind*; *cleansing* belongs to the *hands*, because of *sinful acts*. See Clarke's note on "⁻³⁰⁰⁸James 1:8", for the signification of *double-minded*.

Verse 9. Be afflicted, and mourn] Without true and deep repentance ye cannot expect the mercy of God.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning] It appears most evidently that many of those to whom St. James addressed this epistle had lived a very *irregular* and *dissolute life*. He had already spoken of their *lust*, and *pleasures*, and he had called them *adulterers* and *adulteresses*; and perhaps they were so in the *grossest* sense of the words. He speaks here of their *laughter* and their *joy*; and all the terms taken together show that a *dissolute life* is intended. What a strange view must he have of the nature of primitive Christianity, who can suppose that these words can possibly have been addressed to people professing the *Gospel of Jesus Christ*, who were few in number, without wealth or consequence, and were persecuted and oppressed both by their brethren the Jews and by the Romans!

Verse 10. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord] In ^{<5007>}James 4:7 they were exhorted to *submit* to God; here they are exhorted to *humble themselves in his sight*. Submission to God's authority will precede *humiliation* of soul, and genuine repentance is performed as in the *sight* of God; for when a sinner is truly awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger, he seems to see, whithersoever he turns, the *face* of a justly incensed God turned against him.

He shall lift you up.] Mourners and penitents lay on the ground, and rolled themselves in the dust. When comforted and pardoned, they arose from the earth, shook themselves from the dust, and clothed themselves in their better garments. God promises to raise these from the dust, when sufficiently humbled.

Verse 11. Speak not evil one of another] Perhaps this exhortation refers to evil speaking, slander, and backbiting in general, the writer having no particular persons in view. It may, however, refer to the *contentions* among the *zealots*, and different *factions* then prevailing among this wretched people, or to their calumnies against those of their brethren who had embraced the Christian faith.

He that speaketh evil of his brother] It was an avowed and very general maxim among the rabbins, that "no one could speak evil of his brother without denying God, and becoming an atheist." They consider detraction as the devil's crime originally: he calumniated God Almighty in the words, "He doth know that in the day in which ye eat of it, your eyes shall be

opened, and ye shall be like God, knowing good and evil;” and therefore insinuated that it was through *envy* God had prohibited the tree of knowledge.

Speaketh evil of the law] The law condemns all *evil speaking* and *detraction*. He who is guilty of these, and allows himself in these vices, in effect judges and condemns the law; *i.e.* he considers it unworthy to be kept, and that it is no sin to break it.

Thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.] Thou rejectest the law of God, and settest up thy own mischievous conduct as a rule of life; or, by allowing this *evil speaking* and *detraction*, dost intimate that the law that condemns them is improper, imperfect, or unjust.

Verse 12. There is one lawgiver] **καὶ κριτῆς**, *And judge*, is added here by AB, about *thirty* others, with both the *Syriac*, Erpen’s *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Armenian*, *Æthiopic*, *Slavonic*, *Vulgate*, two copies of the *Itala*, *Cyril of Antioch*, *Euthalius*, *Theophylact*, and *Cassiodorus*. On this evidence Griesbach has received it into the text.

The man who breaks the law, and teaches others so to do, thus in effect set himself up as a *lawgiver* and *judge*. But there is only one such lawgiver and judge-God Almighty, who is *able to save* all those who obey him, and *able to destroy* all those who trample under feet his testimonies.

Who art thou that judgest another?] Who art thou who darest to usurp the office and prerogative of the supreme Judge? But what is that *law* of which St. James speaks? and who is this *lawgiver* and *judge*? Most critics think that the *law* mentioned here is the same as that which he elsewhere calls the *royal law* and *the law of liberty*, thereby meaning the *Gospel*; and that *Christ* is the person who is called the *lawgiver* and *judge*. This, however, is not clear to me. I believe James means the *Jewish law*; and by the *lawgiver* and *judge*, God Almighty, as acknowledged by the Jewish people. I find, or think I find, from the closest examination of this epistle, but few references to Jesus Christ or his Gospel. His Jewish creed, forms, and maxims, this writer keeps constantly in view; and it is proper he should, considering the persons to whom he wrote. Some of them were, doubtless, *Christians*; some of them certainly *no Christians*; and some of them *half Christians* and *half Jews*. The two latter descriptions are those most frequently addressed.

Verse 13. Go to now] *αγε νυν*. *Come now*, the same in meaning as the Hebrew *hbh habah, come*, ^{<חיים>}**Genesis 11:3, 4, 7.** *Come, and hear what I have to say, ye that say, &c.*

To-day, or to-morrow, we will go] This presumption on a precarious life is here well reprov'd; and the ancient Jewish rabbins have some things on the subject which probably St. James had in view. In *Debarim Rabba*, sec. 9, fol. 261, 1, we have the following little story; “Our rabbins tell us a story which happened in the days of Rabbi Simeon, the son of Chelpatha. He was present at the circumcision of a child, and stayed with its father to the entertainment. The father brought out wine for his guests that was seven years old, saying, *With this wine will I continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of my new-born son*. They continued supper till midnight. At that time Rabbi Simeon arose and went out, that he might return to the city in which he dwelt. On the way he saw the angel of death walking up and down. He said to him, Who art thou? He answered, I am the messenger of God. The rabbin said, Why wanderest thou about thus? He answered, I slay those persons who say, *We will do this, or that, and think not how soon death may overpower them*: that man with whom thou hast supped, and who said to his guests, *With this wine will I continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of my new-born son*, behold the end of his life is at hand, for he shall die within thirty days.” By this parable they teach the necessity of considering the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and that God is particularly displeas'd with those

*“Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,
Are quite unfurnished for a world to come.”*

And continue there a year, and buy and sell] This was the custom of those ancient times; they traded from city to city, carrying their goods on the backs of camels. The Jews traded thus to *Tyre, Sidon, Cæsarea, Crete, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Rome, &c.* And it is to this kind of itinerant mercantile life that St. James alludes. See at the end of this chapter.

Verse 14. Whereas ye know not] This verse should be read in a parenthesis. It is not only impious, but grossly absurd, to speak thus concerning futurity, when ye know not what a day may bring forth. Life is utterly precarious; and God has not put it within the power of all the creatures he has made to *command one moment of what is future*.

It is even a vapour] ἀραις γὰρ ἐστίν. *It is a smoke*, always fleeting, uncertain, evanescent, and obscured with various trials and afflictions. This is a frequent metaphor with the Hebrews; see ^{<19A21>}**Psalm 102:11**; *My days are like a shadow*: ^{<18R0>}**Job 8:9**; *Our days upon earth are a shadow*: ^{<13915>}**1 Chronicles 29:15**; *Our days on the earth are a shadow, and there is no abiding. Quid tam circumcisum, tam breve, quam hominis vita longissima?* Plin. l. iii., Ep. 7. “What is so circumscribed, or so short, as the longest life of man?” “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is like grass.” St. James had produced the same figure, ^{<30110>}**James 1:10, 11**. But there is a very remarkable saying in the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, which should be quoted: “As of the green leaves of a thick tree, some fall and some grow; so is the generation of flesh and blood: one cometh to an end, and another is born.” *Ecclus. xiv. 18*.

We find precisely the same image in *Homer* as that quoted above. Did the apocryphal writer borrow it from the *Greek* poet?

οἱ περ φυλλῶν γενεῆ, τοιῆδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
φυλλὰ τὰ μὲν τάνεμος χαμαδὶς χεῖ, ἀλλὰ δε θύλη
τῆλεθοῶσα φυεῖ, ἐσρος δὲπιγιγνεται ὠρη.
ὥς ἀνδρῶν γενεῆ, μὲν φυεῖ, ἡ δάποληγει.

Il. l. vi., ver. 146.

*Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise.
So generations in their course decay;
So flourish these, when those are pass'd away.*
POPE.

Verse 15. For that ye ought to say] ἀντι τοι λεγειν υμας. *Instead of saying, or instead of which ye should say,*

If the Lord will, we shall live] I think St. James had another example from the rabbins in view, which is produced by *Drusius*, *Gregory*, *Cartwright*, and *Schoettgen*, on this clause: “*The bride went up to her chamber, not knowing what was to befall her there.*” On which there is this comment: “No man should ever say that he *will do this or that, without the condition* IF GOD WILL. A certain man said, ‘To-morrow shall I sit with my

bride in my chamber, and there shall rejoice with her.' To which some standing by said, *μνη ρζωγ μα im gozer hashshem*, 'If the Lord will.' To which he answered, 'Whether the Lord will or not, to-morrow will I sit with my bride in my chamber.' He did so; he went with his bride into his chamber, and at night they lay down; but they both died, *antequam illam cognosceret.*" It is not improbable that St. James refers to this case, as he uses the *same phraseology*.

On this subject I shall quote another passage which I read when a schoolboy, and which even then taught me a lesson of caution and of respect for the providence of God. It may be found in Lucian, in the piece entitled, *χαρων, η επισκοπουντες*, c. 6: *επι δειπνον, οιμαι, κληθεις υπο τινος των φιλων ες την υστεραιαν, μαλιστα ηξω, εφη. και μεταξυ λεγοντος, απο του τεγους κεραμις επιπεσουσα, ουκ οιδότου κινησαντος, απεκτεινεν αυτον. εγελασα ουν, ουκ επιτελεσαντος την υποσχεσιν.* "A man was invited by one of his friends to come the next day to supper. *I will certainly come*, said he. In the mean time a tile fell from a house, I knew not who threw it, and killed him. I therefore laughed at him for not fulfilling his engagement." It is often said *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*, "we should learn even from our enemies." Take heed, Christian, that this heathen buffoon laugh thee not out of countenance.

Verse 16. But now ye rejoice in your boastings] Ye glory in your proud and self-sufficient conduct, exulting that ye are free from the trammels of *superstition*, and that ye can live independently of God Almighty. *All such boasting is wicked*, *πονηρα εστιν*, is impious. In an old English work, entitled, *The godly man's picture drawn by a Scripture pencil*, there are these words: "Some of those who despise religion say, *Thank God we are not of this holy number!* They who thank God for their unholiness had best go ring the bells for joy that they shall never see God."

Verse 17. To him that knoweth to do good] As if he had said: After this warning none of you can plead *ignorance*; if, therefore, any of you shall be found to act their ungodly part, not acknowledging the Divine providence, the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of standing every moment prepared to meet God-as you will have the greater sin, you will infallibly get the greater punishment. This may be applied to all who know better than they act. He who does not the Master's will because he does *not know* it, will be beaten with few stripes; but he who knows it and does not do it,

shall be beaten with many; ~~21247~~ **Luke 12:47, 48.** St. James may have the *Christians* in view who were converted from Judaism to Christianity. They had much more light and religious knowledge than the Jews had; and God would require a proportionable improvement from them.

1. SAADY, a celebrated Persian poet, in his *Gulistan*, gives us a remarkable example of this going from city to city to buy and sell, and get gain. "I knew," says he, "a merchant who used to travel with a hundred camels laden with merchandise, and who had forty slaves in his employ. This person took me one day to his warehouse, and entertained me a long time with conversation good for nothing. 'I have,' said he, 'such a partner in Turquestan; such and such property in India; a bond for so much cash in such a province; a security for such another sum.' Then, changing the subject, he said, 'I purpose to go and settle at Alexandria, because the air of that city is salubrious.' Correcting himself, he said, 'No, I will not go to Alexandria; the African sea (the Mediterranean) is too dangerous. But I will make another voyage; and after that I will retire into some quiet corner of the world, and give up a mercantile life.' I asked him (says Saady) what voyage he intended to make. He answered, 'I intend to take *brimstone* to *Persia* and *China*, where I am informed it brings a good price; from *China* I shall take *porcelain* to *Greece*; from *Greece* I shall take *gold tissue* to *India*; from *India* I shall carry *steel* to *Haleb* (Aleppo;) from *Haleb* I shall carry *glass* to *Yemen* (Arabia Felix;) and from *Yemen* I shall carry *printed goods* to *Persia*. When this is accomplished I shall bid farewell to the mercantile life, which requires so many troublesome journeys, and spend the rest of my life in a shop.' He said so much on this subject, till at last he wearied himself with talking; then turning to me he said, 'I entreat thee, Saady, to relate to me something of what thou hast seen and heard in thy travels.' I answered, Hast thou never heard what a traveller said, who fell from his camel in the desert of Joor? *Two things only can fill the eye of a covetous man-contentment*, or the *earth* that is cast on him when laid in his grave."

This is an instructive story, and is taken from *real life*. In this very way, to those same places and with the above specified goods, trade is carried on to this day in the Levant. And often the same person takes all these journeys, and even more. We learn also from it that a covetous man is restless and unhappy, and that to avarice there are no bounds. This account properly illustrates that to which St. James refers: *To-day or to-morrow we*

will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.

2. Providence is God's government of the world; he who properly trusts in Divine providence trusts in God; and he who expects God's direction and help must walk uprightly before him; for it is absurd to expect God to be our *friend* if we continue to be his *enemy*.

3. That man walks most safely who has the least confidence in himself. True *magnanimity* keeps God continually in view. He appoints it its work, and furnishes discretion and power; and its chief excellence consists in being a resolute worker together with him. Pride ever sinks where humility swims; for that man who abases himself God will exalt. To *know* that we are dependent creatures is well; to *feel* it, and to act suitably, is still better.

JAMES

CHAPTER 5.

The profligate rich are in danger of God's judgments, because of their pride, fraudulent dealings, riotous living, and cruelty, 1-6. The oppressed followers of God should be patient, for the Lord's coming is nigh; and should not grudge against each other, 7-9. They should take encouragement from the example of the prophets, and of Job, 10, 11. Swearing forbidden, 12. Directions to the afflicted, 13-16. They should confess their faults to each other, 16. The great prevalence of prayer instanced in Elijah, 17, 18. The blessedness of converting a sinner from the error of his way, 19, 20.

NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

Verse 1. Go to now] See Clarke on “^{-504E3>}James 4:13”.

Weep and howl for your miseries] St. James seems to refer here, in the spirit of prophecy, to the destruction that was coming upon the Jews, not only in Judea, but in all the provinces where they sojourned. He seems here to assume the very air and character of a *prophet*; and in the most dignified language and peculiarly expressive and energetic images, foretells the desolations that were coming upon this bad people.

Verse 2. Your riches are corrupted] **σέσηπε.** Are *putrefied*. The term **πλουτος**, *riches*, is to be taken here, not for *gold, silver, or precious stones*, (for these could not *putrefy*;) but for the produce of the fields and flocks, the different stores of grain, wine, and oil, which they had laid up in their granaries, and the various changes of raiment which they had amassed in their wardrobes.

Verse 3. Your gold and silver is cankered] Instead of helping the poor, and thus honouring God with your substance, ye have, through the principle of covetousness, kept all to yourselves.

The rust of them shall be a witness against you] Your putrefied stores, your moth-eaten garments, and your tarnished coin, are so many proofs that it was not for want of property that you assisted not the poor, but

through a principle of avarice; *loving money*, not for the sake of what it could procure, but for its *own sake*, which is the genuine principle of the *miser*. This was the very character given to this people by our Lord himself; he called them **φιλαργυροι**, *lovers of money*. Against this despicable and abominable disposition, the whole of the 12th chapter of St. Luke is levelled; but it was their easily besetting sin, and is so to the present day.

Shall eat your flesh as it were fire.] This is a very bold and sublime figure. He represents the rust of their coin as becoming a canker that should produce gangrenes and phagedenous ulcers in their flesh, till it should be eaten away from their bones.

Ye have heaped treasure together] This verse is variously *pointed*. The word **ως**, *like as*, in the preceding clause, is left out by the *Syriac*, and some others; and **πυρ**, *fire*, is added here from that clause; so that the whole verse reads thus: “Your gold and your silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall consume your flesh. Ye have treasured up FIRE against the last days.” This is a bold and fine image: instead of the *treasures of corn, wine, and oil, rich stuffs, with silver and gold*, which ye have been laying up, ye shall find a *treasure, a magazine of fire*, that shall burn up your city, and consume even your temple. This was literally true; and these solemn denunciations of Divine wrath were most completely fulfilled. See the notes on Matt. 24, where all the circumstances of this tremendous and final destruction are particularly noted.

By the *last days* we are not to understand the *day of judgment*, but the *last days* of the *Jewish commonwealth*, which were not long distant from the date of this epistle, whether we follow the *earlier* or *later* computation, of which enough has been spoken in the preface.

Verse 4. The hire of the labourers] The law, ^{<B1913>} **Leviticus 19:13**, had ordered: *The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning*, every day’s labour being paid for as soon as ended. This is more clearly stated in another law, ^{<B2415>} **Deuteronomy 24:15**: *At his day thou shalt give him his hire; neither shall the sun go down upon it; -lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee*. And that God particularly resented this defrauding of the hireling we see from ^{<B3015>} **Malachi 3:5**: *I will come near to you in judgment, and will be a swift witness against those who oppress the hireling in his wages*. And on these

laws and threatenings is built what we read in *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 100, l. 45: “When a poor man does any work in a house, the vapour proceeding from him, through the severity of his work, ascends towards heaven. Wo to his employer if he delay to pay him his wages.” To this James seems particularly to allude, when he says: *The cries of them who have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts*; and the rabbins say, “The vapour arising from the sweat of the hard-worked labourer *ascends up before God.*” Both images are sufficiently expressive.

The Lord of sabaoth.] St. James often conceives in *Hebrew* though he writes in *Greek*. It is well known that **twabx hwhy** *Yehovah tsebaoth*, Lord of hosts, or Lord of armies, is a frequent appellation of God in the Old Testament; and signifies his uncontrollable power, and the infinitely numerous means he has for governing the world, and defending his followers, and punishing the wicked.

Verse 5. Ye have lived in pleasure] **ετρυφησατε.** *Ye have lived luxuriously*; feeding yourselves without fear, pampering the flesh.

And been wanton] **εσπαταλησατε.** *Ye have lived lasciviously.* Ye have indulged all your sinful and sensual appetites to the uttermost; and your lives have been scandalous.

Ye have nourished your hearts] **εθρεψατε.** *Ye have fattened your hearts*, and have rendered them incapable of feeling, as in a day of slaughter, **ημερα αφαγης**, *a day of sacrifice*, where many victims are offered at once, and where the people feast upon the sacrifices; many, no doubt, turning, on that occasion, a holy ordinance into a riotous festival.

Verse 6. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.] Several by **τον δικαιον**, *the just one*, understand Jesus Christ, who is so called, ^{<4814>}**Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14**; but the structure of the sentence, and the connection in which it stands, seem to require that we should consider this as applying to the *just* or *righteous in general*, who were persecuted and murdered by those oppressive rich men; and their death was the consequence of their *dragging them before the judgment seats*, ^{<3016>}**James 2:6**, where, having no influence, and none to plead their cause, they were unjustly condemned and executed.

And he doth not resist you.-In this, as in **τον δικαιον**, *the just*, there is an *enallage* of the *singular* for the *plural* number. And in the word **ουκ**

αντιτασσειται, *he doth not resist*, the idea is included of *defence in a court of justice*. These poor righteous people had none to plead their cause; and if they had it would have been useless, as their oppressors had all power and all influence, and those who sat on these judgment seats were lost to all sense of justice and right. Some think that *he doth not resist you* should be referred to GOD; as if he had said, God permits you to go on in this way at present, but he will shortly awake to judgment, and destroy you as enemies of truth and righteousness.

Verse 7. Be patient, therefore] Because God is coming to execute judgment on this wicked people, therefore be patient till he comes. He seems here to refer to the coming of the Lord to execute judgment on the Jewish nation, which shortly afterwards took place.

The husbandman waiteth] The *seed* of your deliverance is already sown, and by and by the harvest of your salvation will take place. God's counsels will ripen in due time.

The early and latter rain.] The rain of *seed time*; and the rain of ripening before *harvest*: the first fell in Judea, about the beginning of *November*, after the seed was sown; and the second towards the end of *April*, when the ears were filling, and this prepared for a full harvest. Without these two rains, the earth would have been unfruitful. These God had promised: *I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil,*
<6114>**Deuteronomy 11:14.** But for these they were not only to *wait patiently*, but also to *pray*, *Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so shall the Lord make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field;* **Zecariah 10:1.**

Verse 8. Be ye also patient] Wait for God's deliverance, as ye wait for his bounty in providence.

Stablish your hearts] Take courage; do not sink under your trials.

The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.] **ηγγικε.** *Is at hand.* He is already on his way to destroy this wicked people, to raze their city and temple, and to destroy their polity for ever; and this judgment will soon take place.

Verse 9. Grudge not] **μη στεναζετε.** *Groan not; grumble not; do not murmur through impatience; and let not any ill treatment which you*

receive, induce you to vent your feelings in imprecations against your oppressors. Leave all this in the hands of God.

Lest ye be condemned] By giving way to a spirit of this kind, you will get under the condemnation of the wicked.

The judge standeth before the door.] His eye is upon every thing that is *wrong in you*, and every *wrong that is done to you*; and he is now entering into judgment with your oppressors.

Verse 10. Take-the prophets] The prophets who had spoken to their forefathers by the authority of God, were persecuted by the very people to whom they delivered the Divine message; but they suffered affliction and persecution with patience, commending their cause to him who judgeth righteously; therefore, imitate their example.

Verse 11. We count them happy which endure.] According to that saying of our blessed Lord, *Blessed are ye when men shall persecute and revile you-for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*
<051> **Matthew 5:11, 12, &c.**

Ye have heard of the patience of Job] Stripped of all his worldly possessions, deprived at a stroke of all his children, tortured in body with sore disease, tempted by the devil, harassed by his wife, and calumniated by his friends, he nevertheless held fast his integrity, resigned himself to the Divine dispensations, and charged not God foolishly.

And have seen the end of the Lord] The *issue* to which God brought all his afflictions and trials, giving him children, increasing his property, lengthening out his life, and multiplying to him every kind of spiritual and secular good. This was *God's end* with respect to him; but the *devil's end* was to drive him to despair, and to cause him to blaspheme his Maker. This mention of *Job* shows him to have been a real person; for a fictitious person would not have been produced as an example of any virtue so highly important as that of patience and perseverance. *The end of the Lord* is a *Hebraism* for the *issue to which God brings any thing or business.*

The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.] Instead of **πολυσπλαγχνος**, which we translate *very pitiful*, and which might be rendered *of much sympathy*, from **πολυς**, *much*, and **σπλαγχνον**, *a bowel*, (because any thing that affects us with commiseration causes us to feel an indescribable emotion of the bowels,) several MSS. have

πολυενσπλαγγνος, from παλυσ, *much*, ευ, *easily*, and σπλαγγνον, a *bowel*, a word not easy to be translated; but it signifies *one whose commiseration is easily excited*, and whose commiseration is *great or abundant*.

Verse 12. Above all things-swear not] What relation this exhortation can have to the subject in question, I confess I cannot see. It may not have been designed to stand in any connection, but to be a separate piece of advice, as in the several cases which immediately follow. That the Jews were notoriously guilty of *common swearing* is allowed on all hands; and that swearing by *heaven, earth, Jerusalem, the temple, the altar*, different parts of the *body*, was not considered by them as *binding oaths*, has been sufficiently proved. Rabbi Akiba taught that “a man might swear with his *lips*, and annul it in his *heart*; and then the oath was not binding.” See **Clarke’s notes on “^{<4053>}Matthew 5:33”**, &c., where the subject is considered in great detail.

Let your yea be yea, &c.] Do not pretend to say *yea* with your *lips*, and annul it in your *heart*; let the *yea* or the *nay* which you *express* be *bona fide* such. Do not imagine that any mental reservation can cancel any such *expressions* of obligation in the sight of God.

Lest ye fall into condemnation.] ἵνα μη υπο κρισιν πεσητε. *Lest ye fall under judgment*. Several MSS. join υπο and κρισιν together, υποκρισιν, and prefix εις, *into*, which makes a widely different reading: *Lest ye fall into hypocrisy*. Now, as it is a fact, that the Jews did teach that there might be *mental reservation*, that would *annul the oath*, how solemnly soever it was taken; the object of St. James, if the last reading be genuine, and it is supported by a great number of excellent MSS., some *versions*, and some of the most eminent of the *fathers*, was to guard against that *hypocritical* method of taking an oath, which is subversive of all moral feeling, and must make conscience itself callous.

Verse 13. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray] The Jews taught that the meaning of the ordinance, ^{<4134>}Leviticus 13:45, which required the leper to cry, *Unclean! unclean!* was, “that thus *making known* his calamity, the people might be led to offer up prayers to God in his behalf,” *Sota*, page 685, ed. Wagens. They taught also, that when any sickness or affliction entered a family, they should go to the wise men, and implore their prayers. *Bava bathra*, fol. 116, 1.

In *Nedarim*, fol. 40, 1, we have this relation: “Rabba, as often as he fell sick, forbade his domestics to mention it for the first day; if he did not then begin to get well, he told his family to go and publish it in the highways, that they who hated him might rejoice, and they that loved him might intercede with God for him.”

Is any merry? let him sing psalms.] These are all general but very useful directions. It is natural for a man to *sing* when he is *cheerful* and *happy*. Now no subject can be more noble than that which is Divine: and as God alone is the author of all that good which makes a man *happy*, then his praise should be the subject of the *song* of him who is merry. But where persons rejoice in iniquity, and not in the truth, God and sacred things can never be the subject of their song.

Verse 14. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders] This was also a Jewish maxim. Rabbi Simeon, in *Sepher Hachaiyim*, said: “What should a man do who goes to visit the sick? *Ans.* He who studies to restore the health of the body, should first lay the foundation in the health of the soul. The wise men have said, No healing is equal to that which comes from the word *of God* and *prayer*. Rabbi Phineas, the son of Chamma, hath said, ‘When sickness or disease enters into a man’s family, let him apply to a wise man, who will implore mercy in his behalf.’“ See *Schoettgen*.

St. James very properly sends all such to the elders of the Church, who had power with God through the great Mediator, that they might pray for them.

Anointing him with oil] That St. James neither means any kind of *incantation*, any kind of *miracle*, or such *extreme unction* as the Romish Church prescribes, will be sufficiently evident from these considerations: 1. He was a holy man, and could prescribe nothing but what was holy. 2. If a *miracle* was intended, it could have been as well wrought *without the oil*, as *with* it. 3. It is not intimated that even this unction is to save the sick man, but the prayer of faith, ^{<315>}**James 5:15**. 4. What is here recommended was to be done as a natural means of restoring health, which, while they used prayer and supplication to God, they were not to neglect. 5. *Oil* in Judea was celebrated for its *sanative* qualities; so that they scarcely ever took a journey without carrying oil with them, (see in the case of the Samaritan,) with which they anointed their bodies, healed their wounds, bruises, &c. 6. *Oil* was and is frequently used in the east as a means of cure in very dangerous diseases; and in Egypt it is often used in the cure of

the *plague*. Even in Europe it has been tried with great success in the cure of *dropsy*. And *pure olive oil* is excellent for recent wounds and bruises; and I have seen it tried in this way with the best effects. 7. But that it was the custom of the Jews to apply it as a means of healing, and that St. James refers to this custom, is not only evident from the case of the wounded man ministered to by the good Samaritan, ^{<41034>} **Luke 10:34**, but from the practice of the Jewish rabbins. In *Midrash Koheleth*, fol. 73, 1, it is said: “Chanina, son of the brother of the Rabbi Joshua, went to visit his uncle at Capernaum; he was taken ill; and Rabbi Joshua went to him and *anointed him with oil, and he was restored*.” They had, therefore, recourse to this as a *natural* remedy; and we find that the disciples used it also in this way to heal the sick, not exerting the miraculous power but in cases where natural means were ineffectual. *And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them*; ^{<410613>} **Mark 6:13**. On this latter place I have supposed that it might have been done *symbolically*, in order to prepare the way for a miraculous cure: this is the opinion of many commentators; but I am led, on more mature consideration, to doubt its propriety, yet dare not decide. In short, *anointing the sick with oil*, in order to their recovery, was a constant practice among the Jews. See *Lightfoot* and *Wetstein* on ^{<410613>} **Mark 6:13**. And here I am satisfied that it has no other meaning than as a *natural means* of restoring health; and that St. James desires them to use *natural means* while looking to God for an especial blessing. And no wise man would direct otherwise. 8. That the *anointing* recommended here by St. James cannot be such as the Romish Church prescribes, and it is on this passage principally that they found their sacrament of *extreme unction*, is evident from these considerations: 1. St. James orders the sick person to be *anointed* in reference to *his cure*; but they anoint the sick in the *agonies of death*, when there is *no prospect of his recovery*; and never administer that *sacrament*, as it is called, while there is *any hope of life*. 2. St James orders this *anointing* for the cure of the *body*, but they apply it for the cure of the *soul*; in reference to which use of it St. James gives no directions: and what is said of the *forgiveness of sins*, in ^{<390615>} **James 5:15**, is rather to be referred to *faith* and *prayer*, which are often the means of restoring lost health, and preventing premature death, when *natural means*, the most skillfully used, have been useless. 3. The *anointing with oil*, if ever used as a means or *symbol* in *working miraculous cures*, was only applied in *some cases*, perhaps *very few*, if any; but the Romish Church uses it in *every case*; and makes it *necessary to the salvation* of every departing soul. Therefore, *St. James’*

unction, and the *extreme unction* of the Romish Church, are essentially different. See below.

Verse 15. And the prayer of faith; shall save the sick] That is, God will often make these the means of a sick man's recovery; but there often are cases where *faith* and *prayer* are both ineffectual, because God sees it will be prejudicial to the patient's salvation to be restored; and therefore all faith and prayer on such occasions should be exerted on this ground: "If it be most for thy glory, and the eternal good of this man's soul, let him be restored; if otherwise, Lord, pardon, purify him, and take him to thy glory."

The Lord shall raise him up] Not the *elders*, how faithfully and fervently soever they have prayed.

And if he have committed sins] So as to have occasioned his present malady, *they shall be forgiven him*; for being the *cause* of the affliction it is natural to conclude that, if the *effect* be to cease, the *cause* must be removed. We find that in the miraculous restoration to health, under the powerful hand of Christ, the sin of the party is generally said to be *forgiven*, and this also *before* the miracle was wrought on the *body*: hence there was a maxim among the Jews, and it seems to be founded in *common sense* and *reason*, that God never restores a man miraculously to health till he has pardoned his sins; because it would be incongruous for God to exert his miraculous power in saving a *body*, the *soul* of which was in a state of condemnation to eternal death, because of the crimes it had committed against its Maker and Judge. Here then it is GOD that *remits the sin*, not in reference to the *unction*, but in reference to the *cure* of the *body*, which he is miraculously to effect.

Verse 16. Confess your faults one to another] This is a good general direction to Christians who endeavour to maintain among themselves the communion of saints. This social confession tends much to humble the soul, and to make it watchful. We naturally wish that our friends in general, and our religious friends in particular, should think well of us; and when we confess to them offences which, without this confession, they could never have known, we feel humbled, are kept from self-applause, and induced to watch unto prayer, that we may not increase our offences before God, or be obliged any more to undergo the painful humiliation of acknowledging our weakness, fickleness, or infidelity to our religious brethren.

It is not said, *Confess your faults to the ELDERS that they may forgive them*, or prescribe *penance* in order to forgive them. No; the members of the Church were to *confess their faults to each other*; therefore *auricular confession* to a priest, such as is prescribed by the Romish Church, has no foundation in this passage. Indeed, had it any foundation here it would prove more than they wish, for it would require the *priest to confess his sins to the people*, as well as the people to confess theirs to the priest.

And pray one for another] There is no instance in *auricular confession* where the *penitent* and the *priest* pray together for pardon; but here the people are commanded to pray for each other that they may be healed.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.] The words **δησις ενεργουμενη** signify *energetic supplication*, or such a prayer as is *suggested to the soul and wrought in it by a Divine energy*. When God designs to do some particular work in his Church he pours out on his followers the spirit of grace and supplication; and this he does sometimes when he is about to do some especial work for an *individual*. When such a power of prayer is granted, faith should be immediately called into exercise, that the blessing may be given: the spirit of prayer is the proof that the power of God is present to heal. *Long prayers* give no particular evidence of *Divine inspiration*: the following was a maxim among the ancient Jews, **ηδχq μyqydx tl ptv** *the prayers of the righteous are short*. This is exemplified in almost every instance in the Old Testament.

Verse 17. Elias was a man subject to like passions] This was *Elijah*, and a consistency between the *names* of the same persons as expressed in the Old and the New Testaments should be kept up.

The word **ομοιοπαθης** signifies of *the same constitution*, a human being just as ourselves are. See the same phrase and its explanation in ^{<41415>}**Acts 14:15**, and the note there. There was some reason to apprehend that because *Elijah* was *translated*, that therefore he was more *than human*, and if so, his example could be no pattern for us; and as the design of St. James was to excite men to pray, expecting the Divine interference whenever that should be necessary, therefore he tells them that *Elijah was a man like themselves, of the same constitution, liable to the same accidents, and needing the same supports*.

And he prayed earnestly] προσευχη προσηυξατο. *He prayed with prayer*; a Hebraism for, he *prayed fervently*.

That it might not rain] See this history, ^{<1170>}**1 Kings 17:1**, &c.

And it rained not on the earth] επι της γης. *On that land*, viz. the land of Judea; for this drought did not extend elsewhere.

Three years and six months.] This is the term mentioned by our Lord, ^{<1025>}**Luke 4:25**; but this is not specified in the original history. In ^{<1180>}**1 Kings 18:1**, it is said, *In the third year the word of the Lord came to Elijah*, that is, concerning the *rain*; but this *third year* is to be computed from the time of his going to live at Zarephath, which happened many days after the *drought began*, as is plain from this, that he remained at the *brook Cherith* till it was dried up, and then went to Zarephath, in the country of Zidon; ^{<1170>}**1 Kings 17:7-9**. Therefore the *three years and six months* must be computed from his denouncing the drought, at which time that judgment commenced. *Macknight*.

Verse 18. And he prayed again] This *second* prayer is not mentioned in the history in express words, but as in ^{<1182>}**1 Kings 18:42**, it is said, *He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees*; that was probably the time of the second praying, namely, that rain might come, as this was the proper posture of prayer.

Verse 19. Err from the truth] Stray away from the Gospel of Christ; *and one convert him*-reclaim him from his error, and bring him back to the fold of Christ.

Verse 20. Let him know] Let him duly consider, for his encouragement, that he who is the instrument of converting a sinner shall save a soul from eternal death, and a body from ruin, *and shall hide a multitude of sins*; for in being the means of his conversion we bring him back to God, who, in his infinite mercy, *hides* or *blots* out the numerous sins which he had committed during the time of his backsliding. It is not the man's sins who is the means of his conversion, but the sins of the backslider, which are here said to be *hidden*. See more below.

1. MANY are of opinion that the *hiding a multitude of sins* is here to be understood of the person who converts the backslider: this is a dangerous doctrine, and what the Holy Spirit never taught to man. Were this true it would lead many a sinner to endeavour the reformation of his neighbour,

that himself might continue under the influence of his own beloved sins and *conversion to a particular creed* would be put in the place of *conversion to God*, and thus the substance be lost in the shadow. Bishop *Atterbury*, (Ser. vol. i. p. 46,) and *Scott*, (Christian Life, vol. i. p. 368,) contend “that the *covering a multitude of sins* includes also, that the *pious action* of which the apostle speaks engages God to look with *greater indulgence* on the character of the person that performs it, and to be *less severe in marking what he has done amiss*.” See *Macknight*. This from such authorities may be considered doubly dangerous; it argues however great ignorance of God, of the nature of Divine justice, and of the sinfulness of sin. It is besides completely *antievangelical*; it teaches in effect that something besides the *blood of the covenant* will render God propitious to man, and that the performance of a *pious action* will induce God’s justice to show *greater indulgence* to the person who performs it, and to be *less severe in marking what he has done amiss*. On the ground of this doctrine we might confide that, had he a certain quantum of *pious acts*, we might have all the sins of our lives forgiven, independently of the *sacrifice of Christ*; for if *one pious act* can procure pardon for a *multitude of sins*, what may not be expected from many?

2. The *Jewish* doctrine, to which it is possible St. James may allude, was certainly more *sound* than that taught by these *Christian divines*. They allowed that the man who was the means of converting another had done a work highly pleasing to God, and which should be rewarded; but they never insinuate that this would *atone* for sin. I shall produce a few examples:—

In *Synopsis Sohzar*, p. 47, n. 17, it is said: *Great is his excellence who persuades a sick person to turn from his sins.*

Ibid, p. 92, n. 18: *Great is his reward who brings back the pious into the way of the blessed Lord.*

Yoma, fol. 87, 1: *By his hands iniquity is not committed, who turns many to righteousness; i.e. God does not permit him to fall into sin. What is the reason? Ans. Lest those should be found in paradise, while their instructor is found in hell.*

This doctrine is both innocent and godly in comparison of the other. It holds out a *motive* to diligence and zeal, but nothing farther. In short, if we allow any thing to *cover our sins* beside the *mercy of God in Christ Jesus*,

WE *shall err* most dangerously *from the truth*, and add this moreover to the *multitude of OUR sins*, that we maintained that the gift of God could be purchased by our puny acts of comparative righteousness.

3. As one immortal soul is of more worth than all the material creation of God, every man who knows the worth of his own should labour for the salvation of others. To be the means of depriving hell of her expectation, and adding even one soul to the Church triumphant, is a matter of infinite moment; and he who is such an instrument has much reason to thank God that ever he was born. He who lays out his accounts to do good to the souls of men, will ever have the blessing of God in his own. Besides, God will not suffer him to labour in vain, or spend his strength for naught. At first he may see little fruit; but the bread cast upon the waters shall be found after many days: and if he should never see it in this life, he may take for granted that whatsoever he has done for God, in simplicity and godly sincerity, has been less or more effectual.

After the last word of this epistle *αμαρτιων*, of *sins*, some versions add *his*, others *theirs*; and one MS. and the later *Syriac* have *Amen*. But these additions are of no authority.

The subscriptions to this epistle, in the VERSIONS, are the following: The end of the Epistle of James the apostle.-SYRIAC. The catholic Epistle of James the apostle is ended.-SYRIAC PHILOXENIAN. The end.-ÆTHIOPIC. Praise be to God for ever and ever; and may his mercy be upon us. Amen.-ARABIC. The Epistle of James the *son of Zebedee*, is ended.-ITALA, one copy. Nothing.-COPTIC. Nothing.-Printed VULGATE. The Epistle of James is ended.-*Bib.* VULG. Edit. *Eggestein*. The Epistle of St. James the apostle is ended.-*Complutensian*.

In the MANUSCRIPTS: Of James.-*Codex Vaticanus*, B. The Epistle of James.-*Codex Alexandrinus*. The end of the catholic Epistle of James.-*Codex Vaticanus*, 1210. The catholic Epistle of James the apostle.-A *Vienna* MS. The catholic Epistle of the holy Apostle James.-An ancient MS. in the library of the *Augustins*, at Rome. The end of the Epistle of the holy Apostle James, the *brother of God*.-One of *Petavius's* MSS., written in the *thirteenth century*. The same is found in a *Vatican* MS. of the *eleventh century*. The most ancient MSS. have little or no subscription.

Two opinions relative to the author are expressed in these MSS. One copy of the *Itala*, the *Codex Corbejensis*, at Paris, which contains this epistle only, attributes it to *James, the son of Zebedee*; and two, comparatively recent, attribute it to *James, our Lord's brother*. The former testimony, taken in conjunction with some internal evidences, led Michaelis, and some others, to suppose it probable that *James the elder*, or the *son of Zebedee*, was the author. I should give it to this apostle, in preference to the other, had I not reason to believe that a *James*, different from either; was the author. But *who* or *what* he was, at this distance of time, it is impossible to say. Having now done with all comments on the text, I shall conclude with some particulars relative to *James, our Lord's brother*, and some general observations on the structure and importance of this epistle.

I have entered but little into the history of this James, because I was not satisfied that he is the author of this epistle: however, observing that the current of modern authors are decided in their opinion that he was the author, I perceive I may be blamed unless I be more particular concerning his life; as some of the ancients have related several circumstances relative to him that are very remarkable, and, indeed, singular. Dr. Lardner has collected the whole; and, although the same authors from whom he has taken his accounts are before me, yet, not supposing that I can at all mend either his selections or arrangement, I shall take the accounts as he states them.

“I should now proceed,” says this learned man, “to write the history of this person (*James*) from ancient authors; but that is a difficult task, as I have found, after trying more than once, and at distant spaces of time. I shall therefore take DIVERS passages of Eusebius and others, and make such reflections as offer for finding out as much truth as we can.

“Eusebius, in his chapter concerning our Saviour's disciples, (Eccl. Hist. lib. i., cap. 12,) speaks of James, to whom our Lord showed himself after his resurrection, ^{<461307>} **1 Corinthians 15:7**, as being one of the seventy disciples.

“The same author has another chapter, (Hist. Eccl., lib. ii., cap. 1,) entitled, Of Things constituted by the Apostles after our Saviour's Ascension, which is to this purpose:-

“The first is the choice of Matthias, one of Christ's disciples, into the apostleship, in the room of Judas; then the appointment of the seven

deacons, one of whom was Stephen, who, soon after his being ordained, was stoned by those who had killed the Lord, and was the first martyr for Christ; then James, called the Lord's brother, because he was the son of Joseph, to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused. This James, called by the ancients the just, on account of his eminent virtue, is said to have been appointed the first bishop of Jerusalem; and Clement, in the sixth book of his Institutions, writes after this manner: That after our Lord's ascension, Peter, and James, and John, though they had been favoured by the Lord above the rest, did not contend for honour, but chose James the just to be bishop of Jerusalem; and in the seventh book of the same work he says, that after his resurrection the Lord gave to James the just, and Peter, and John, the gift of knowledge; and they gave it to the other apostles, and the other apostles gave it to the seventy, one of whom was Barnabas: for there were two named James, one the just, who was thrown down from the battlement of the temple and killed by a fuller's staff; the other is he who was beheaded. Of him who was called the just, Paul also makes mention, saying, Other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

"I would now take a passage from Origen, in the tenth vol. of his Commentaries upon ^{<40135>}**Matthew 13:55, 56:** *Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? They thought,* says Origen, *that he was the son of Joseph and Mary. The brethren of Jesus, some say, upon the ground of tradition, and particularly of what is said in the gospel according to Peter, or the book of James, were the sons of Joseph by a former wife, who cohabited with him before Mary. They who say this are desirous of maintaining the honour of Mary's virginity to the last, (or her perpetual virginity,) that the body chosen to fulfil what is said, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,* ^{<40135>}**Luke 1:35,** might not know man after that: and I think it very reasonable that, as Jesus was the first fruits of virginity among men, Mary should be the same among women; for it would be very improper to give that honour to any besides her. This James is he whom Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Galatians, saying, *Other of the apostles, saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.* This James was in so great repute with the people for his virtue, that Josephus, who wrote twenty books of the Jewish antiquities, desirous to assign the reason of their suffering such things, so that even their temple was destroyed, says that those things were owing to the anger of God for what they did to*

James, the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ. And it is wonderful that he, who did not believe our Jesus to be the Christ, should bear such a testimony to James. He also says that the people thought they suffered those things on account of James. Jude, who wrote an epistle, of a few lines indeed, but filled with the powerful word of the heavenly grace, says, at the beginning, *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James*. Of Joses and Simon we know nothing.

“Origen, in his books against Celsus, quotes Josephus again as speaking of James; to the like purpose; but there are not now any such passages in Josephus, though they are quoted as from him by Eusebius also. As the death of James has been mentioned, I shall now immediately take the accounts of it which are in Eusebius, and I will transcribe a large part of the twenty-third chapter of the second book of his Ecclesiastical History: ‘But when Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and Festus had sent him to Rome, the Jews being disappointed in their design against him, turned their rage against James, the Lord’s brother, to whom the apostles had consigned the episcopal chair of Jerusalem, and in this manner they proceeded against him: having laid hold of him, they required him, in the presence of all the people, to renounce his faith in Christ; but he, with freedom and boldness beyond expectation, before all the multitude declared our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. They, not enduring the testimony of a man who was in high esteem for his piety, laid hold of the opportunity when the country was without a governor to put him to death; for Festus having died about that time in Judea, the province had in it no procurator. The manner of the death of James was shown before in the words of Clement, who said that he was thrown off the battlement of the temple, and then beat to death with a club. But no one has so accurately related this transaction as Hegesippus, a man in the first succession of the apostles, in the fifth book of his Commentaries, whose words are to this purpose: James, the brother of our Lord, undertook together with the apostles, the government of the Church. He has been called the just by all, from the time of our Saviour to ours: for many have been named James; but he was holy from his mother’s womb. He drank neither wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat any animal food; there never came a razor upon his head; he neither anointed himself with oil, nor did he use a bath. To him alone was it lawful to enter the holy place. He wore no woollen, but only linen garments. He entered into the temple alone, where he prayed upon his knees; insomuch that his knees were become like the knees of a camel by means of his being

continually upon them, worshipping God, and praying for the forgiveness of the people. Upon account of his virtue he was called the just, and Oblias, that is, the defence of the people, and righteousness. Some, therefore, of the seven sects which were among the Jews, of whom I spoke in the former part of these Commentaries, asked him, Which is the gate of Jesus? or, What is the gate of salvation? and he said, Jesus is the Saviour, or the way of salvation. Some of them therefore believed that Jesus is the Christ. And many of the chief men also believing, there was a disturbance among the Jews and among the scribes and Pharisees, who said there was danger lest all the people should think Jesus to be the Christ. Coming therefore to James they said, We beseech thee to restrain the error of this people; we entreat thee to persuade all who come hither at the time of passover to think rightly concerning Jesus, for all the people and all of us put confidence in thee. Stand therefore on the battlement of the temple, that being placed on high thou mayest be conspicuous, and thy words may be easily heard by all the people; for because of the passover all the tribes are come hither, and many Gentiles. Therefore the scribes and Pharisees before named placed James upon the battlement of the temple, and cried out to him and said, O Justus, whom we ought all to believe, since the people are in an error, following Jesus, who was crucified, tell us what is the gate of Jesus. And he answered with a loud voice, Why do you ask me concerning the Son of man? He even sitteth in the heaven, at the right hand of the great Power, and will come in the clouds of heaven. And many were fully satisfied and well pleased with the testimony of James, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! But the same scribes and Pharisees said one to another, We have done wrong in procuring such a testimony to Jesus. Let us go up and throw him down, that the people may be terrified from giving credit to him. And they went up presently, and cast him down, and said, Let us stone James the just: and they began to stone him because he was not killed by the fall. But he turning himself, kneeled, saying, I entreat thee, O Lord God the Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. As they were stoning him, one said, Give over. What do ye? The just man prays for you. And one of them, a fuller, took a pole, which was used to beat clothes with, and struck him on the head. Thus his martyrdom was completed. And they buried him in that place; and his monument still remains near the temple. This James was a true witness, both to Jews and Gentiles, that Jesus is the Christ. Soon after Judea was invaded by Vespasian, and the people were carried captive.' So writes Hegesippus at large, agreeably to Clement. For certain, James was an excellent man, and

much esteemed by many for his virtue; insomuch that the most thoughtful men among the Jews were of opinion that his death was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem, which followed soon after his martyrdom: and that it was owing to nothing else but the wickedness committed against him. And Josephus says the same in these words: ‘These things befell the Jews in vindication of James the just, who was brother of Jesus, called the Christ. For the Jews killed him; who was a most righteous man.’

“The time of the death of James may be determined without much difficulty; he was alive when Paul came to Jerusalem at the pentecost, in the year of Christ 58, and it is likely that he was dead when St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews at the beginning of the year 63. Theodoret, upon ^{<8137>}**Hebrews 13:7** supposes the apostle there to refer to the martyrdoms of Stephen, James the brother of John, and James the just. According to Hegesippus, the death of James happened about the time of passover, which might be that of the year 62; and if Festus was then dead, and Albinus not arrived, the province was without a governor. Such a season left the Jews at liberty to gratify their licentious and turbulent disposition, and they were very likely to embrace it.”

I have said but little relative to the controversy concerning the *apostleship* of James, our Lord’s brother; for, as I am still in doubt whether he was the author of this epistle, I do not judge it necessary to enter into the question. I proceed now to some general observations on the epistle itself, and the evidence it affords of the learning and science of its author.

1. I have already conjectured that this epistle ranks among the *most ancient* of the Christian writings; its total want of reference to the great facts which distinguish the early history of the Church, viz., the calling of the Gentiles, the disputes between them and the Jews, the questions concerning circumcision, and the obligation of the law in connection with the Gospel &c., &c., shows that it must have been written before those things took place, or that they must have been wholly unknown to the author; which is incredible, allowing him to have been a *Christian* writer.

2. The *style* of this epistle is much more elevated than most other parts of the New Testament. It abounds with figures and metaphors, at once bold, dignified, just, and impressive. Many parts of it are in the genuine prophetic style, and much after the manner of the Prophet *Zephaniah*, to whom there is a near resemblance in several passages.

3. An attentive reader of this epistle will perceive the author to be a man of *deep thought* and *considerable learning*. He had studied the Jewish prophets closely, and imitated their style; but he appears also to have read the *Greek poets*: his *language* is such as we might expect from one who had made them his study, but who avoided to quote them. We find a perfect *Greek hexameter* in ^{<S0117>}**James 1:17**, and another may be perceived in ^{<S0104>}**James 4:4**; but these are probably not borrowed, but are the spontaneous, undesigned effort of his own well cultivated mind. His *science* may be noted in several places, but particularly in ^{<S0117>}**James 1:17**, on which see the note and the diagram, and its explanation at the end of the chapter. Images from *natural history* are not unfrequent; and that in ^{<S0114>}**James 1:14, 15** is exceedingly correct and appropriate, but will not bear a closely literal translation.

4. His constant attention and reference to the *writings and maxims of his own countrymen* is peculiarly observable. Several of his remarks tend to confirm the antiquity of the *Talmud*; and the parallel passages in the different *tracts* of that work cast much light on the allusions of St. James. Without constant reference to the ancient Jewish rabbins, we should have sought for the meaning of several passages in vain.

5. St. James is in many places *obscure*; this may arise partly from his own deep and strong conceptions, and partly from allusions to *arts* or *maxims* which are not come down to us, or which lie yet undiscovered in the *Mishna* or *Talmud*. To elucidate this writer I have taken more than common pains, but dare not say that I have been always successful, though I have availed myself of all the help within my reach. To *Schoettgen's* *Horæ Hebraicæ* I am considerably indebted, as also to Dr. *Macknight*, *Kypke*, *Rosenmuller*, &c., but in many cases I have departed from all these, and others of the same class, and followed my own light.

6. On the controversy relative to the doctrine of *justification*, as taught by Paul and James, I have not entered deeply; I have produced in the proper places what appeared to me to be the most natural method of reconciling those writers. I believe St. James not to be in opposition to St. Paul, but to a corrupt doctrine taught among his *own countrymen* relative to this important subject. The *doctrine of justification by faith in Christ Jesus*, as taught by St. Paul, is *both* rational and true. St. James shows that a *bare belief in the God of Israel* justifies no man; and that the *genuine faith* that justifies works by love, and produces obedience to all the precepts

contained in the moral law; and that this obedience is the evidence of the sincerity of that faith which professes to have put its possessor in the enjoyment of the peace and favour of God.

7. This epistle ends *abruptly*, and scarcely appears to be a finished work. The author probably intended to have added more, but may have been prevented by death. James, our Lord's brother, was murdered by the Jews, as we have already seen. James, the son Zebedee, had probably a short race; but whether either of these were its author we know not. The work was probably *posthumous*, not appearing till after the author's death; and this may have been one reason why it was so little known in the earliest ages of the primitive Church.

8. The spirit of *Antinomianism* is as dangerous in the Church as the spirit of *Pharisaism*; to the *former* the Epistle of James is a most *powerful antidote*; and the Christian minister who wishes to improve and guard the morals of his flock will bring its important doctrines, in due proportion, into his public ministry. It is no proof of the improved state of public morals that many, who call themselves *evangelical teachers*, scarcely ever attempt to instruct the public by texts selected from this epistle.

For other particulars, relative to the time of writing this epistle, the *author*, his *inspiration*, *apostleship*, &c., I must refer to Michaelis and Lardner, and to the *preface*.

Millbrook, Dec. 9, 1816

Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition, Dec. 31, 1831.