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DOCTRINAL PECULIARITIES OF THE  
EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES

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

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by  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The writer of this dissertation wrote his Bachelor of Theology thesis on the Isagogics of 1 Peter together with a translation and exegetical study of 1 Peter 2:1-17. He wrote a dissertation on the Letter to the Hebrews for his Master of Theology degree. This included an introduction to the Letter, a translation of the entire Epistle, and an exegetical study of Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26-31. As he pondered the problem of selecting a subject for his doctor's thesis, he decided that he would like to take one of the shorter epistles of the New Testament and write a complete commentary on that particular book. He selected the Epistle of James, being especially interested in the problem of the authorship of the Letter and the problem of the relationship between faith and works as presented in James 2:14-26. Dr. Arndt of the New Testament department of Concordia Seminary felt that a complete commentary on James was too ambitious a project for the writer to undertake; he suggested the title which this thesis bears. Professor Franzmann, having made the Epistle of James the subject of special study, was designated as the writer's advisor. With him, the writer worked out the outline and the limits of this dissertation as it is here presented.

As with his earlier theses, the writer feels that this dissertation should be far better than it is, but he believes that it does show considerable improvement over his previous efforts. Through this study, he has grown in his appreciation of the Epistle of James; and if this thesis contributes toward the development of greater appreciation of the Letter on the part of those who take the time and trouble to read the thesis, the writer will be grateful to God for having been used to serve Him in this way.

## PART I

### ISAGOGICS OF THE EPISTLE

According to the Epistle itself the writer is "James" (or Jacob) servant of God and Lord Jesus Christ. He was not told which James is the writer of the Letter. The New Testament introduces us to the following men named James - some of whom may be identical:

1. James, the son of Zebedee, an apostle, brother of John, the apostle (Matt. 10:2; 13:13; Mark 3:13; 6:30; Luke 9:12; Acts 1:13).
2. James, the son of Alphaeus, an apostle (Matt. 10:3; Acts 1:13).
3. James, the little (Mark 15:40).
4. James, the father of the apostle, John - not identical (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).
5. James who was granted a special appearance of the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:7).
6. James, the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19; Matt. 13:55).
7. James, a leading elder in the congregation in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 2:9, 12).
8. James, the brother of Jude, the writer of the

## CHAPTER II

### THE WRITER OF THE EPISTLE

According to the Epistle itself the writer is: "James (or Jacob) servant of God and Lord Jesus Christ." We are not told which James is the writer of the Letter. The New Testament introduces us to the following men named James - some of whom may be identical:

1. James, the son of Zebedee, an apostle, brother of John, the apostle (Matt. 4:21; 10:2; 17:1; Mark 10:35; 13:3; Luke 9:54; Acts 12:2).
2. James, the son of Alphaeus, an apostle (Matt. 10:3; Acts 1:13).
3. James, the Little (Mark 15:40).
4. James, the father of the apostle, Judas - not Iscariot (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13).
5. James who was granted a special appearance of the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:7).
6. James, the brother of the Lord (Gal. 1:19; Matt. 13:55).
7. James, a leading elder in the congregation in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 2:9,12).
8. James, the brother of Jude, the writer of the

Epistle which bears his name (Jude 1).<sup>1</sup>

James, the son of Alphaeus, and James, the Little, may be the same man. In that case, the second apostle named James in the lists of apostles (Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; and Acts 1:13) was the son of Alphaeus and the Mary referred to in Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40. Some have identified this Mary with the wife of Clopas referred to in John 19:25, believing that Clopas is one Greek form of the Aramaic name Chalpai of which Alphaeus is another Greek form.<sup>2</sup> However, this cannot be proved from the New Testament.

It is very probable that we may regard the last four in the above list as being the same person. When James, the son of Zebedee, is referred to in the New Testament he is always spoken of as one of the sons of Zebedee or as a brother of John (Matt. 4:21; 10:2; 17:1; 20:20; 26:37; 27:56; Mark 1:19; 3:17; 5:37; 10:35; Luke 5:10; John 21:2; Acts 12:2) or this relationship is indicated by the context (Mark 1:29; cf. 1:19; 9:2; 10:41; cf. 10:35; 13:3; cf. 3:16-18; 14:33; Luke 6:14; 8:51; 9:28, 54; Acts 1:13).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1900), pp. 25, 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), p. 102.

Similarly, when the second James in the disciple-band is referred to, he is designated as the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13).<sup>4</sup>

When the name, James, stands alone the reference invariably seems to be to the man who was the leading elder of the congregation in Jerusalem for many years. Since this is true in such passages as Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; and Galatians 2:9,12, we have reason to believe that it is this James who is referred to by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:7 when he writes of the appearance of the Resurrected Lord to James. It is likely that it is to this James that Paul refers also in Galatians 1:19 when he writes of James, the brother of the Lord.

The question, whether or not Paul in this passage calls this James an apostle, perhaps cannot be settled to the satisfaction of everyone with the evidence that is available. However, when a reader focuses his attention on the context of verse 19 and not only upon the two words in the verse he will, I believe, come to the conclusion that Paul is here emphasizing the fact that on this, his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, Peter was the only one of the apostles whom he saw. But while he is emphasizing this he realizes that he may be accused by some of being dishonest if he fails to mention that he also saw

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

James, the brother of the Lord. For this man, who had become very prominent in the leadership of the mother-church in Jerusalem, was regarded by many as being on the same high level as the twelve apostles themselves.

Indeed, it would not be strange if Paul regarded James as a true apostle of Christ even though he was not a member of the original twelve. Paul, throughout his Epistles, is very emphatic in his own claim of being an apostle of Christ (Rom. 1:1; 11:13; 1 Cor. 9:1; 2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11,12; Gal. 1:1; 2:6-9; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 2:7; Tit. 1:1, etc.). The risen Lord had appeared to him, the unbeliever and persecutor of Christians, had led him to faith in Himself, and had sent him out to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. The experience of James was similar. He too had been an unbeliever during the earthly ministry of Jesus (John 7:5). To him too the risen Lord had appeared in a special manifestation (1 Cor. 15:7), had led him to faith in Himself, and had sent him out to be His servant, especially, it seems, among the Jews.

The writer of the Epistle of Jude calls Himself: "Judas, servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James" (Jude 1). When he thus identifies himself, not only as a servant of Christ, but also as a brother of James, he no doubt refers to the well-known James who was a leader in the congregation in Jerusalem for many years. For, unless his brother was better known than he was, there would be little point in

mentioning the relationship. And when we turn to the lists of the "brothers of the Lord" which we find in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 we find the name Judas there as well as the name James.

The matter of the relationship between Jesus and the "brothers of the Lord" has been much discussed. There are three main views with regard to this relationship: 1. Helvidian: These "brothers" were sons of Joseph and Mary born later than Jesus. 2. Epiphanian: They were sons of Joseph by a former marriage and therefore older than Jesus. 3. Hieronymian: They were cousins of Jesus, sons of a sister of the Virgin Mary who was also named Mary.<sup>5</sup>

The New Testament passages which have a bearing on the question are the following: Matthew 1:24,25; Luke 2:7; John 2:12; Matthew 13:54-56 with the parallel in Mark 6:1-3; Mark 3:20,21,31-35 with the parallels in Matthew 12:46-50 and Luke 8:19-21; John 7:2-9; Matthew 27:55,56; Mark 15:40,47; 16:1; Luke 24:10; John 19:25-27; Acts 1:13,14; 1 Corinthians 9:5; and Galatians 1:18,19.<sup>6</sup>

In Matthew 1:24,25 we are told that Joseph, after having received in a dream a revelation concerning the conception by the Holy Spirit of Mary's unborn Child, arose

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<sup>5</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. vi.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. vi-viii.

from sleep and took his wife as the angel of the Lord commanded him. "And he did not know her until she bore her son."

Matthew certainly gives the impression that Joseph and Mary lived together as husband and wife after the birth of Mary's Firstborn.

In the story of the birth of the Savior in Luke 2 we read: "She bore her son, the firstborn," (τὸν πρῶτό-  
τοκον). The word πρῶτότοκον does not in it-  
self necessarily imply that there were other children born  
later. But Luke, at the time that he wrote, knew whether  
or not Mary had given birth to other children. And if he  
had known that Mary had had no child except Jesus, he almost  
certainly would have used the term *μονογενῆ* rather  
than πρῶτότοκον.<sup>7</sup>

The story of the experience of the twelve-year-old  
Jesus in the temple suggests strongly that Mary and Joseph  
had younger children. It is easier to understand that they  
could let the boy, Jesus, get out of their sight and not be-  
gin a serious search for Him until they had traveled a full  
day on the homeward journey if they had younger children to  
care for. Their negligence seems inexcusable if He was the  
only Child.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>William Patrick, James The Lord's Brother (Edinburgh:  
T. & T. Clark, 1906), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup>Mayor, op. cit., pp. xxv, xxvi.

In John 2:12 we are told that Jesus, His mother, brothers, and disciples went to Capernaum where they stayed a few days. In this passage as in Mark 3:31-35 and parallel passages we see the brothers of Jesus in the company of His mother. If they were sons of Joseph and a former wife - therefore, some years older than Jesus who was about thirty years old at the time (Luke 3:23) - it is not likely that they would be closely associated with Mary, apparently after the death of Joseph. If they were sons of Mary's sister, it is strange that we meet them in Scripture in the company of their aunt - never in the company of their mother.

The people of Nazareth refer to the brothers and sisters of Jesus as though they were members of the same family (Matt. 13:54-56; Mark 6:1-3). In their thinking, as far as we can gather from the written report, the relationship to Him of His brothers and sisters was as real as the relationship of His mother.

The question, whether the Evangelist refers in John 19:25 to three or four women standing near the cross of Jesus, has been much discussed. It would be strange if two sisters bore the same name, Mary. That is an unheard of thing among us and the burden of proof rests with those who claim that it was customary among the Jews in Biblical times. In the second place, the lack of a connecting particle between ἡ ἀδελφὴ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ and Μαρία ἡ κλωπᾶ does not force us to the con-

clusion that John is referring to the same woman. We note that in Matthew 10:3,4 the disciples of Jesus, after the first four, are arranged in pairs without a connecting particle between the groups. The same is true of some of the names in the list given by Luke in Acts 1:13. We note also that John has just been writing of the soldiers who divided the clothes of Jesus into four parts and cast lots for His *XITWVA*, John 19:23-25a. Then he turns to the contrasting attitude and activities of the women. He names the mother of Jesus and her sister first; they constitute a pair - two sisters. Then he names the other two women; they also constitute a pair - having the same name, Mary. There were four soldiers. The number of the very different group, the women, was also four and their names are arranged in pairs.

When we compare the lists of the names of women who were in the neighborhood of Jesus' cross as given in Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; and John 19:25, we find that:

1. Only John mentions Mary, the mother of Jesus.
2. Mary Magdalene is in all three lists.
3. Mary, the mother of James and Joses, is in the lists of Matthew and Mark. Perhaps she may be identified with Mary, the wife of Clopas, in John's list.

4. Matthew lists as one of the women "the mother of the sons of Zebedee." Mark lists "Salome" who is usually considered the mother of the sons of Zebedee, James and John.

John lists the sister of Jesus' mother. It may well be that the Evangelist is referring to his own mother in this way. Such a designation would be in keeping with the indirect way in which he refers to himself, "the disciple whom He loved."<sup>9</sup>

A person who reads the Scripture passages which have a bearing on the matter of the relationship between Jesus and His "brothers" - reads them without preconceived ideas - will naturally come to the conclusion that the brothers and sisters of the Lord were sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus, the firstborn Son of Mary. It is difficult to understand how Lenski can write:

Coming down from certainty to probability, ready to content ourselves with that, the least probability lies on the side of the view of uterine children. A greater degree of probability exists for the assumption of cousinship, children of Mary's sister. Examine the evidence; do it with an unbiased, judicial mind...<sup>10</sup>

In my humble opinion, the student who so examines the Biblical evidence will arrive at an opinion exactly opposite the one indicated by Lenski. In fact, the "cousinship" idea will not even occur to the Bible reader who has not been indoctrinated from extra-Biblical sources - especially if he reads the New Testament in Greek and does not therefore run into that vague English word, "brethren."

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. xx.

<sup>10</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 515.

On this subject, Lenski, among other things, writes: "Nowhere do we read: 'the sons, or the children of Mary, or of Mary and Joseph'...We read 'his brothers - his sisters' and not 'their other children.'<sup>11</sup> But why should we? Why should the Evangelists write in that way? They were writing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Everything that is mentioned finds a place in their accounts because it is related to Him and it is this relationship that matters.

The one obstacle to the view that the brothers and sisters of the Lord are children of Joseph and Mary, younger than Jesus, is the fact that Jesus, while on the cross, entrusted His mother to the care of His beloved disciple, John 19:25-27. Why did He entrust His mother to John if she had four sons and at least two daughters to care for her in her old age? We are unable to answer that question. But that is not strange, since we do not know all the facts in the case. It may be that all of Mary's sons and daughters were married; their own immediate families occupied their attention to a great extent. John, however, may have been unmarried and could give to Mary the companionship and spiritual fellowship that she needed. She, in turn, could keep house for John and in the quietness of that home - free from the distractions of grandchildren and a busy household - ponder the experiences that God had given to her when she had

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 513, 514.

been chosen the "handmaid of the Lord" (Luke 1:38; 2:19; 2:51). If John was a son of Mary's sister, there was a rather close blood relationship between the two. And we may recall that Jesus made clear the fact that there is a higher relationship than the relationship of blood (Mark 3:31-35). Even with the meager facts that we have at hand we can feel that there was a special fitness in the fact that these two people who seemingly appreciated the Lord Jesus most in the days of His visible life on earth should be given by Him to one another.

It is beyond the scope of the present work to go into the patristic writings to discover the views of Church Fathers on the relationship of the "brethren of the Lord" to Jesus. A brief statement on the basis of secondary sources must suffice. According to Patrick,<sup>12</sup> there are the following primary sources, giving the views of early Christians on this question: Protevangelium of James and the Gospel of Peter - both probably from the second century; Hegesippus, and Tertullian. The Protevangelium of James and the Gospel of Peter are apocryphal writings - both fabrications for a purpose. Many things in them are contrary to facts stated in the Gospels. Not a single assertion which they contain can be accepted without confirmation from other more reliable sources. Therefore, no reliance can be

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<sup>12</sup>Patrick, op. cit., pp. 9-12.

placed on statements in them to the effect that Joseph was married before he married Mary and had sons by this former marriage.

Hegesippus was an ecclesiastical writer of the second century. He was probably of Jewish origin - at least, such was the conclusion of Eusebius from Hegesippus' writings. He apparently lived in the Orient since he stopped at Corinth while he was on his way by sea to Rome. Eusebius quotes him frequently as a witness of the true faith - always from a work called Upomnemata, composed of five books, written at different times. It seems to be a free setting down of the writer's reminiscences, following no special order, although penetrated by the same design and same beliefs.<sup>13</sup> Eusebius, in his Church History, Book III, Chapter 20, quotes Hegesippus as follows: "Of the family of the Lord there were still living the grandchildren of Jude, who is said to have been the Lord's brother according to the flesh."<sup>14</sup> This quotation does not make clear in what sense Hegesippus believed Jude to be the brother of the Lord. Therefore we

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<sup>13</sup>C. Weizsacker, "Hegesippus," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), V, 201, 202.

<sup>14</sup>Arthur Cushman McGiffert (translator and editor), "The Church History of Eusebius," A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, edited by Henry Wace and Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), I, 148.

must say that his testimony on the question of James' relationship to the Lord is not clear.

The testimony of Tertullian is clear. His language "plainly implies that to him the brothers of our Lord were His brothers in precisely the same sense in which Mary was His mother."<sup>15</sup> According to Patrick:

He writes...in a manner which shows that he took for granted that Joseph and Mary lived together after our Lord's birth as married persons...Tertullian may be regarded as giving not his own opinion merely, but that generally entertained...Certainly Tertullian was of all men of his time the least likely to entertain this opinion unless he had regarded it as the only legitimate inference from Scripture, or had found it current within the Church. The assertion may therefore be regarded as established that the most ancient trustworthy evidence is in favour of the opinion that our Lord's brothers were the sons of Joseph and Mary.<sup>16</sup>

Since the Biblical evidence and the earliest trustworthy testimony of a Church father strongly indicate that the brothers and sisters of Jesus were sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary, we may accept this as a fact in spite of the belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary which became prevalent in the Church in the third and fourth centuries. The unscriptural view that the unmarried state is a higher and more God-pleasing state than that of marriage was, no doubt, responsible for the development of this belief.

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<sup>15</sup>Patrick, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

When we read then at the beginning of our Epistle: "James, the servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ," we can believe that the Epistle was written by a man who grew up in the same home as our Savior. He was trained and influenced in early years by the young woman whom God had chosen to be the mother of His Son and by the young man who is characterized in Scripture as a "righteous man" (Matt. 1:19) and who repeatedly received direct guidance from God and was obedient to that guidance. In this home, too, there was a remarkable older Brother who, no doubt, influenced James to a great extent; even very ordinary boys have great influence over their younger brothers. Since there were at least seven children in this home - both boys and girls - James as well as Jesus had opportunities for rich family experiences. Since James is mentioned first in the two lists of the brothers of Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3) it may be inferred that he was the oldest of the four. Whether or not he was older than one or more of his sisters is not indicated in the New Testament.

James may or may not have been a married man. The only clue that we have in Scripture is the word of Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:5: "Have we not the right to lead about a believing wife as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?" This, of course, does not necessarily mean that all four of the brothers were married. Paul could write in this way if three of them were married

and traveled about on missionary journeys - or even if this was true of only two of them. And yet, since James was apparently the best known of the four it would be a bit strange for Paul to include the brothers of the Lord in his question if James was unmarried and immovably stationed in Jerusalem.

The ideas of James' asceticism, including celibacy, have no basis in Scripture. Apparently, they have sprung from the description by Hegesippus of the mode of life followed by James and of his death. This description has been preserved by Eusebius (H. E. ii. 23).<sup>17</sup> This account contains many things which cannot be accepted as sober facts. But even Hegesippus does not claim that James was unmarried.

During the public ministry of Jesus when the people crowded about Him and His disciples, and He was kept so busy that He had no opportunity to eat, James with his brothers and their mother feared that Jesus was losing His mind. They felt that it was necessary for them to lay hold of Him and take Him home for a rest (Mark 3:20,21,31-35; Matt. 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21). It is John who tells us plainly that the brothers of Jesus, including James, did not believe in Him during His earthly ministry, John 7:5. Apparently it was the special appearance of the risen Savior, 1 Corinthians 15:7, which led James out of his unbelief and into the ranks of His followers. He perhaps was instrumental in

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

leading his brothers to faith, for we read in the first chapter of Acts that the brothers of Jesus were with the disciples, the pious women, and the mother of Jesus in the upper room during the ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost.

James was soon called into a leading role in the congregation in Jerusalem. Paul saw him there when, three years after his conversion (ca. 36 A.D.), he went up to visit Peter (Gal. 1:19). After Peter had been rescued from imprisonment under Herod, he asked the Christians gathered for prayer in the house of Mary, Mark's mother, to report the news of his release to "James and the brethren" (Acts 12:17). James took a prominent part in the conference in Jerusalem which had before it the problem of whether or not it was necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised when they became Christians (Acts 15). Many writers state that James presided at that conference. That may be true; but I fail to find any statement to that effect in Acts 15. It was he who proposed the resolution which was adopted by the conference (Acts 15:13-21). The letter which was drawn up by the conference to be sent to the Christians in Antioch has some points of resemblance to the Epistle of James.<sup>18</sup> This

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<sup>18</sup>For a list of words and expressions which occur either in the address of James (Acts 15:13-21) or in the letter sent by the Jerusalem Conference to Antioch (Acts 15:23-29) and which are also found in the Letter of James, see Mayor, op. cit., pp. 111, iv.

may indicate that James had an important part in the writing of the letter adopted by the Jerusalem Conference. When Paul returned to Jerusalem for the last time - the last time, at least, as far as the New Testament records show - he and his companions reported to James in the presence of all the elders (Acts 21:18).

The New Testament gives us no information regarding the death of James. Hegesippus' account of James' martyrdom in Jerusalem has been preserved by Eusebius.<sup>19</sup> However, this does not appear to be a trustworthy account. In it James is represented apparently as a Nazarite; there is nothing in Scripture to indicate that he was such. It is stated that James did not eat flesh; this assertion cannot be true if he conformed to the ordinary standard of Jewish orthodoxy, because every loyal Jew partook of the Paschal lamb. Again, it is said that he alone was permitted to enter the Holy Place. This cannot be true, for only the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, and the priests alone to enter the Holy Place. James was not a Jewish priest; he was not descended from the tribe of Levi but from the tribe of Judah (Matt. 1:2-16; Luke 3:24-33). It is said that the Jews, Scribes, and Pharisees asked James to restrain the people because they had come to believe that Jesus was the Christ. It is hardly credible that such a

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<sup>19</sup>McGiffert, op. cit. (H. E., 11, 23), pp. 125-7.

request would be addressed by the leaders of the Jews to the leader of the Christians. After James had been a leader of the Christians in Jerusalem for many years, the Jewish leaders had no reason to expect that James would deny that Jesus is the Christ, as the account indicates that they did.<sup>20</sup>

A more sober account is given by Josephus in Antiquities xx. ix. 1. Of this account, Plummer writes: "This account by Josephus contains no improbabilities, and should be preferred to that of Hegesippus."<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Zahn states that the statement of Hegesippus is our only authority with regard to the death of James, since the passage in Josephus shows unmistakable signs of interpolation by a Christian hand.<sup>22</sup>

In opposition to Zahn and others who regard the passage in Josephus as an interpolation, Patrick writes:

The passage bears the imprint of genuineness. No Christian would have spoken of the so-called Christ. Nor would he have related the execution of James in such cold passionless language. If Josephus were to refer to the death of James at all, he could hardly have spoken otherwise. Further, the difference of tone regarding James between the present passage and that commonly regarded as spurious quoted by Eusebius (H. E., ii. 23), furnishes additional evidence of its originality. There is, then, no reason for regarding the words referred to as added to the original text,

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<sup>20</sup>Patrick, op. cit., pp. 222-30.

<sup>21</sup>Plummer, op. cit., pp. 39, 40.

<sup>22</sup>Zahn, op. cit., p. 107, n. 4.

and the entire narrative may be accepted as authentic. Being the witness of a contemporary and in a sense even of an enemy, it is raised beyond all suspicion.<sup>23</sup>

The account of Josephus is briefly this: After the death of Festus, the Roman governor, and before Albinus, his successor, arrived in Jerusalem, the younger Annas who had just been raised by Herod Agrippa to the high priesthood called a meeting of the Sanhedrin and had James and some others condemned to death by atoning for the transgression of the Law. Josephus implies that James and his fellow-Christians perished by this sentence. The date of James' death, as indicated by Josephus, is 62 A.D.<sup>24</sup>

The accounts of Hegesippus and Josephus agree in the following items: James died in Jerusalem, being put to death by unbelieving Jews. His death occurred some time between 60 and 70 A.D. It seems clear even from the account of Josephus that James died as a martyr to his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ - a glorious end for one who, for a time, stumbled in unbelief because of his very nearness to the person of Jesus.

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<sup>23</sup>Patrick, op. cit., pp. 234, 235.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 234-7.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE FIRST READERS OF THE EPISTLE

The readers addressed by the writer of the Epistle are indicated in the first verse: "James, servant of God and Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion, greeting!"

The expression "the twelve tribes" leads us at once to think of Jews - the people descended from the twelve sons of Jacob. Ten of these tribes were, in large part, carried away into captivity by the Assyrians. The poor of the land who were left behind apparently intermarried with the people whom the Assyrians sent into the land (2 Kings 17). The resulting mixed people were known as Samaritans in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. No return to Palestine of the captives taken to Assyria is recorded in the Bible. However, it is likely that some pious people of these tribes immigrated into the land of Judah after the division of the Kingdom into the two parts (1 Kings 12). In Judah, priests of the Tribe of Levi still officiated; there the temple was located; and over the land of Judah, kings of the house of David ruled. According to promise, kings of the tribe of Judah should reign until "Shiloh" should come (Gen. 49:10). Therefore, the pious people of the Ten Tribes, no doubt, were interested in immigrating into the territory of the

Kingdom of Judah if there was any opportunity to do so. Some of the poor people left behind at the time of the fall of Samaria (1 Kings 17), may likewise have immigrated into the territory of the Kingdom which had not yet fallen. Also, it is possible that at least some people of the Ten Tribes returned to Palestine after the Babylonian Captivity with the remnant of the people of Judah. At any rate, we read in Luke 2:36 of Anna, the prophetess, who was of the tribe of Asher.

The Jewish people are at times referred to in the New Testament as "the twelve tribes." For instance, in Matthew 19:28, we read that Jesus said to His disciples that they would sit on twelve thrones, "judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Similar words of Jesus are recorded in Luke 22:30. In Acts 26:7 we read that Paul referred to his people, the Jews, as "our twelve tribes."

Several things in the Epistle of James tend to indicate that the writer has people with a Jewish background in mind as he writes. He refers to Abraham as "our father" in 2:21. In view of Paul's use of this expression in Romans 4:1 when writing to a congregation which was made up apparently of both Gentiles and Jews, the expression in James 2:21 does not, in any sense, prove that James was writing to Jews; and yet we can say that it would be more natural for him to write in that way if he was addressing Jewish Christians. James refers to the place of worship or to the assembly of worship-

ers as a "synagogue" (2:2). He takes it for granted that his readers are familiar, not only with the life of Abraham (2:21-23), but also with the lives of Rahab (2:25), the prophets (5:10), Job (5:11), and Elijah (5:17). These things do not prove that James was addressing his Letter to Jewish Christians, since Gentile Christians who read the Old Testament carefully could also be expected to be familiar with these Old Testament characters and expressions. And yet we can say that these references, to some extent at least, favor the view that James had people with a Jewish background in mind when he wrote his Epistle.

The use of the term *κυρίου πασων* in 5:4 does not necessarily indicate that the author is addressing Jewish readers since Gentile Christians familiar with Isaiah 1:9; 5:9; etc., would recognize the expression, but it would ordinarily mean more to pious Jews. This is the only place in the New Testament in which we find this expression except for Paul's quotation of Isaiah 1:9 in Roman<sup>s</sup> 9:29.

Jewish forms of oaths are taken as illustrations in 5:12 - a verse which is closely related to a section of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:33-37. The Jews were careful to refrain from mentioning the name of God in their oaths; this was not true of heathen Gentiles.

The vices that are preached against in this Epistle are such as were common among Jews - reckless language,

rash swearing, oppression of the poor, covetousness, and the like. There is little or no reference to the gross sexual immorality which was rare among Jews but common among Gentiles.<sup>1</sup> The Epistle of James is in marked contrast, in this regard, to the Epistles of Paul and Peter. The latter writers found it necessary to warn their readers emphatically against the danger of falling into the immoralities of the heathen Gentiles.

These things alone would not clearly identify the readers as being Jewish, but since such readers are rather definitely indicated in the first verse of the Epistle, these things help to confirm the impression given by the salutation. Some have seen in the reference to Rahab in 2:25 an indication that James also had Gentile readers in mind when he wrote his Letter.<sup>2</sup> But Matthew, who is quite generally believed to have written especially for the Jews, included the mention of Rahab in his genealogy of Jesus (1:5); and the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews who, seemingly, wrote to a group of Jewish Christians likewise mentioned Rahab as an example of a person who had faith (11:31). A consideration of these facts makes the above-

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1900), pp. 45, 46.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), p. 91.

mentioned inference seem doubtful indeed. If the three books in the New Testament which seem to be addressed especially to Jews are the only ones which refer to Rahab, then the mention of her in one of them can hardly be used to prove that the writer of that book is thinking of Gentiles. There may well have been a few Gentiles in the groups to which the Epistle of James was first sent but there is very little indication, if any, of this fact in the Epistle itself.

But it also seems clear that James wrote his Letter, not to all Jews, but to Christian Jews. He writes as a servant of Jesus Christ, 1:1. He assumes that his readers have faith in Christ, 2:1. They are no longer under the yoke of bondage but under the perfect law of liberty, 1:25; 2:12. They live among unbelievers and blasphemers of Christ, 2:6,7.<sup>3</sup> They are reminded of the coming of the Lord and are exhorted to be patient until He comes, 5:7,8. This sounds like references to the second coming of Christ, though it is not absolutely certain that τοῦ κυρίου in these verses refers to the Second Person in God.

It is possible that James uses the word διασπορά in 1:1 to indicate that he is addressing, not all Jews, but those Jews who had gone out from the great body of Jews by accepting Jesus as the Messiah. These Christian Jews had

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<sup>3</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. cxv.

been dispersed from Jerusalem by the persecution which sprang up after the stoning of Stephen, Acts 8:1; 11:19. It was a very thorough dispersion according to Acts 8:1; all Christians except the Apostles left Jerusalem. According to a strict interpretation of the verse, that means that James also left Jerusalem. And he may well have gone back to Galilee and stayed there for a time. When the persecution died down, some of the Christians gradually returned - James being among them, if indeed he had left Jerusalem at all. He was back there when Paul visited Peter in Jerusalem three years after his conversion (Gal. 1:19). By the time that James, the son of Zebedee, was put to death and Peter was imprisoned and miraculously released (Acts 12:1-17), probably in 44 A.D., he was in such a place of leadership in the Jerusalem congregation that Peter asked that news of his release be reported to "James and to the brethren," Acts 12:17.

If James wrote his Letter within ten years or so of the persecution which scattered the Christians from Jerusalem into the surrounding territories, he might well address the Christians of the time as "the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion." At that time probably only the congregation in Antioch included any significant number of Gentiles (Acts 11:19-26). Therefore, the first part of the salutation: "which are in the dispersion" would point to the fact that he was addressing the latest dispersion of

Jews - the dispersion which occurred when a minority of the Jews accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and, as a result of this acceptance, were driven by the persecution of the majority out of the capital city.

In this case, even the Christian congregation in Jerusalem which reassembled after the persecution following Stephen's martyrdom died down can be considered included in the "diaspora." Indeed, since the Letter has many of the characteristics of a sermon, it may well be that it was, in large part, delivered orally to the Christian congregation in Jerusalem and later put into written form and sent by messengers to Christian congregations in various places.

We can consider included in the greeting of 1:1 such Christian congregations as those in Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee (Acts 8:1,14,25,40; 9:31,32,36; 10:24; 21:8; Gal. 1:22; 1 Thess. 2:14). We can consider included also the congregations at Damascus, Tyre, in Cyprus, at Antioch, and Ptolemais (Acts 11:1-26; 13:1; 21:3,7; and 9:2-25).<sup>4</sup>

In brief, then, we may say: Insofar as we are able to determine from the Epistle of James itself and the remainder of the New Testament, the first readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and other parts of Judaea, Galilee, Samaria, Phoenicia, Damascus, Cyprus, Syria, and possibly even more distant points. There may have been

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<sup>4</sup>Zahn, op. cit., pp. 100, 101.

among these Jewish Christians a small number of Gentile Christians - especially in Antioch and the surrounding territory.

#### THE PLACE AND DATE OF WRITING

The place of writing need not detain us long. If James, the brother of the Lord, is the writer of the letter, then we can quite safely conclude that it was written in Jerusalem. It is true that we meet him every time that he is mentioned in Scripture after the Ascension of our Lord. The only reference that might indicate that James went out from Jerusalem on missionary journeys is the one in 1 Corinthians 9:5: "Have we not the right to lead about a believing wife as the rest of the apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?" This may include James although, as pointed out in Chapter II, Paul would write in this way even if only two or three of our Lord's brethren were married and made missionary journeys. Even if James went on such journeys, it is likely that he wrote the Epistle while he was at home in Jerusalem. The allusions to nature in the Epistle tend to confirm the belief that some place in Palestine - not necessarily Jerusalem, of course, - was the place of writing: the dove (1:11), the fig tree (2:2), the olive tree (3:11), and the early and latter rain (5:2).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James* (London: Macmillan & Co., Limited, 1877), p. xxx.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PLACE AND DATE OF WRITING

The place of writing need not detain us long. If James, the brother of the Lord, is the writer of the Letter, then we can quite safely conclude that it was written in Jerusalem. It is there that we meet him every time that he is mentioned in Scripture after the Ascension of our Lord. The only reference that might indicate that James went out from Jerusalem on missionary journeys is the one in 1 Corinthians 9:5: "Have we not the right to lead about a believing wife as the rest of the apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?" This may include James although, as pointed out in Chapter II, Paul could write in this way even if only two or three of our Lord's brothers were married and made missionary journeys. Even if James went on such journeys, it is likely that he wrote the Epistle while he was at home in Jerusalem. The allusions to nature in the Epistle tend to confirm the belief that some place in Palestine - not necessarily Jerusalem, of course, - was the place of writing: the scorching wind (1:11), the neighborhood of the sea (1:6; 3:4), sweet and bitter springs (3:11), figs and olives (3:12), and the early and latter rain (5:7).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. cxx.

An early date of writing has already been suggested in Chapter III. The attempt will be made in this chapter to back up that suggestion.

There are hints of early date in the Epistle itself. For instance, the place of meeting of the Christians is referred to as a synagogue in 2:2, although it clearly is a synagogue controlled by Christians.<sup>2</sup> There is no mention of bishops or deacons but only of teachers (3:1) and elders (5:14). Teaching is somewhat unorganized; the opportunity to come forward to teach is apparently open to everyone (3:1), as in the congregation in Corinth as indicated by 1 Corinthians 14:26-33. The elders are called elders of the "church" (ἐκκλησία), perhaps to make it clear that it is not the elders of the Jews to whom reference is being made. These elders are to use means of healing which take us back to the activities of the disciples of Jesus while their Master was still visibly present with them (Mark 6:13).<sup>3</sup>

In the second place, some of the omissions of the Epistle point to an early date of composition. There is no reference in the Letter to the destruction of Jerusalem in

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<sup>2</sup> in 2:2 may mean "into your assembly." However, when we take into consideration the verses that follow, especially verse 3 where we read of the places in the room assigned to the rich and poor persons who came as visitors, it is more natural to take "synagogue" as referring to the place in which the Christians assembled for worship.

<sup>3</sup>Mayor, op. cit., pp. cxxiii, cxxiv.

70 A.D. If the Letter was written to Jewish Christians during the period, 70 to 96 A.D., such an omission would be difficult to explain.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore fairly safe to conclude that the Epistle was written before 70 A.D. A second significant silence of the Epistle is its silence regarding the problem of the admission of Gentiles into the Christian Church. If it had been written after a Jewish faction of the Church tried to make it necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised in order to secure admission as members of the Christian Church, the writer could hardly have ignored this issue. It seems then that the Epistle of James must have been written before the question of the necessity of circumcising the Gentiles became a burning issue (Acts 15:1; Gal. 2:3; 5:2, etc.). No reference is made in the Letter to the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:1-29), which sought to settle the question: Is it necessary for Gentile converts to the Christian faith to be circumcised? The fact that James and the elders in Jerusalem referred to the action taken at this conference, when Paul came to Jerusalem for the last time (Acts 21:25), suggests that the lack of such a reference in the Epistle of James means that it was written before the conference.<sup>5</sup> The date of this Jerusalem Conference is variously given by different writers - all the way

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. cxxii.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

from 48 to 52 A.D. One of the more recent writers on the historical place of the Letter of James sets the date of the Jerusalem Conference as 48.<sup>6</sup> This places the date of Paul's conversion in 31, which seems a little early (Gal. 1:15-18; 2:1). Such an early date leaves little room for the events and developments recorded in Acts 1-8. For this reason, the present writer believes that the year, 50 A.D., is a better guess than 48 as the date of the Jerusalem Conference. The fact which has already been mentioned that there is very little, if any, reference to Gentile Christians in our Epistle is a further indication of the early date of writing. After Paul's first missionary journey and the establishment of the largely Gentile congregations of Lycaonia (Acts 13:1-14:28), a writer of a letter apparently addressed to the entire Christian Church of the time could hardly fail to take cognizance of this Gentile branch of the Christian fellowship. The Book of Acts gives the impression that this first missionary journey was completed shortly before the Jerusalem Conference. It was at this conference that James and the other leaders of the Church received a full report of the missionary work that had been done on this journey (Acts 15:1-4; Gal. 2:1,2). Therefore, the Epistle of James

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<sup>6</sup>Gerhard Kittel, "Der Geschichtliche Ort des Jakobusbriefes," Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1942), 41. Band, p. 98.

must have been written before Paul's first missionary journey (ca. 48-49) - or, at least, before James received authentic information concerning the largely Gentile congregations established by Paul and Barnabas on this journey.

On the other hand, there are some considerations which should lead us to hesitate to set the date of writing of the Epistle of James extremely early in the history of the Christian Church. James writes as though he expected to be heard. He writes, not arrogantly, but with authority. It would take some time before James' authority to write to the entire Church in this way would be recognized. Again, there is an absence of any reference to an immediately preceding conversion of the readers. The writer seems to take for granted that the majority of readers have been Christians for some years. In the third place, the references to persecution are not such as to suggest that the persecution which sprang up after the martyrdom of Stephen or any similar persecution lay in the immediate background. If the first readers had been called upon to go through severe persecution in the immediate past, there would have been fewer petty rivalries and less worldly scheming among them than is indicated by the reprimands of James in this Letter.<sup>7</sup>

If we take all of these things into consideration, it would seem that we will not be far wrong if we regard the

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<sup>7</sup>Mayor, op. cit., pp. cxxv, cxxvi.

date of writing of the Epistle of James to be about 47 A.D.

# CHAPTER V

## CONDITIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE EPISTLE

Jewish Christians of the earliest period of the Church were called upon to suffer more or less persecution at the hands of their unbelieving countrymen. We know something about this persecution from the record that we have in the Book of Acts. The persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen gradually became less severe. One reason for that, no doubt, was the removal of Saul as a persecutor by his conversion. But the Christians continued to experience serious trials. They were tempted to become discouraged with the struggles of the Christian life. They had need of such patience (1:3, 12). Particularly, the rich Jews oppressed the Christian poor and blasphemed the name of their Lord (2:6, 7; 5:1-6).<sup>1</sup>

As we might expect, the Jews who became Christians did not at once in their daily lives become free from their former sins. Many of the sins for which Jesus scourged his countrymen - especially the selfish and Pharisaic - lingered on to some degree and in some form in the lives of the Jews who became Christians. For instance:

<sup>1</sup>Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, translated from the third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1907), I. 36, 37.

## CHAPTER V

### CONDITIONS CALLING FORTH THE EPISTLE

Jewish Christians of the earliest period of the Church were called upon to suffer more or less persecution at the hands of their unbelieving countrymen. We know something about this persecution from the record that we have in the Book of Acts. The persecution following the martyrdom of Stephen gradually became less severe. One reason for that, no doubt, was the removal of Saul as a persecutor by his conversion. But the Christians continued to experience serious trials. They were tempted to become discouraged with the struggles of the Christian life. They had need of much patience (1:2,12). Particularly, the rich Jews oppressed the Christian poor and blasphemed the name of their Lord (2:6,7; 5:1-6).<sup>1</sup>

As we might expect, the Jews who became Christians did not at once in their daily lives become free from their former sins. Many of the sins for which Jesus scourged His countrymen - especially the scribes and Pharisees - lingered on to some degree and in some form in the lives of the Jews who became Christians. For instance:

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<sup>1</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), I, 86, 87.

1. Their superficial hearing of the Word of God without being doers of that Word.

Jesus said:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt. 7:21-23).<sup>2</sup>

James found it necessary to ask: "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?" (2:14). He found it necessary to exhort: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (1:22).

2. Eagerness to dogmatize and proselytize.

Jesus said:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves (Matt. 23:15).

James can deal more gently with the over-eager Christians but his warning is in somewhat the same vein: "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment" (3:1).

3. Failure to fulfill real requirements of the Law - mercy, love, and justice - while paying devotion to its letter.

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<sup>2</sup>Scripture quotations in this chapter are from the American Revised Version of 1901.

Jesus said:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone (Matt. 23:23).

James found it necessary to write:

If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled, before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world (1:26,27).

4. The getting of wealth without any thought of God, with the impossible attempt to divide affections between God and earthly possessions.

The advice of Jesus is:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also (Matt. 6:19-21).

James addresses this sharp rebuke to some of the people in the Church of his day: "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God" (4:4). He reasons with some of the merchants among his readers in this way:

Come now, ye that say, Today or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall

both live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil (4:13-16).

#### 5. The practice of prayer without faith in God.

Jesus reasons with His disciples in this way:

What man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matt. 7:9-11).

And, in connection with the withering of the fig tree, Jesus sought to bolster the faith of His disciples with these words:

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he saith cometh to pass; he shall have it. Therefore I say unto you, All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them (Mark 11:23,24).

James finds it necessary to admonish his people to pray in faith:

But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed (1:5,6).

#### 6. Judging, slandering, and cursing neighbors.

Jesus said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you" (Matt. 7:1,2).

James has occasion to write:

Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speak-

eth against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor? (4:11,12).<sup>3</sup>

7. The taking of oaths too lightly.<sup>4</sup>

Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount:

...I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one (Matt. 5:34-37).

James' words are very similar: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment" (5:12).

These words of James, echoing a number of the admonitions and warnings of Jesus, indicate some of the conditions prevalent among members of the Christian Church of the time which called forth such an Epistle as this one of James. It seems from the Letter that the most serious cause for concern was a lack of correspondence between the conduct of those whom the writer has in mind and the vital content of the Word which they have heard and know (1:22-25). The faith which they confess with their lips, they do not manifest in

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<sup>3</sup>Cf. also Matthew 5:22 with James 3:9.

<sup>4</sup>Zahn, op. cit., pp. 87-91.

a life of obedience, helpfulness, and purity (2:14-26; 1:27). Specifically, they fail to show their faith in works of mercy and love (1:27; 2:13,15,16), in bridling the tongue (1:26; 3:2-12), and in being patient in suffering (1:3,4,12; 5:7-11).<sup>5</sup> Instead of living their faith out in life, they contradict their confession of faith by showing respect of persons, treating rudely the poor whom God has favored, and showing favors to the rich who persecute poor believers in Christ and blaspheme the name of their Lord (2:1-7). They seek to justify (2:8,9) their good treatment of the rich by calling attention to the second great Commandment stated by Jesus: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:39), and to His command to love enemies (Luke 6:27,28). But this is only an attempt to cover up an attitude that is at variance with God's attitude toward men. They are careful to observe the outward forms of religion (ἑξωτερικὰ) and they pride themselves on that (1:26), but in their relations with one another and with those whom they seek to teach, they are more inclined to revile and curse than they are to help one another by prayer and loving admonition (3:9; 4:11,12; 5:16,19).<sup>6</sup> They are eager to teach even though they are poorly qualified to do so and have not been called to teach (3:1,2). They consider themselves to be

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 84 and p. 97, n. 3.

wise, but the fruits found in their lives indicate that the wisdom that is from above does not dwell in them to the extent that it could and should (3:13-18). James, by the grace of God, a hater of sham and a lover of genuine, God-centered religion,<sup>7</sup> feels constrained by these conditions among the professing Christians of his day to write the Letter which we have before us for special study in this thesis.

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<sup>7</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 3.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WRITER'S APPARENT PURPOSE IN WRITING

It seems clear from the Book of Acts that the leaders of the Christians in Jerusalem were concerned about keeping in contact with congregations which were established in neighboring and even distant areas. When the apostles in Jerusalem had heard about Philip's missionary work in Samaria, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. They prayed for the believing Samaritans and laid their hands upon them. As they returned to Jerusalem they preached to many villages of the Samaritans, Acts 8:14-25. Similarly, when the congregation in Jerusalem heard about the missionary work that was being done in Antioch, Barnabas was sent to investigate and supervise, Acts 11:22. The journeys of Peter recorded in Acts 9:32-11:2 were not purely missionary journeys, since there were Christians in at least some of the places that he visited (Acts 9:32,36). He visited them to give help, encouragement, and guidance. Prophets went from Jerusalem to Antioch later to help bind together the Christian work being done in the two places, Acts 11:27.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), I, 93.

The writing of the Letter of James was a part of the effort to hold together the Christian congregations everywhere and to guide their development along uniform lines. This likely was at least a part of James' purpose in writing this Epistle.<sup>2</sup>

James was located at the center of early Jewish Christianity. The experiences and trials of the Christians in the capital city of the Jews were matters which came under his own observation and were in large part his own experiences and trials. Jewish Christians came to Jerusalem from many different places at the time of the Jewish festivals. These festivals were still sacred seasons to them. Leaders of Christian groups, no doubt, made it a point to see James in private, report to him concerning the situation in their home fields, and seek advice from him concerning the problems which confronted them in their labors. Jewish Christians attended the public Christian worship services in Jerusalem while they were there. Very likely James had opportunities to speak with these visitors after the worship services and learn something from them of the situation in their parts of the Church. He learned of the trials and difficulties which confronted the Christians and their need of instruction in regard to the place of these trials in their life with God. He realized that they needed encouragement.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

And one purpose that he had in mind as he wrote his Letter was to supply this instruction and encouragement. Farrar writes: "The purpose for which it was written was to encourage the Jewish Christians to the endurance of trial by stirring them up to a brighter energy of holy living."<sup>3</sup>

This clearly was not James' only purpose in writing his Letter, however. In addition to his desire to give encouragement and to contribute toward holding together the Christian congregations in various places, James felt that it was necessary to warn members of these congregations against the sins which he knew, from his own observation and the reports which had come to him, were prevalent and which were threatening to undermine the very life and existence of truly Christian congregations. The sins against which James thinks it necessary to warn his readers have been briefly pointed out in Chapter V. Therefore, it will not be necessary to review them here.

We can say, then, that James' purpose in writing this Letter was threefold: 1. To hold together the various parts of the Christian Church in a period when it was spreading rapidly in every direction from its original center; 2. to give guidance and encouragement to Christians continually beset by more or less severe persecution; and 3. to attack

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<sup>3</sup>Frederic W. Farrar, The Early Days of Christianity (New York: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1882), II, 6.

the sins common among Jewish Christians which were threaten-  
ing to destroy the Church of Christ.

## CHAPTER VII

### AUTHENTICITY AND CANONICITY OF THE EPISTLE

Some scholars find echoes of the Epistle of James in several of the Epistles of Paul. For example, Mayor states that Paul quoted the Epistle of James "certainly in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians written in 58 and 57, probably in his two Epistles to the Corinthians (57), and possibly in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians (52)."<sup>1</sup> Zahn too finds traces of James' influence in Paul's Epistle to the Romans.<sup>2</sup> However, an examination of passages in Romans which, it is claimed, echo James and expand his thought, does not convince the present writer that Paul had portions of the Epistle of James in mind when he wrote these passages. Two such passages are Romans 5:3,4, compared with James 1:2-4; and Romans 7:23, compared with James 4:1. The present writer is inclined to agree with Patrick when he writes:

The language of Paul may just as easily be independent. For it should be observed that each writer pursues his own line of thought. That of Paul is quite as original

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1897), p. cxxii.

<sup>2</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), I, 126-8.

and distinctive as that of James.<sup>3</sup>

The proof of relationship between James and the Epistles of Paul, even Romans, is far from being conclusive.

There is more reason to believe that there is a literary relationship between James and 1 Peter. A comparison of such passages as the following: James 1:1 and 1 Peter 1:1; James 1:2 and 1 Peter 1:6,7; James 1:12 and 1 Peter 5:4; James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:21 and 1 Peter 2:1,2; James 4:6,10 and 1 Peter 5:6, leads the reader to believe that there are similarities between the two Letters which cannot be purely accidental. Selwyn seeks to explain the similarities exhibited by the Epistles of the New Testament, including James and 1 Peter, to one another by tracing much of the material which they contain back to oral and written material which was used by the Church in general to instruct catechumens in preparation for baptism, to inspire and admonish Christians to live in accordance with the will of their Lord, and to encourage them in time of trial and persecution.<sup>4</sup> This theory is interesting and, no doubt, can be supported to some extent by proofs drawn from the New Testament and from the history and experience of the Christian Church. But that it accounts for the similarities ex-

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<sup>3</sup>William Patrick, James The Lord's Brother (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), p. 303.

<sup>4</sup>Edward Gordon Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1947), II, 363-466.

hibited by the Letter of James and the First Epistle of Peter may be questioned. The forms and materials of catechetical instruction and the hymnody of a particular historical group of Christians in the United States today is, no doubt, at least as general and ingrained in the tradition of that particular group as they could have been in the Christian Church of the first century, but we cannot explain close and numerous similarities exhibited by the sermons or writings of two pastors of that group by referring to their common background of hymnody and catechetical instruction, or even to their common theological training. If such similarities are found, the explanation must usually be sought in the dependence of the one preacher or writer upon the other.

We know from the New Testament (Acts 12:17; 15:7-14; Gal. 1:18,19; 2:9, etc.) that James and Peter were associated with one another in doing Christian work in and around Jerusalem. They, no doubt, heard one another preach the Word - perhaps often. They may have traveled on missionary tours together (1 Cor. 9:5). Each may have become quite familiar with the message that the other was in the habit of bringing to the ears of his hearers. Each may have been influenced by the other to change his own form of the message by observing the effectiveness of the message as delivered by the other. But even this does not explain the similarities exhibited by the Letters of the two men,

written probably at widely separated times and with quite different readers in mind.

The most natural and probable explanation of the similarities as well as the dissimilarities of the two Epistles is that one writer was well acquainted with the Letter of the other at the time that he wrote. When he came, in his own Epistle, to a subject treated by the other writer, it was natural for him to use language and Old Testament quotations which had become especially familiar to him through familiarity with the Letter of his co-laborer in the Church.

Scholars are not in agreement as to which of the two Epistles was written earlier. Selwyn makes the statement that B. Weiss' arguments in favor of the priority of 1 Peter seem to him to be "far more cogent than those of A. Meyer on the opposite side."<sup>5</sup> But in the context of the passage to which Selwyn refers, Weiss argues in favor of dating the Letter of James in the second half of the year, 50, insisting nevertheless that James has echoes of 1 Peter rather than that Peter is dependent upon the Letter of James.<sup>6</sup> Selwyn, on the other hand, sets the death of James in the year 62 A.D. as a terminus a quo and the Neronian perse-

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 463. His reference is to Bernhard Weiss, A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament, translated by A. J. K. Davidson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889), II, 106, n. 3; and to A. Meyer, Das Rätsel des Jakobsbriefts.

<sup>6</sup>Weiss, op. cit., II, 106, 107.

cution in the summer of 64 as a terminus ad quem for the writing of 1 Peter, suggesting specifically the autumn of 63 A.D. as the date of composition.<sup>7</sup> How James could echo, in his Letter, an Epistle which was written a year or more after his death, Selwyn does not explain. The present writer believes that Selwyn's arguments on the dating of 1 Peter<sup>8</sup> are sound. He has, in Chapter IV of this thesis, sought to show that the most probable date of the composition of the Letter of James is the year 47 A.D. If these dates are even approximately correct and if there is any dependence of one writer upon the other, then it is Peter who makes use of his knowledge of the Letter of James, and he is a strong witness for the authenticity of the Letter which has been regarded by many with suspicion. Zahn writes:

Granted that the resemblance between this letter (1 Peter) and James is such as to necessitate the assumption that one of them depends upon the other, it is easy to see that throughout it is Peter who elaborates James' short suggestions, expands his pithy sentences, and tones down the boldness and abruptness of his thought.<sup>9</sup>

It is reasonably certain that Clement of Rome knew and made use of the Epistle of James in his Letter to the Corinthians, written probably in 96. There should be no doubt that our Epistle was used by the writer of the Shepherd of

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<sup>7</sup>Selwyn, op. cit., pp. 56-63.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Zahn, op. cit., p. 128. See also n. 3, pp. 133, 134.

Hermas who, it seems, was a layman in the congregation in Rome and who probably wrote about 150 A.D. Justin Martyr, who died about 165, seems to make use of James in The First Apology and the Dialogue with Trypho.<sup>10</sup>

There may be echoes of the Epistle of James also in the Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, which are commonly assigned to the first century.<sup>11</sup>

The Letter of James appears to be echoed also by the following second-century writers: Irenaeus, Theophilus, the writers of the Epistle to Diognetus and the so-called second epistle of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp. It was apparently commented on along with the other Catholic Epistles by Clement of Alexandria.<sup>12</sup>

James is absent from the Muratorian Canon, from the list of works recognized by Tertullian, and from Canon Mommseninus, belonging to the middle of the fourth century and written in Africa. The Epistle seems not to have been acknowledged as canonical in the churches of Rome and Carthage during the third and fourth centuries.<sup>13</sup>

As far as the sources enable us to determine, the

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<sup>10</sup>Patrick, op. cit., pp. 347-53.

<sup>11</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. cxxi.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Patrick, op. cit., p. 352.

Alexandrian Church always included James in the Canon along with a number of other Catholic Epistles on a basis of equal authority with the rest. In the case of the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch, this can be shown to be probable.<sup>14</sup>

Origen (died ca. 250) is the first to ascribe the Epistle to James and he speaks of it as an Epistle "currently attributed to him."<sup>15</sup> Both he and Eusebius (died ca. 340) quote it by name as authoritative and attribute the Epistle with some hesitation to James, the brother of the Lord.<sup>16</sup>

The Letter was included in the lists of sacred writings by Cyril of Jerusalem in 348 and by Athanasius in 367. It was recognized as canonical at the third Council of Carthage in 397.<sup>17</sup>

The question of the authenticity and canonicity of the Letter of James was re-opened in the period of the Reformation. Erasmus and Cajetan were in doubt about the apostolic authorship of James.<sup>18</sup> Luther wrote among other derogatory things about James, these words:

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<sup>14</sup>Zahn, op. cit., pp. 123, 124.

<sup>15</sup>Frederic W. Farrar, The Early Days of Christianity (New York: Cassell, Petter, Galpin and Co., 1882), II, 1.

<sup>16</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. cxxi.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 523.

This James does no more than drive to the law and its works, and in a disorderly way throws one thing into another, so that I imagine, it was some good pious man or other, who took up a few statements from the disciples of the apostles and so threw them on paper, or perhaps out of his sermon the thing was composed by another.<sup>19</sup>

In these words, Luther indicates that he believed that the Letter of James was composed by a man three or four generations removed from the apostles and that it therefore had no right to a place among the canonical books of the New Testament. In his first edition of the New Testament in German in 1522, Luther made a separate group of James, Jude, Hebrews, and Revelation, and placed them at the end of the volume, assigning no numbers to them in his table of contents. The words "a right strawy epistle" are omitted from the introduction to James in the first complete German Bible issued in 1534. Since 1603, the disputed books have had numbers in the table of contents.<sup>20</sup> About 1600, the questioning of James and the other deuterocanonical books ceased as far as the evangelical churches are concerned.<sup>21</sup>

Many scholars have held and continue to hold the view that the Letter was written later than the lifetime of James, the brother of the Lord, and that it therefore was not written by him. The names of a number of these scholars are

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<sup>19</sup>Quoted by Lenski, op. cit., p. 523.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 523, 524.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 524.

listed by Moffatt; this is the view that he himself seems to favor.<sup>22</sup> Ropes, whose name appears in Moffatt's list, places the date of the Epistle in the period, 75-125 A.D., and regards it as being pseudonymous.<sup>23</sup> He seeks to bolster his position by pointing to the writer's contact with Hellenism and insists that a Galilean peasant could not be expected to have this contact.<sup>24</sup> But Mayor points out that Galilee was studded with Greek towns, that the neighboring town of Gadara was celebrated as an important seat of Greek learning and literature, and that as the principal teacher of the Jewish believers, many of whom were Hellenists, James' apparently natural bent toward seeking knowledge and wisdom would become a duty: "He would be a student of Greek in order that he might be a more effective instructor to his own people."<sup>25</sup> A second consideration by which Ropes seeks to bolster his position is the fact that James does not mention the controversy which arose when some Jews insisted that Gentiles must be circumcised if they were to become

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<sup>22</sup>James Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), pp. 470, 471.

<sup>23</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 49.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>25</sup>Mayor, op. cit., pp. cxxxvi, cxxxvii.

true Christians.<sup>26</sup> This omission proves nothing if, as is most probable, the Letter was written before this controversy raised its ugly head. Ropes makes the statement that

...the literary customs of the time make the publication of a pseudonymous epistle well conceivable, even for an earnest and sincere writer, at a time when James himself had been dead certainly for fifteen years, perhaps for more than fifty.<sup>27</sup>

But Ropes fails to explain why this particular "pseudonymous" writing was in due time recognized as canonical, whereas many works which falsely bore the name of Peter, Paul, Thomas, or some other apostle, as well as the name of James, were never seriously considered as being entitled to a place in the New Testament Canon. Moffatt writes that:

The lack of any emphasis upon the apostle's personality and authority (no *καταπαύσας* in 1:1, as in 1 Pet. 1:1, 2 Pet. 1:1) tells against this theory. If a second-century writer, who wished to counteract some ultra Paulinists had chosen the name of the revered head of the Jerusalem Church (so, e.g., S. Davidson, Grafe, Jülicher), why did he not make more of Paul's opponent? To argue that he refrained from introducing such traits, lest his writing should incur suspicion as a literary fiction, is to attribute too modern and subtle motives to him.<sup>28</sup>

Those who seek to prove that the Letter of James is not an authentic writing of James, the brother of the Lord, the man who was a leader in the Church in Jerusalem for twenty years or more, must reckon with the following considerations

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<sup>26</sup>Ropes, op. cit., pp. 50, 51.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>28</sup>Moffatt, op. cit., p. 472.

which have been noted earlier in this chapter:

1. Possible echoes of the Letter of James in some of the Epistles of Paul, notably, Romans.
2. The more probable echoes of the Letter in 1 Peter.
3. The very probable use made of James by Clement of Rome in the year 96.
4. The indisputable use of the language of James made by the writer of the Shepherd of Hermas who may have been a contemporary of Clement of Rome, who, in any case, wrote no later than 150 A.D.
5. The use of James by Justin Martyr, who died about 165.
6. Its recognition as a part of the Canon by the Alexandrian Church apparently from early times.
7. Its probable recognition likewise by the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch from earliest times.
8. Its inclusion in the lists of sacred writings by Cyril of Jerusalem in 348 and by Athanasius in 367.
9. Its recognition as being canonical by the Council of Carthage in 397.
10. The holding of its place in the Canon in spite of the expressed views of Luther and other respected critics.

The scanty extant references to the Epistle of James during the years, 47-397, may be explained by the fact that it was addressed to the Christian Church about the year 47,

while its membership was still almost entirely Jewish.<sup>29</sup> Its contents did not apply particularly to the situations which arose when many largely Gentile congregations came into being. These congregations were more interested in the Letters of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, who had addressed Epistles to these congregations or to sister congregations. The seeming clash between Paul's writings and James 2:14-26 may have helped to restrict the circulation of the Letter of James. The Epistle does not deal extensively with any of the great distinctive doctrines of the Christian Church. This may have had a part in restricting circulation of the Epistle.<sup>30</sup> Though the Letter was probably known to Clement of Rome, Hermas, and Justin Martyr, it may not have been read in public worship in the churches in Rome and other places.<sup>31</sup> And Zahn observes that the New Testament Canon was composed of the books coming down from the Apostolic age which were adopted as lectionaries in the religious services of the Gentile-Christian Church.<sup>32</sup> If the Letter of James was read in public worship in only a few places, such as Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, it is not strange that it was slow in finding its place in the New

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<sup>29</sup>Zahn, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>30</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 521.

<sup>31</sup>Patrick, op. cit., p. 352.

<sup>32</sup>Zahn, op. cit., p. 124.

Testament Canon.

But, because it was a God-inspired message given through a revered leader of the early Christian Church, the Letter of James did, in due time, take its place in the Canon, has remained there, and should be respected and studied today as a message from God - a message which we sorely need in our day.

## PART II

### THEOLOGY OF JAMES IN THE EPISTLE

In 1914, we saw that James, as a spiritual introduction by him, asks the question: "Do you believe that God is God?" and then goes on to say that if he has received an affirmative answer, "You will find the answer also believe and wonder." In view of the latter part of this statement, we must conclude that there is more here. The reason for the delay is that now, at least, of the first readers did not go beyond a verbal statement of their faith. They did not live their faith out in daily life. But there is no reason to believe that James was not absolutely sincere when he expressed the confession of faith that God is God. This view is confirmed by the statement in 1:17 that "God is faithful and keeps his word" - He who is able to save and to destroy." This can only refer to God; He is God. Therefore we can say that the faith of God is taught in this Epistle.

The Trinity of God is also indicated - at least in part. In 1:1, the writer refers to himself as "servant of God and Lord Jesus Christ." And, the Father, and Christ are referred to as being on the same high level, with 1:1 connecting the references to God, the Father, and Christ. Therefore the name of Christ is prefixed the title "Lord" ( $\kappa\upsilon\omicron\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ ), which strongly suggests that James regarded

## CHAPTER VIII

### DOCTRINE IN JAMES CONCERNING GOD

In 2:19, we read that James, or a speaker introduced by him, asks the question: "Do you believe that God is one?" and then goes on to say as if he has received an affirmative answer: "You do well; the demons also believe and shudder." In view of the latter part of this statement, we must conclude that there is irony here. The reason for the irony is that some, at least, of the first readers did not go beyond a verbal statement of their faith. They did not live their faith out in daily life. But there is no reason to believe that James was not absolutely sincere when he approved the confession of faith that God is one. This view is confirmed by the statement in 4:12 that: "One is Lawgiver and Judge - He Who is able to save and to destroy." This can only refer to God; He is one. Therefore we can say that the Unity of God is taught in this Epistle.

The Trinity of God is also indicated - at least in part. In 1:1, the writer refers to himself as "servant of God and Lord Jesus Christ." God, the Father, and Christ are referred to as being on the same high level, with *καί* connecting the references to God, the Father, and Christ. Before the name of Christ is prefixed the title "Lord" (*Κυρίου*), which strongly suggests that James regarded

Christ as true God, equal to God, the Father. In 2:1, the Second Person in God is referred to, not only as "our Lord Jesus Christ," but also as "the Glory." When we take these two verses into consideration, there can be no reasonable doubt that James ascribes to Christ the glory and prerogatives of God. Upon the interpretation of 4:5 depends the question, whether or not there is reference in our Epistle to the Third Person in God. The present writer believes that the translation most in keeping with the context is the following: "Or, do you think that the Scripture speaks in an empty way? The Spirit Whom He caused to dwell in us yearns jealously" over us.<sup>1</sup> If this is the correct interpretation

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<sup>1</sup>Weiss, in opposition to C. F. Schmid in Biblical Theology of the New Testament, translated by G. W. Venable (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870), p. 351, asserts that τὸ πνεῦμα refers to the principle which vitalizes the body - not to the Spirit bestowed upon Christians (Bernhard Weiss, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, translated from the Third Revised Edition by David Eaton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879), I, 264, n. 1). But the correctness of this assertion may be questioned. James has just used the strong language of verse 4: "You adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity of (or, against) God? Whoever, therefore, wishes to be a friend of the world, makes himself an enemy of God" (the writer's translation). The thought and wording of this verse is based on many passages in the Old Testament, e.g., Isaiah 57:3-9; Jeremiah 3:20; Ezekiel 16:32-38; 23:1-49; Hosea 2:1-13; Psalm 73:27 (Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. 134). James then asks: "Do you think that the Scripture speaks in an empty way?" His meaning is: Do you think that God, in these many passages of Scripture, is speaking in an idle way, not meaning what He says? By no means! "The Spirit whom He caused to dwell in us yearns jealously" over us. (Cf. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran

of the verse, our Epistle not only teaches the Unity or Oneness of God but also makes reference to the three Persons of the Trinity.

In the last words of 1:18, reference is made to the creatures of God, thus implying that God is Creator. In 1:17 God is called "Father of lights," indicating that He is Creator of the sun, moon, and stars. He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift, 1:17; this plainly suggests that God is the Creator of all things, since all good things come from Him. If, as some believe, *πνεῦμα* in 4:5 refers to the spirit in man which vitalizes the body,<sup>2</sup> there is reference in this verse to the creation of man by God (Gen. 2:7). However, as indicated above, the present writer believes that reference is made in this verse to the Holy Spirit.

God is Lawgiver and Judge, 4:12. He is the Giver of specific Commandments, 2:11, some of which are summarized in the royal law of the Scriptures: "You shall love your

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Book Concern, 1938), pp. 639-41.) Since God desires to have the whole-hearted allegiance and love of His people, the Holy Spirit whom God has given to Christians (Acts 2:38; 8:14-17) to dwell in them (1 Cor. 3:16), yearns jealously over God's people, desiring to lead them into whole-hearted surrender of their hearts and lives to God. Mayor writes of this interpretation: "It is in my opinion the only interpretation which is alike in harmony with the context and permissible according to the usage of the Greek language" (Mayor, op. cit., p. 137).

<sup>2</sup>Weiss, op. cit., p. 264, n. 1.

neighbor as yourself," 2:8. If a person breaks one part of this law, he is guilty of breaking the whole law, 2:10. The Judge will render judgment without mercy to him who has showed no mercy, 2:13. To those who love Him, the Judge has promised to give the crown of life, 1:12.<sup>3</sup>

God is referred to as God and Father in 1:27 and as Lord and Father in 3:9. We are told in 1:18 that God, having willed it, brought us into being (as Christians) by means of His Word to be the firstfruits of His creatures.<sup>4</sup> He is,

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<sup>3</sup>The many echoes of Jesus' words in the Letter of James make it probable that James had in mind such words of Jesus as are recorded in Matthew 25:31-46 and John 5:28,29, when he wrote 1:12. In these and other passages recording words of Jesus, the Divine Judge, the judgments meted out to the wicked, and the promise of life and blessing to those who show their faith and love in good works, are prominently set forth. With such words of Jesus in the back of his mind as well as Old Testament passages, such as Psalm 65:11 and Psalm 103:4, James encourages those who are experiencing trials and difficulties in this life by reminding them that the blessing of eternal life is the gift of God bestowed upon those who patiently continue to be faithful to the end of life on earth. The same Judge (Matt. 25:31-46) who passes sentence upon those who have showed no mercy (2:13), bestows the crown of life upon those who, in spite of trials, continue to love their Lord to the end. Similar thoughts are expressed by Peter (1 Pet. 4:12-19; 5:4) and Paul (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 8:18,28).

<sup>4</sup>The view that ἀπὸ κύριον ἡμᾶς in 1:18 refers to the creation of mankind is urged, among others, by Spitta and especially by Hort (James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 166). But, as Ropes points out, the objection which seems decisive against this is that the figure of begetting was not used for creation. On the other hand, it came early into use with reference to the Christians who regarded themselves as "sons of God" (*ibid.*). The view that the reference is to the regeneration of Christians

therefore, Father in a special sense to Christians. God has chosen those who are poor in material things to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He has promised to those who love Him, 2:5. He has a special care also for the humble; He gives them grace and exalts them; but He resists the proud, 4:6,10. As a good Father, He not only gives His children the Kingdom with grace to live in that Kingdom but He also gives wisdom, 1:5, and all other good and perfect gifts, 1:17.

God is Lord of all men whether they bow in submission before Him or not. He is able to save and to destroy, 4:12. It is folly to go about in daily life and in the pursuit of wealth without recognizing the governing and controlling hand of God - without recognizing our utter dependence upon Him, 4:13-16. The person who is a child of God through faith in Christ, 2:1, is a willing servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, 1:1. Let the servant be absolutely subject to this Lord, 4:7, who will accept no rival in the

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makes the connection with 1:19 smooth and natural (*ibid.*). Huther asserts that the verb, ἀπεκύνω, testifies to the fact that the discourse here is of the new birth, and not of natural birth, because ἀποκύνω is synonymous with γεννάω; the man γεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (1 Jn. 3:9; see also 1 Pet. 1:23) is not man in himself, but man born again. The word, ἡμεῖς, refers to us not as men but us as Christians (Joh. Ed. Huther, "A Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), p. 57).

control of His servant's life. He who flirts with other masters, makes himself an enemy of God, 4:4.

God is unchangeable. With Him there is no "variation or shadow of turning," 1:17.<sup>5</sup> "God is alike incapable of change in His own nature (παράλλαξις) and incapable of being changed by the action of others (ἀποκλίανμα)."<sup>6</sup>

God is merciful. He is full of pity and merciful, 5:11. Those who worship God and address Him as their Father show that they belong in His family by being merciful and

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<sup>5</sup>The Greek word, παράλλαξις, means "variation" or "change." James has referred to God as the "Father of lights." This leads him to emphasize the difference between these lights - the sun, moon, and stars - and the Father or Creator of these lights. They change. In the morning we see the sun in the east; as it comes more and more overhead, it seems to radiate more light and heat. In the evening it sinks lower and lower in the west and finally disappears below the horizon. There are changes in the moon - changes in its position in the sky and in its size and shape as we see it; at regular intervals, it disappears entirely for a time. There are changes also in the position and brightness of the stars as we observe them in the heavens. But God, the Father of these lights, does not change; there is no variation of brightness or position so far as He is concerned. James adds: ὅτι τῶν ἑστῶν ἀποκλίανμα, "or shadow of turning" (or change). Shadows have their effect upon the heavenly lights. There are cloudy days when we do not see the sun at all, or we see it for a time and then it is hidden again by a cloud. There are dark nights when a person who looks up toward the sky does not see the moon or any stars. But shadows have no effect upon God. They do not dim the brightness of His goodness or His power. With Him there is no shadow of turning. "For I, Jehovah, change not" (Mal. 3:6a, American Revised Version of 1901). "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 Jn. 1:5b). (Lanski, op. cit., pp. 553, 554.)

<sup>6</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 59.

helpful toward the orphans and widows in their need as well as by keeping themselves unspotted from the world, 1:27.

God is holy. He is untempted by evil and He tempts no one, 1:13. No person who defiles himself by fellowship with the ungodly world can expect to have fellowship with the holy God, 4:4. The wisdom that comes from God is pure, 3:17.

God is wise. He who lacks wisdom is invited to ask for wisdom from God; and the promise is given that he who asks in faith will receive wisdom in liberal measure, 1:5,6. But He who is able to bestow wisdom liberally upon others must Himself be wise. The wisdom that comes down from the wise God is described as to its inner nature and as to its outward effects in 3:17,18.<sup>7</sup> This wisdom is described as being, first of all, pure. Then it is also peaceable, sweetly reasonable, inviting to suppliants, filled with mercy and good fruits, without vacillation, without hypocrisy. This description of the wisdom that comes from above must apply in an even greater degree to Him who is the pure Fountain of this wisdom.

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<sup>7</sup> Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900), pp. 203-11.

## CHAPTER IX

### DOCTRINE IN JAMES CONCERNING CHRIST

Specific references to Christ are not numerous in the Epistle of James.<sup>1</sup> But references there are and these are sufficient to reveal the place that the Lord Jesus occupies in Christian faith and life.

That James regarded Christ as true God is indicated in the very first verse of the Epistle. The writer calls himself a servant or slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup>Spitta in Zur Geschichte des Urchristentums, Vol. II, 1896, and Massebieau in his paper, "L'Épître de Jacques, est-elle l'Œuvre d'un Chrétien?" in Revue de l'histoire des Religions for 1895, argue that the Letter of James is a pre-Christian Jewish writing which has been Christianized by the insertion of  $\eta\mu\omega\nu\ \text{I}\eta\sigma\omega\upsilon\ \chi\epsilon\iota\rho\omega\varsigma$  in 2:1, and  $\text{I}\eta\sigma\omega\upsilon\ \chi\epsilon\iota\rho\omega\varsigma$  (Massebieau) or  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \kappa\upsilon\varsigma\iota\omega\varsigma\ \text{I}\eta\sigma\omega\upsilon\ \chi\epsilon\iota\rho\omega\varsigma$  (Spitta) in 1:1. (Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), pp. clxviii-clxx, and Gerald H. Rendall, The Epistle of St. James and Judaic Christianity (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927), p. 88). But it would be strange if a writer, wishing to Christianize the Letter of James would be satisfied with these two interpolations. Why didn't he introduce references to the life and work of Christ where it seemed called for? (Mayor, op. cit., pp. clxx, clxxi). Other passages in the Letter which require a Christian explanation include the following: "name by which ye are called," 2:7; "brought us forth..." 1:18; "the perfect law, the law of liberty," 1:25; "the implanted word," 1:21; "the coming of the Lord," 5:7; "our God and Father," 1:27; 3:9; "the elders of the Church," 5:14; "anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord," 5:14. (William Patrick, James The Lord's Brother (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), pp. 340, 341.) Referring to the excisions in 1:1 and 2:1 proposed by Spitta, Rendall writes: "For excision there is not a grain of textual support." (Rendall, op. cit., p. 88.)

He ascribes to Jesus the same honor and glory that he ascribes to God, the Father, by naming them together and connecting their names with *καί*. Before the name of Jesus he pre-fixes the term of reverence, *κύριος*, which is the word used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew, *יהוה*, the covenant-name of the God of Israel.<sup>2</sup> We can hardly ex-

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<sup>2</sup>Like the Hebrew word *adon*, the Greek word *κύριος* properly means "ruler." Occasionally, it has the sense of "owner;" cf. Mark 12:9; 13:35. Very often it means the master of a slave. In New Testament times, *κύριος* was a common term of courtesy, especially in addressing a social superior, very much as "sir" in English; cf. Matthew 21:30; 27:63; John 12:21. Kings are everywhere styled "lords," especially in addressing them. In the ancient East, kings were supposed to be divine beings, even gods incarnate. So the title, "lord," when given to them, acquired a religious significance. In the first century, B.C., the Greek kings of Egypt were styled in inscriptions, "Lord King God." The early Roman emperors refused such titles in Rome and the West, but had to accept them in the East. In Egypt, at the beginning of the Christian era, sacrifices were offered for "the god and lord emperor," Augustus. From the first century, B.C., onwards the title "lord" was given to gods of Eastern origin whose worship spread widely throughout the Roman Empire, e.g., to the Egyptian god, Serapis and (in the feminine form) to the Egyptian goddess, Isis. Thus in New Testament times there were literally "gods many, and lords many" (1 Cor. 8:5), and for pagans the two words had very much the same meaning.

But for Christians there was only "one God, the Father," and only "one Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 8:6). "Jesus is Lord" was probably the earliest baptismal creed of the Church; cf. Romans 10:9; Philipians 2:11. But though Christians acknowledged only one "Lord," they regarded the Old Testament in Greek as their Bible, and so they continued to call God the Father "Lord" also, even when they were not quoting directly from the Old Testament. Paul, however, boldly applies to Christ Old Testament passages in which "the Lord" meant God; cf. e.g. Romans 10:13; and, except in Old Testament quotations, it is doubtful whether in his Letters "the Lord" ever means anything but "the Lord Jesus Christ." Everything that a man may expect from God, Paul expects equally from Jesus Christ. There is no reason to

pect to find anywhere a clearer ascription of divinity to Jesus than this.

In 2:1, James refers to "the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glory."<sup>3</sup> The last two words surely have their

doubt that even during Jesus' visible life on earth, His own disciples called Him "Master and Lord," John 13:13. (J. Y. Campbell, "Lord," A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by Alan Richardson (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), pp. 130, 131.)

James, in common with other New Testament writers, applies the title, *Κύριος*, sometimes to God, the Father, and sometimes to Christ. He clearly uses it to refer to Christ in 1:1 and 2:1, very probably also in 5:7, 8, 14, 15. He seems to use *Κύριος* to refer to God, the Father, or to the Triune God, in 1:6; 3:9; 4:10, 15; 5:4, 10, and 11 (twice). His use of the term throughout the Epistle indicates that he regards the Father and the Son as being equal in power and glory.

<sup>3</sup>The words in the genitive, *τῆς δόξης*, have been variously interpreted as having an objective, a subjective, or a qualitative force, and have been connected by different commentators with every substantive in the sentence. (Mayor, op. cit., p. 76.) Bengel suggested that *τῆς δόξης* should be taken in apposition with *τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. This suggestion has been set aside by later commentators on the ground that the abstract term, *δόξα*, is too indefinite to bear this weight of meaning. But, as Mayor points out, other abstractions are used of Christ - the Truth, the Life, etc. He is called the Word; why not the Glory? (ibid.). In 1 Timothy 1:1 we read: "... *Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τῆς ἐλπίδος ἡμῶν* and translate: "Christ Jesus, our Hope." In Luke 2:29-32, Simeon is surely referring to the Christ-Child in his arms when he speaks of *τὸ σωτήριον σου ... ὧς ...* and *δόξαν*. Therefore, we have at least one example of Christ being referred to as "Glory." See also 2 Peter 1:17; Colossians 1:27; Romans 9:4; John 17:22; 1:14; Hebrews 1:3 (*ἀπαύλασμα τῆς δόξης*). "We may suppose that the reason why the word *δόξα* stands here alone, without *ἡμῶν* or *τοῦ Πατρὸς*, is in order that it may be understood in its fullest and widest sense of Him who alone comprises all glory in Himself. This interpretation is confirmed by the rhythm which makes a natural pause before *τῆς δόξης*." (Mayor, op. cit., p. 78.)

significance to our study of the Christology of James. Perhaps he is here echoing the words of Simeon in the Nunc Dimittis: Jesus, God's Salvation, would be light to the Gentiles and glory to God's people, Israel (Luke 2:32).<sup>4</sup> In

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<sup>4</sup>The primary meaning of *do'ga*, "glory" (Heb. Kabod) is that of weight and substance. A man of wealth is a man of substance, of kabod. His external appearance and bearing would reflect his wealth and also be called kabod. His wealth and dignity demanded and compelled respect and honor from his fellows; this too was called glory or honor (kabod).

The "glory of God" is, in effect, the term used to express that which men can apprehend of the presence of God on earth. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21,22), was the visible indication to the Israelites of the presence of God. When God was to give Moses the written copies of the Ten Commandments, we are told that the "appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Ex. 24:17). When the tabernacle was finished, the cloud and the fire indicated the presence of God with His people (Ex. 40:34-38). The "Glory of God" appeared to vindicate Moses and Aaron when the people murmured against them (Ex. 16:10; Num. 14:10; 16:19,42; 20:6). There are references to the glory of God in such passages as Psalm 97:6; 102:16; Isaiah 24:23; 59:19; 60:1,2; and Zechariah 2:5. Ezekiel used the expression, "glory of God" to describe the brilliant appearance of God when He came to renew the prophet's call to prophesy among the exiles in Babylon (Ezek. 1:26-28). Later we are told that Ezekiel saw the glory of God move out of the Temple eastward to the Mount of Olives on the way to Babylon where His people were exiled (Ezek. 11:22-25).

In the Old Testament, the "glory" became an element in the expected Messianic age. In the New Testament it is an integral part of the life in the Kingdom of God, both realized now and expected in the future. The actual and the eschatological elements come together with dynamic certainty in the person of Jesus Christ. The glory of Christ is identifiable with the glory of God. It is in the face of Christ that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in our hearts (2 Cor. 4:6). Throughout the New Testament, Christ is presented as the glory of God made visible on earth to those whose eyes are opened to see it; but it is perhaps in the Fourth Gospel that this conception is most strongly stressed (John 1:14; 2:11; 5:41; 17:5,22). The

any case, James is here using another term which emphasizes the fact of the divinity of Jesus. No pious Jew - much less a Christian Jew - would refer to anyone except God as "the Glory." With only two short words and in more characteristically Jewish fashion, James is pointing up the same truth that Paul emphasized when he wrote: "In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9).

In 2:7 we find another indication that James regarded Jesus as being one with God the Father (John 10:30). In his discussion on the evil of showing preference to rich people over the poor he asks: "Do not they blaspheme the noble Name that was called upon you?" James was in the group of early followers of Jesus before and after Pentecost (Acts 1:13,14). He, no doubt, heard Peter give his answer to the people who were convicted of sin on that first Christian Pentecost Sunday and asked: "What shall we do?" Peter's answer was: "Repent and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 2:37,38). He was in that group of early Christians when Peter said to the

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high-priestly prayer (John 17) is dominated by the idea of *δόξα*. In the Passion and Resurrection of Christ the utter glory of God is revealed (L. H. Brockington, "Glory," A Theological Word Book Of The Bible, pp. 175, 176).

James must have seen much more of this with his eyes of faith than he is often given credit for seeing, since he not only refers to our Savior as "our Lord Jesus Christ" but also as "the Glory," 2:1, and seeks to point out to his readers the incompatibility of respect of persons with faith in Him who is the Glory of God manifested before our eyes.

lame man at the temple gate: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6), and when Peter said to the leaders of the unbelieving Jews: "In no other is there salvation; for neither is there any other Name under the heaven, given among men, in which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). It is not likely that Peter was the only member of the group who repeatedly referred to the name of Jesus in this way. It was, no doubt, the common language of all members of the group. Nor was the use of the name limited to the Christian group. The opponents of the Christians said: "...let us threaten them that they speak no more on this name to any of men" (Acts 4:17). And again: "We strictly charged you not to teach on this name..." (Acts 5:28). The expression, "called upon you" occurs in the Septuagint in such passages as 2 Chronicles 7:14; Jeremiah 14:9; 15:16; and Amos 9:12.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, because of Old Testament usage and the usage common among the early Christians, it must have been natural for James to use such language as we find in 2:7, and he could be sure that all his early readers would understand his meaning; he used language that was familiar to all Jewish Christians. It was especially familiar to Christians because of the formula used in baptism: "In the name of the Father,

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<sup>5</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 578.

and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>6</sup> When referring to baptism, the early Christians sometimes used the expression "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38), or "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). It is very probable that the first readers of the Epistle were led to think of their baptism when they read: "the good name which was called upon you." The name to which he refers is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. If that name can be blasphemed, it is a divine name.<sup>7</sup>

That James regarded Jesus as the Messiah is, of course, clear from the fact that he refers to Him as Christ, 1:1; 2:1. No further proof is needed to establish this fact.

$\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew  $\pi' \psi \eta$ .

Christ is the object of the faith of James and his readers, 2:1. Those who are joined to Him by faith should show no partiality in their contacts with rich and poor. Such partiality and "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" do not go together. To those who have faith in Jesus Christ, He is Master; they are His servants, 1:1. They recognize Him as their Lord and seek to avoid behavior which is inconsistent with faith in Him, 1:1; 2:1. Because Christ is the object of their faith and love, because He is the Lord

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900), pp. 115, 116.

and Master of Christians, the worst of the evils which the wicked rich inflict upon poor Christians is the blaspheming of their Lord's name, 2:6,7.

The elders of the congregations to which James writes are to anoint the sick with oil "in the name of the Lord," 5:14. We cannot, with absolute certainty, say that "Lord" here refers to Christ rather than to God the Father. But there are several considerations which should lead us to favor this view. In the first place, James was, in a sense, passing on instructions which Jesus had given to His disciples during His visible earthly ministry. In Mark 6:13, we read of the disciples after Jesus had sent them out on their first missionary journey that "they threw out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them." Apparently, the disciples were acting in accordance with the instructions of their Master when they thus anointed the sick with oil and healed them. They did this, no doubt, "in the name of the Lord" who had sent them out. For, we read of the seventy that they returned with joy, saying: "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name" (Luke 10:17). It is therefore reasonable to believe that the twelve disciples also anointed the sick with oil "in the name of the Lord," that is, in the name of Christ, their Master. James instructs elders of the congregations of his day to do likewise. Again, we recall that it was in the name of Jesus that the first Christians in Jerusalem did everything -

baptized (Acts 2:38), gave a lame man the ability to walk (3:6,16), were saved (4:12), performed signs and wonders (4:30), taught (5:28), preached (8:12), etc. James was a member of that group (Acts 1:13,14). Those were stirring days and, beyond a doubt, James was greatly influenced during that early period. Many things from those early days stayed with him the rest of his life. It would be natural then for James to write that the elders of the church should anoint the sick "in the name of the Lord," that is, in the name of Jesus Christ. He has specifically referred to Christ as "Lord" earlier in the Epistle (1:1; 2:1). He has referred to the name which has been called upon the Christians, that is, the name of Christ, 2:7. With this background, we should be pre-disposed to believe that "Lord" in this passage refers to Christ. There is nothing in the context of the passage to forbid this interpretation. Therefore, it is not improbable that in 5:14  $\kappa\upsilon\tau\iota\sigma\upsilon$  refers to Christ. It follows that  $\acute{\omicron}\ \kappa\upsilon\tau\iota\sigma\upsilon$  in 5:15 also refers to Christ. The Lord Jesus will raise up the man who is sick, as He did innumerable times in the days of His visible ministry on earth.

It is clear from our Epistle that James was familiar with many of the words of Jesus. As we read the exhortations of James, we are reminded again and again of words of Jesus as we know them from the Gospels. We do not find exact quotations from any of the Gospels as we have them. There are

perhaps especially two reasons for this. In the first place, the four Gospels probably had not been written when James wrote his Epistle. The sayings of Jesus were, in that early period, circulating in oral form or in an early written form which was slightly different from that which has come to us in the Gospels. A second and more important reason is the fact that these sayings of Jesus have passed through the soul of James, the Lord's brother. He had heard these sayings of Jesus - some of them, no doubt, directly from the lips of Jesus; other sayings he had heard from the Apostles and other people who had been in His audiences. James, like his mother, Mary (Luke 2:19,51), had kept these sayings in his heart. He had meditated upon them until they had become a part of him. When he opened his mouth to speak or took a pen in his hand to write, echoes of the Savior's words sprang spontaneously to his lips or to his pen.

Perhaps the closest parallel between admonitions of Jesus, as we have them recorded, and exhortations of James in his Epistle are the words concerning oaths recorded in Matthew 5:34-37 and James 5:12. We can regard James 5:12 as the oldest and most authentic commentary on the words of Jesus on oaths as recorded by Matthew.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Gerhard Kittel, "Der geschichtliche Ort des Jakobus-briefes," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1942), Band 41, p. 84.

Kittel, in "Der geschichtliche Ort des Jakobusbriefes," compares twenty-six different passages in James with words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke.<sup>9</sup> In many cases, the similarities are striking. There is no doubt that the statement often made by students of James that this brief Epistle contains more of the sayings of Jesus than all the other Epistles of the New Testament put together is true.

These echoes of the words of Jesus indicate that James regarded the admonitions and the promises of Christ as divinely authoritative - as authoritative as the Old Testament Scriptures. And since there are many echoes of Jesus' words in the Epistle of James and comparatively few references to the Old Testament, we may draw the conclusion that James regarded the words of Jesus as of even greater importance to the Christians of his day than the Old Testament Scriptures. We have reason to believe that James would have heartily endorsed the opening statement of the Letter to the Hebrews: "God, who has in times past spoken to the fathers through the prophets in many portions and in many ways, has, at the end of these days, spoken to us through His Son, whom He made heir of all things, through whom He also made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1,2; the writer's translation). Through his many echoes of the words of Jesus, James seems to say:

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 84-90.

Since God has given us His final word through His Son, let us listen carefully to that word and be doers of the word.

In 5:7,8, we find two references to the coming of the Lord. In an Epistle which has definitely established its Christian character by the statement that it is written by a servant of Christ (1:1); by the reference to its readers as those who have faith in "our Lord Jesus Christ" (2:1); and by its numerous echoes of the words of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, these references should be accepted without hesitation as referring to Christ's second coming to free His own from the many ills which beset them. Since the writer has absorbed so many of the words of Jesus and reproduced them in one form or other in his Epistle, it is to be expected that he has also taken to heart the many references of Jesus to His second coming (Matt. 24:27,30,39,44; 25:10, 19,31, etc.). This *παρουσία* has become a glorious reality to James and he makes use of this truth to encourage his brethren to bear patiently the trials that they are called upon to endure.

The Christology of James as revealed in this Epistle shapes up then as follows: Christ is true God, equal to God, the Father. He is the long-awaited Messiah. He is the Center of faith of Christians, and He is their Master and Lord. The sick are to be anointed with oil in the name of Christ; this suggests that other things too are to be done in His name. His Word is authoritative; to it Christians

will give ear; to it they will be obedient. Christ is coming again; Christians can remember this for their comfort as they meet the tribulations of life in the midst of ungodly and grasping men.

When we inquire concerning James' teaching about man, we note, first of all, that he lays stress on the transitoriness of man's life in this world. Man shall fade and pass away as the flower of grass, 1:10, 11. This is true of the rich man, but that the poor man or peasant is no exception is no different in this respect. James views all human life as a vapor that appears for a brief moment and then vanishes away, 1:12.

The sinfulness of man is pointed out in the Epistle in various ways, and this depravity is traced to its source - hell, 3:6.<sup>1</sup> As far as man himself is concerned, the roots

To 1:11, James establishes his position not to say that temptations to sin come to men from God. For, God who is Himself untempted by evil, does not tempt a human being to sin. Rather, the source of temptation is in the individual himself (1:14). We must not seek to lay the blame for his evil-doing upon God or some other individual, as Adam and Eve tried to do (Gen. 3:12, 13). He himself is responsible to God, and he must face the consequences of his failure to live up to his responsibilities. However, this is not the final word in the letter of James regarding the source of temptation and sin. In Chapter 3, when James is discussing the sin of the tongue, he will say, "Behold, what a small fire kindles what a large forest! And the tongue is a fire. As a world of iniquity is the tongue established among our members, which defiles the whole body and sets on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell" (3:6, 7; the writer's translation). The tongue which is used as an instrument to commit sin, is called by James a "fire" which is

## CHAPTER X

### DOCTRINE IN JAMES CONCERNING MAN

When we inquire concerning James' teaching about man, we note, first of all, that he lays stress on the transitoriness of man's life in this world. Man shall fade and pass away as the flower of grass, 1:10,11. This is spoken of the rich man, but that the poor man or person of moderate means is no different in this respect James makes clear when he compares human life in this world, generally, to a vapor that appears for a brief moment and then vanishes away, 4:14.

The sinfulness of man is pointed out in the Epistle in various ways, and this depravity is traced to its source - hell, 3:6.<sup>1</sup> As far as man himself is concerned, the roots

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<sup>1</sup>In 1:13, James admonishes his readers not to say that temptations to sin come to them from God. For, God who is Himself untempted by evil, does not tempt a human being to sin. Rather, the source of temptation is in the individual himself (1:14). He must not seek to lay the blame for his evil-doing upon God or some other individual, as Adam and Eve tried to do (Gen. 3:12,13). He himself is responsible to God, and he must face the consequences if he fails to live up to his responsibilities. However, this is not the final word in the Letter of James regarding the source of temptation and sin. In Chapter 3, when James is discussing the sins of the tongue, he writes: "Behold, what a small fire kindles what a large forest! And the tongue is a fire. As a world of iniquity is the tongue established among our members, which defiles the whole body and sets on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by Hell" (3:5b,6; the writer's translation). The tongue which is used as an instrument to commit sin, is called by James a "fire" which is

of his sin are in the heart which is filled with bitter jealousy and a rebellious, warlike spirit, 3:14, and is in need of being purified, 4:8. Lust, issuing forth from this impure heart, is personified as a harlot who entices a man to sin. When the harlot, that is, the lust, conceives, she brings forth sin and the sin when it runs its course, brings forth death, 1:14,15.<sup>2</sup> When lust issues forth from the impure heart of man and is permitted to entice the man to sin, his hands become defiled and are in need of cleansing, 4:8. Lusts which struggle within the person for control of the members of his body are responsible for the fightings and the wars among men, 4:1,2.

The deep depravity of man breaks out into sins of the mind. The mind becomes perverted and imagines that God is tempting the individual to sin, 1:13. It deceives itself

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kindled by Hell. Now, since James traces sins of word to Hell as the place of their origin, we have reason to believe that he would likewise trace sins of thought and deed to the same source. Behind the actual sins of thought, word, and deed, lies the fact of original sin, the depraved nature of man. But James in 3:6 does not stop at the half-way station in tracing sins of the tongue to their source. He does not say that the evil tongue is set on fire by the evil nature of man but that it is set on fire by Hell. Therefore, we can say that James very briefly indicates that the depravity of man has its source in Hell. Commenting on James 3:6, Mayor writes: "Here we have the origin of sin carried back beyond the *ἐπιθυμία* of the individual as shown in 1:14" (Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Bernhard Weiss, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, translated from the Third Revised Edition by David Eaton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879), I, 267, 268.

into thinking that God is responsible for sin, 1:16; into thinking that the hearing of God's Word without the doing of it is sufficient, 1:22; and into thinking that the person is truly religious even though the unbridled tongue clearly shows that this is not the case at all, 1:26. This perverted mind loses its sense of true values so that the individual judges the worth of another on the basis of the amount of wealth he has, 2:1-4. The mind becomes lifted up with pride in its own accomplishments so that the person has no patience to hear what God or another person has to say but is quick to set forth his own views and quick to become angry when his counsels go unheeded, 1:19. This pride of mind also exhibits itself in an attitude of independence from God, the man acting upon the assumption that he can plan his own life without recognition of his dependence upon the will and goodness of God, 4:13-16.

The sins of the tongue receive special and recurrent attention in the Epistle of James. Some of these have already been alluded to because the sins of the mind quickly develop into sins of the tongue. Man with his perverted mind accuses God of being the source of the temptation that comes to him, 1:13. He speaks politely to the rich visitor but roughly to the poor man who ventures into his meeting-place at the time of worship, 2:2-4. He blasphemes the name of Christ, 2:7. He is over-eager to speak so that he must have his say before he is ready to speak wisely and teach

others with blessing, 1:19; 3:1. One little tongue often sets off a whole series of sins in the lives of many people. It is a fire kindled in hell and spreads disastrously from person to person, 3:5,6. The tongue which ought to be used in blessing God is often used in cursing men who were created in the image of God. The same individual often tries to use his tongue to bless God, on the one hand, and to curse men, on the other, 3:9,10. This is another indication of how sin has darkened the understanding of man (cf. sins of the mind, as treated above), since he does not see the inconsistency of such behavior, though he never sees a spring gush forth both fresh and bitter water, nor does he see a tree or a plant bear fruit that is not "after its kind" (Gen. 1:11,12), 3:11,12. Men with bitter and quarrelsome hearts undertake to be teachers of God's truth and, by their unchristian attitude, drive those whom they seek to teach away from God's truth, 3:14. Sinful men use their tongues to pray, though their faith in God is not steadfast, 1:6-8; some pray with wrong and selfish motives, 4:3, and thereby show that they do not have in full measure the wisdom that is from above, because that is "without hypocrisy," 3:17 (end). Another form that sin in word takes is to speak and complain against other people, 4:11,12; 5:9. And a very common sin which must be rooted out, first of all, is the profuse taking of oaths in ordinary conversation, 5:12.

The inward depravity of man reveals itself also in deeds. Sinful man shows partiality to the rich over the poor man, 2:1-4:9; oppresses and robs his weaker neighbor, 2:6; 5:1-6; breaks one or another of the Commandments of God, 2:11, and thereby becomes guilty of breaking the whole Law of God, 2:10; deals mercilessly with his fellow-man, 2:13; fails to help his neighbor in need when he has the means and the opportunity to do so, 2:15,16, and thereby becomes guilty of sins of omission, 4:17; wages wars and carries on community feuds with fellow-men, 4:1,2; seeks the friendship of the world in preference to fellowship with God, 4:4; rebels against God and accepts the advances of the devil, 4:7, living in indifference to the will of God, 4:13-16; condemns and puts to death innocent fellow-men, 5:6; and in general, is guilty of a multitude of sins, 5:20.

Man is, however, capable of being saved from sin and sanctified through the truth, according to James. But since this part of James' teaching must come up for review in the following chapter on the soteriology of James, it would be repetitious to present it here.

## CHAPTER XI

### DOCTRINE IN JAMES CONCERNING SALVATION

In the preceding chapter we took note of James' teaching concerning the depravity of man. We saw that he does not minimize the corruption of human nature; it is not just a surface dislocation which can be remedied by a little attention to the improvement of morals. The sinfulness of man has its origin in hell. It has roots in man's innermost being, the heart. From there it crops up in sinful attitudes, words, and deeds.

If sinful man is to be saved from the guilt and consequences of his sin, nothing short of a new birth of the individual will suffice, 1:18. The word that James uses in referring to this new birth is  $\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\omega$  which means: "to be pregnant, to bear young, to bring forth."<sup>1</sup> The same word, in a slightly different form,<sup>2</sup> is used in verse 15 where it is written that the lust when it has conceived bears (  $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\tau\epsilon\iota$  ) sin and the sin when it is finished brings forth (  $\alpha\pi\omicron\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota$  ) death. Man, through his lust,

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<sup>1</sup>Liddell & Scott, Greek-English Lexicon (Abridged), 25th Edition (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1930), p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 64; and George Benedict Winer, A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament, Seventh Edition by Gottlieb Lünemann, translated by J. Henry Thayer (Andover, Mass.: Warren F. Draper, 1889), p. 88.

brings forth death. God, through His will, brings forth new creatures in Christ. Although the name of God does not occur in verse 18, it is clear from the context, especially verse 17, that the reference is to Him who is the "Father of lights" and who does not change. In this brief verse, 1:18, James indicates briefly the cause or the motive power which brings about man's salvation - God's will; the manner of bringing man within reach of that salvation - a birth; the means by which the spiritual birth is effected - the Word of truth; and the goal which God had before Him when He undertook to rescue sinful man from the depravity of his life in sin - to make saved human beings the firstfruits of His creatures.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>"Firstfruits...of the harvest and of the firstborn belonged to God in a peculiar way according to the ceremonial law...Of all the created things we reborn children of God are his peculiar possession, sacred to him, not only created by him, but also brought forth in a spiritual birth by means of his Word. Will he tempt us again to fall away? Nay, he will continue to shower perfect gifts upon us (v. 17). The addition of *ἡ ἀρχὴ*, 'a kind of firstfruits,' indicates that James applies the metaphor of firstfruits in a special way." (R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 556.)

In the Seventh Edition of the Meyer Commentary, Dibelius writes: "Der Gedankenkreis der juedischen Spruchweisheit, in dem sich unser Verf. bisher fast ausschliesslich bewegte, scheint hier in charakteristischer Weise verlassen zu sein. Und in der Tat ist der Vers nur aus einer christlichen Glaubens- und Lebens-Welt heraus zu verstehen. Denn die kosmologische Erklarung ist nicht durchfuehrbar; er bleibt also nur die Deutung auf die Wiedergeburt. Nun wuerde es bei der weiten Verbreitung dieser Vorstellungen wohl denkbar sein, dass auch ein Jude sein frommes Erleben als neue wunderbare Geburt darstellte. Aber Jak. 1:18 ist nicht als

We may ask: Does James have anything to say about the place of baptism in connection with the new birth? The answer must be: He does not mention baptism when he writes of the new birth in 1:18. However, there seems to be a reference to baptism in 2:7, where James asks with respect to rich persecutors of Christians: "Do not they blaspheme the noble name which was called upon you?" With regard to this verse, Rendall writes that it is not likely that this verse "refers expressly to baptism; though it denotes in general terms the avowed and consecrated allegiance, the sacramentum of fidelity and service owed to Jesus Christ, as liegelord of conscience and belief."<sup>4</sup> But if James here refers to allegiance owed to Christ, there is no reason to say that he does not refer expressly to baptism. The readers entered upon al-

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Zeugnis eines Mystikers zu verstehen, sondern redet von und zu einem ganzen Kreis von Menschen, die sich 'wiedergeboren' fühlen und denen diese Vorstellung ganz vertraut und keiner Erklärung mehr bedürftig zu sein scheint. Und noch mehr: diese Menschen fassen ihre Wiedergeburt als den Auftakt zu der Neuschöpfung der ganzen Welt, sie sind nur die 'Erstlinge' der grossen kosmischen Erneuerung. Diese Gedanken sind nur möglich auf dem Boden einer Religion, die das eigene fromme Erleben in unmittelbare Beziehung zum Weltende setzt. So bildet beides, die Vulgarisierung der Wiedergeburtsvorstellung und der eschatologische Optimismus, ein Zeugnis gegen den juedischen Ursprung des ganzen Jak und gegen die Hypothese von Spitta und Massebleau." (Martin Dibelius, "Der Brief des Jakobus," Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar ueber das Neue Testament, begründet von Heinr. Aug. Wihl. Meyer, 7. Auflage, pp. 101-2.)

<sup>4</sup>Gerald H. Rendall, The Epistle of St. James and Judaic Christianity (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927), p. 90.

legiance to Christ when they were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or, as it was sometimes briefly referred to, baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38). The language of the verse is such that we should say rather that James refers first of all to baptism when Christ's name was called over the readers and then to all that baptism implies as to their relationship with Christ.<sup>5</sup> Since the Word of God is the effective element in baptism, James does not deny that baptism is a means of regeneration when he writes as he does in 1:18, any more than Peter makes such a denial in 1 Peter 1:23 (Cf. Acts 2:38 and 1 Pet. 3:21).

James gives his readers credit for knowing the things

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<sup>5</sup> Expressions like ὄνομα τὸ ἐπικληθέν (ἐφ' ὧν in 2:7 occur often in the Old Testament in the sense that one comes to belong to him whose name is called upon him; it is often said that the name of God was called upon Israel, e.g., Deuteronomy 28:10; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Jeremiah 14:9; 15:16; Amos 9:12 (cf. with Amos passage, Acts 15:16-18); see also Genesis 48:16 and Isaiah 4:1. (Joh. Ed. Huther, "A Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), p. 81.)

The aorist tense of the verb, ἐπικληθέν, indicates beyond reasonable doubt that James is referring to baptism in this verse. He refers to something that occurred and was completed at some point of time in the past. In the case of those who are Christians, that would not be true of a general calling of the name of Christ or Christian upon them; they continue to be Christians; the name of Christ continues to be a good name to them and they continue to be referred to as His followers. But at one point of time in the past, the good name of Christ was called upon (or over) them in a special way - in a way that is not repeated; they were baptized.

that are stated in 1:18 but he wants to stir them up to act upon this knowledge, 1:19. He urges them to do especially two things: 1. Put away all filthiness and wickedness; and 2. receive in meekness the implanted Word, 1:21. It is not man in his natural state apart from God who is urged to do these things but man who has been born again, 1:18. In addition to the fact that there is a direct connection in the context between verse 18 and verse 21, we have the word, *ἐμψυτον*, in verse 21. When was the Word implanted and by whom? At the time of the new birth by God Himself, 1:18. James is writing to people who have been born again and who know about this change which God has brought about in them. They have the implanted word; it was used by God in effecting their new birth. But if this new life is to continue to live, if it is to develop and grow strong, Christians must actively and consciously put away sin which threatens to kill the new life; they must lay hold in earnest upon the Word which in God's hands effected their new birth and which is able to bring their souls into heaven where they are safe forever.<sup>6</sup> Peter's admonition is very similar, 1 Peter 2:1,2.

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<sup>6</sup>For the use of *ἐμψυτον* in this verse, cf. Jeremiah 9:20; Proverbs 1:3; 2:1; and 4:10. Ropes writes: "This seems to refer (like *ἐμψυτον* [or, *ἐμψυ*] *ἐκ* τῆς καρδίας σου in Deuteronomy 30:1), not to the mere initial acceptance of the Gospel, preached and heard, but (cf. *ἐμψυτον*) to attention to the knowledge of God's will, cf. Matthew 11:14; 1 Corinthians 2:14." (James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary

James goes on to make it clear that it is not enough to receive this Word passively, to assent to it, to raise no objection to it. More is needed if that Word is to be a blessing to the person who has been born again. He must be a doer of the Word - not only a hearer, 1:22-25. He must believe the message and he must live in obedience to Him who is the center of that message (John 14:15).

As we trace the direct connection between verse 18 and verse 25, we are bound to come to the conclusion that "the perfect law, the law of liberty," of verse 25 is the same as the "word of truth" of verse 18.<sup>7</sup> That Word of truth is the means through which God gave the readers their new life, 1:18. It is the Word which is able to save their souls, 1:21. But the Word which is able to save souls is the Gospel - the Good News of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16). Therefore, the person who looks attentively at Him who is the center of the Gospel - looks in faith - and who continues, by active faith and obedience, in His fellowship - this one is blessed in his doing, 1:25. Those who put their trust in Jesus as their Savior and who take their stand on His side

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(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 172.) Mayor calls attention, in this connection, to Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; and 2:13. (Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. 65.)

<sup>7</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), pp. 115, 116, note 1.

to serve Him in their daily lives will have much to do with what can be called "law." They will be under obligation to do their Lord's will and their great desire will be to carry out His will. But this law is no task-master; it is a law of liberty, 1:25. It points out to the Christian what his Lord wants him to do and what He wants him to avoid. And the happy servant of Christ is glad to receive that guidance and gladly seeks to carry out his Lord's will because of his love for Him who loved him and gave Himself up for him (Gal. 2:20).

When we give due consideration to James' statements in 1:18 and 21 as well as in 2:1 so that we recognize that James is writing to Christians and is using the word "law" to refer to the Word of God, including the Gospel and the obligations which flow from acceptance of the Gospel, then it becomes clear that James is not just a teacher of moralism but an earnest Christian preacher who urges his people to live out in their lives the implications of the Gospel of Christ. Thus in 1:27, he indicates that the person who has true religion in his heart - has been born again by the Word of truth, 1:18, and therefore has "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2:1, - such a one will help the orphans and widows and will keep himself unspotted from the sins of the world. He will not be like the person who speaks empty words of encouragement to needy folks but who does nothing to supply their needs, 2:15,16. He will not make a dif-

ference in his treatment of the rich and the poor, 2:1-4. He will, on the contrary, be guided in his life with his fellow-men by the Commandments of God, 2:9-11, especially by the royal law, 2:8, the second great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40), being mindful of the fact that he is to be judged by a law of liberty, 2:12, the Word of God which includes the Good News of Christ. "Law of liberty" must mean the same here as in 1:25. There, it clearly refers back to the "implanted word" of 1:21 which, in turn, refers back to the "word of truth" in 1:18. He who has received the Gospel has received much. "And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke 12:48).

James is no perfectionist. All Christians stumble in many things, 3:2. They must sincerely repent of their sins and humble themselves before their Lord, 4:9,10. They need to confess their sins to one another and pray for one another, 5:16. They need the forgiveness of sin, 5:15. But, having prayed in faith for wisdom, 1:5-8, they, having received wisdom from above, bring forth good fruits in righteousness and peace, 3:17,18. Having drawn near to God through faith in Christ, 2:1, and God having drawn near to them, 4:8a, they are enabled to work with God in cleansing their hands and purifying their hearts, 4:8b. James does not teach synergism. God, having willed our salvation, brought us into being as new creatures, 1:18. God alone was active in our regeneration. But, having become regenerate, we are exhorted to

cooperate with God in our sanctification - in our growth in the Christian life.

James is especially concerned about the Christian's growth in patience. Trials and difficulties in life build up patience when they are met in the right spirit, 1:2-4,12. The prospect of the Lord's coming to receive His own encourages Christians to be patient in the midst of the trials and difficulties of Christian life, 5:7,8. Considering the example of saints who have gone on before will also help, 5:10,11. Christian fellowship and, above all, private and group prayer will help the Christian traveler over the rough places of life, 5:13-18.

The slogan: "Once saved - always saved" surely did not come into being as a result of James' teaching. He indicates very definitely the possibility of erring from the truth. And a person who has thus been led astray from the truth is in need of being converted. His soul needs to be saved from eternal death and his many sins need to be covered, 5:19,20, by the blood of Christ.

The Christian who is willing to be used by God as an instrument in His hands to convert a person who is living in error, renders that person a glorious service. He rescues the soul of that man from eternal separation from God and covers that man's many sins, 5:19,20, from the sight of the holy God.

The soteriology of James is therefore in absolute agreement with the writers of the other books of the New Testament. Lost, sinful man is rescued from the powers of hell by God who brings about a radical change which is called a new birth. Having become a new creature, the believer in Christ seeks to live a life that is worthy of the Father into whose family he has been born. He needs to pray God for wisdom; he needs patience in meeting the trials of Christian life. He often stumbles and needs to repent, confess his sin, and receive God's forgiveness. But he can bear fruit in his life that is acceptable to God. He can even serve God in the glorious task of rescuing other souls from spiritual death.

## CHAPTER XII

### DOCTRINE IN JAMES CONCERNING THE LAST THINGS

In considering what James writes about the last things, we begin by inquiring: What does he say about temporal death? In 1:10, James compares the life of a rich man on earth to the flower of grass. Like the flower, the rich man shall pass away. And this is true, not only of the rich man. The life of all human beings is like vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away, 4:14. Let everyone, therefore, realize that he will live and "do this or that" only as God wills it and gives him grace and strength to do it, 4:15. In view of the brevity and uncertainty of human life, the rich Christian has reason to rejoice that he has been led away from dependence upon his wealth and has humbly bowed before Him who alone can place the rich man as well as the poor man in a high position, 1:9-11. In 1:15, James teaches that sin brings forth death, thereby setting forth the same truth as Paul, using a different figure, teaches in Romans 6:23. By means of a figure which James uses to emphasize another truth, he incidentally teaches concerning the essence of temporal death, 2:26. It is a separation of the soul from the body.

The fifth chapter of the Letter of James is strongly eschatological.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, this chapter is as concretely practical as the remainder of the Letter. After addressing some very stern words to the rich who have been heaping up material wealth for themselves, who have been fraudulently depriving the laborers who worked for them of their wages, and who have been grievously persecuting the righteous man (5:1-6), James turns to his fellow-Christians who have been suffering at the hands of wicked men, with this admonition: "Be patient, therefore, until the coming (*παρουσία*) of the Lord" (5:7). We have seen (near the close of Chapter IX) that there is good reason to believe that James here refers to the second coming of Christ. In the midst of their trials, the suffering Christians can remember that their Lord is coming again to take those who are His own into His Father's house that they may be with Him (John 14:2,3). Having this prospect before them, the suffering believers shall be patient. Those who cultivate the soil must have patience if they are to see and receive the fruits of the earth; they must wait for the early and latter rain (5:7b). Christians have more reason to be patient than the farmers and fruitgrowers; the latter wait

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Gerhard Kittel, "Der geschichtliche Ort des Jakobusbriefes," Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Toepelmann, 1942), Band 41, pp. 83-4.

for the harvest, but Christians wait for their Lord and His coming is near (5:8). From the positive admonition, "Be patient" (5:7,8), James goes over to the negative, "Do not grumble against one another" (5:9). Those who grumble are in danger of falling under the sentence of the Judge (cf. Num. 21:5,6) and the Judge stands before the doors (5:9b), about to enter and begin to execute judgment. Since this reference to the Judge follows closely the references in 5:7,8 to Christ's return, we have reason to conclude that James also in verse 9 is referring to Christ. We can say then that James, in agreement with other New Testament writers, teaches that the return of Christ is near and that He will, when He returns, come as Judge - the Judge of living and dead. James uses the fact of Christ's return to warn against the danger of living in sin and to encourage Christians to endure patiently the trials that come.

James clearly wants his readers to be conscious of the fact that a time of reckoning is coming for all of them. There are numerous references to judgment in this brief Letter. For instance, James warns his readers that judgment will be without mercy upon those who have shown no mercy, 2:13. Heavier judgment will fall upon those who undertake to teach others if they misuse their position of trust, 3:1. There is only one Judge and He is also the Law-giver, 4:12. The Judge will take sins of omission into consideration as well as sins of commission, 4:17. The evidence

against those who will be judged is accumulating while they are living and committing sin in this life, 5:4. The storm of judgment will break upon evil doers unexpectedly, 5:1. In fact, those who are living selfishly, pampering themselves with the wealth and sensual enjoyments of this world, have already entered upon the time of judgment; they are living in a "day of slaughter" (5:5).<sup>2</sup> Those who go beyond plain, unadorned speech - especially those who swear falsely or foolishly - are warned that they are in danger of falling under judgment, 5:12. The judgment is imminent, for the Judge is standing before the doors, 5:9. The judgment of those who have had opportunities to hear the Gospel will be based on the law of liberty, 2:12. As James uses this expression, it is equivalent to the Word of Truth, the whole message of Scripture, including the Gospel.

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<sup>2</sup>In farm areas of our land, we may see young cattle grazing quietly in a luxuriant field of clover or lying down in the tall grass, contentedly chewing their cud. Or, we may see them in fattening pens with more feed than they can eat around them. They seem to have everything that their animal-hearts could desire. But they are being fattened for the slaughter. Soon their lives will be snuffed out and every part of their bodies will be used to satisfy the needs and the desires of men. James must have had some such picture in mind when he wrote the words in 5:5. Human beings may give all their attention to satisfying their physical desires and to heaping up material wealth for themselves. They may be totally indifferent to the will of God, and care not a whit that the Son of God died for them. They may openly transgress every law of God, and cruelly oppress their fellow-men. As they live in this way, the day of reckoning draws nearer and nearer. Like stupid cattle, they are nourishing themselves for the day of slaughter.

James promises his readers that if they humble themselves before the Lord, He will exalt them, 4:10. He writes that we call those blessed who endured, 5:11. In 2:5, James indicates by a question which expects an affirmative answer that God has chosen those who are poor in material means to be rich in faith and heirs of the Kingdom which He promised to those who love Him. The man who endures tribulation is pronounced blessed because when he has been approved he shall receive the crown of life which He promised to those who love Him, 1:12. This is a definite promise of eternal life.

### PART III

#### THE RELATION OF FAITH AND WORKS IN THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER ACCORDING TO JAMES 2:14-26

It is important that we understand the word "faith" in our letter. As seen in this chapter, therefore, is an examination of the different passages in which this word occurs.

Immediately after the greeting in 1:1, James exhorts his readers to rejoice when they meet many trials in life because the testing of their faith will cause them to grow in the virtue of patience, 1:2,3. He goes on to exhort his readers to let patience have its perfect work in order that they may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing, 1:4. He makes it clear then at the very beginning of his Epistle that he wants his readers to progress in their life with God to the very top - to the peak of spiritual experience. And what is it that is fundamental in this spiritual growth? It is faith. The readers are to rejoice when they fall into seasons of trials and difficulties because this experience will test their faith. If it is not genuine, it will then be revealed in its true colors. If it is true and living faith, it will be strengthened and become more mature in the fires of trial. It will produce the fruit of patience which is a precious virtue in the sight of God. The power

## CHAPTER XIII

### FAITH AS USED BY JAMES IN THE EPISTLE

As we undertake the study of the passage, 2:14-26, it is important that we have clearly in mind what James means when he uses the word,  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ , in our Letter. We turn in this chapter, therefore, to an examination of the different passages in which this word occurs.

Immediately after the greeting in 1:1, James exhorts his readers to rejoice when they meet many trials in life because the testing of their faith will cause them to grow in the virtue of patience, 1:2,3. He goes on to exhort his readers to let patience have its perfect work in order that they may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing, 1:4. He makes it clear then at the very beginning of his Epistle that he wants his readers to progress in their life with God to the very top - to the peak of spiritual experience. And what is it that is fundamental in this spiritual growth? It is faith. The readers are to rejoice when they fall into maelstroms of trials and difficulties because this experience will test their faith. If it is not genuine, it will then be revealed in its true colors. If it is true and living faith, it will be strengthened and become more mature in the fires of trial. It will produce the fruit of patience which is a precious virtue in the child of God. The person

who has this virtue of patience will, with proper direction, develop into a well-balanced spiritual personality. But we notice that the whole superstructure of the mature person's spiritual life is grounded on faith which James takes for granted his readers have. Therefore, we can say that with James faith is the fundamental quality of the child of God.

Next, we note that James regards faith as essential to true prayer. When he has admonished his readers to rejoice in the midst of tribulations and, through the testing and strengthening of their faith, grow into mature men of God, he seems to anticipate that his readers will ask: "Who is sufficient for these things?" He writes that if any one of them lacks wisdom, he shall ask of God who gives liberally to all who ask without reproaching them for shortcomings and sins of the past; the wisdom that he seeks will be given him, 1:5. But this asking must be an asking in faith. The doubter is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed about by the wind, 1:6. Such a man has no reason to expect that his prayer will be heard and answered, for he is double-minded and unstable in his ways, 1:7,8. It is the person whose mind is anchored by faith who can expect an answer to his prayer for wisdom. The same truth is restated in 5:15. When the elders of the congregation anoint a sick man with oil in the name of the Lord and pray over him, James writes that the prayer of faith shall save the man who is sick and the Lord shall raise him up. In the

following verse, James writes that the "prayer of a righteous man is strong as it works." In verse 15, we are told that the prayer of faith will save him who is sick; in verse 16, it is the prayer of a person who is righteous and powerful to accomplish great things. From this we may conclude that James teaches that it is the righteous person who can offer a prayer of faith. Also, it is valid to conclude that the righteous man is a man of faith. Since, as we have seen, faith with James is the fundamental quality of the child of God (1:2-4), we may say that James teaches justification by faith. A man is righteous ( $\delta\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ) because of his faith; he is able to pray in faith (5:15), and therefore his prayer is strong as it works (5:16).

In Hebrews 11:1, we find the following definition of faith: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." When we note what James writes in 1:5-8, we are led to the conclusion that James would subscribe to this definition. The person who prays in faith is no doubter; he is not tossed to and fro like a wave of the sea. He prays with the assurance that what he hopes to receive and prays for will be given him. He does not, with his physical eyes, see God standing ready to answer his prayer but he has the conviction that God nevertheless can and will hear his prayer and supply the wisdom that he himself lacks.

We are now to pull out the weeds and give to the seed planted in us good soil in which to grow, 1:21. In

With James, faith is trust in the holiness and goodness of God, 1:13-17. The person who has faith in God does not accuse Him of being the cause of the temptations to sin which come to him, 1:13. He does not permit himself to be deceived into such a view, 1:16. Rather, he recognizes that God is the Giver of every good and perfect gift; he recognizes too that God is not fickle; He does not change so that one needs to be in doubt as to what to expect of Him, 1:17. The gift that has the greatest and most far-reaching importance to him personally is his own new birth in accordance with the will of God, 1:18. The means which God used in bringing about this new birth is the Word of truth, 1:18. And faith must be exercised to lay hold on (receive) this Word of truth which was implanted by God when He brought about the new birth of the individual, 1:21,18. The fact that the Word is called an implanted Word in verse 21 is at least a suggestion of the truth that God gave to the person who was born again faith to believe the message of the Word. It was God who brought us forth, 1:18. He did it by means of the Word of truth. But a human being can lay hold of the Word of God only by means of faith. It would seem to follow, then, that James teaches in a very few words that God gave us faith in the Word of truth and wrought in us through the Word the transformation called the new birth. We are now to pull out the weeds and give to the Word planted in us good soil in which to grow, 1:21. In

other words, now that God has given us faith, we are to exercise that faith by taking a strong grasp on the Word of truth.

After we have taken note of James' teaching in the first chapter regarding faith, we should be prepared for the message of the second chapter, the first verse: "Do not have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glory, together with respect of persons." James here teaches that the object of faith of the one who has been born again, 1:18, who receives the implanted Word, 1:21, who is a doer of that Word, 1:22, and who is thereby blessed, 1:25, is "our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glory." The wording of James' statement, *πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, is in keeping with such other New Testament passages as Mark 11:22; Acts 3:16; Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16; and Revelation 14:22, in which the objective genitive is likewise used.<sup>1</sup> When James makes clear in one passage of his Epistle that Christ is the Center and Object of the faith of his readers and himself, we should recognize that the same is true in other passages of his Epistle in which he refers to true faith. We have no right to say that in some passages in which James clearly refers to true faith without designating Christ as the object or center of faith - we

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1897), p. 76.

have no right to say that he is referring to faith in God, the Father, without including faith in Christ.<sup>2</sup> The very first verse of the Epistle should militate against such a conclusion. There James states that he is a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. In the passages, then, that we have already considered we should understand that Christ is the Object of faith. The faith which is the fundamental quality of the Christian, 1:3, is faith in Christ. The prayer of faith, 1:6; 5:15, is the prayer of faith in Jesus Christ. The prayer of the righteous one, 5:16, is the prayer of one who believes in Christ as his Savior. Faith in the holiness and goodness of God, 1:13-17, is faith in a God who, in His hatred of sin and in His love for the sinner, gave His only-begotten Son to save man from sin. Receiving the implanted Word, 1:18,21, is receiving a Word which testifies of Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of men.

James, by asking a question which expects an affirmative answer, teaches that those who are rich in faith are also heirs of the Kingdom which God promised to those who love Him, 2:5. He does not explicitly state that through faith a poor man becomes an heir of the Kingdom. But, according to James, the two go together and we may assume that he means to indicate that there is a vital connection between

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<sup>2</sup>William Patrick, James The Lord's Brother (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), p. 334.

them. Here, too, we should understand that he is writing about those who are rich in the faith which has Christ as its object. It is they who are heirs of the Kingdom which God promised to those who love Him. When we read what James says of the poor in 2:5, as Schlatter writes, we understand more fully why he, in 1:9, exhorts the humble man to glory in his high station.<sup>3</sup> If God has chosen him to be rich in faith and an heir of the Kingdom, he has much reason to glory; that is, he has reason to glory in the Lord, 1 Corinthians 1:31.

Finally, we note that James teaches that faith in Christ affects the life that the believer lives. This is brought out emphatically in 2:1-9, where it is emphasized that respect of persons and faith in Christ do not go together. The person who believes in Christ as his Savior will not despise the poor nor fawn before the rich. The believer's life must not be marred by this sin. True faith is productive of more than words. It is productive of kindness and helpfulness toward the unfortunate and needy; it keeps the believer free from the stains of the sinful world, 1:27. It leads a person to be obedient to God even when He commands him to give up that which is dearest to him in his life on earth, 2:21-25. According to James, true faith is

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<sup>3</sup>A. Schlatter, Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament, Dritter Band (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1921), p. 181.

an active, living, productive force.

In the section, 2:14-26, James is dealing with the faith that a certain man (ΤΙΣ) says that he has. This faith is not a productive force in his life. The man who says that he has it, does not have good works to show as the fruit of his faith, 2:14. The only evidence of the presence of faith is the declaration of the man himself. James does not, in so many words, declare that the faith which this man says that he has is not faith at all.<sup>4</sup> He uses the same word to refer to this fruitless faith as he has used to refer to true Christian faith. Intellectual assent is, after all, an element in true faith, and one should not be hasty to say that the faith that another has, according to his own confession, is not faith at all. But James raises the question as to whether this faith can save the man, 2:14, and the form of his question (μή) shows that he expects the question to be answered in the negative. He declares that such a faith is dead, 2:17; that it is barren, 2:20; and that it is like the body of a dead man, 2:26. It is clearly something entirely different from what James has referred to as faith in 1:3,6; 2:1,5; and 5:15. In his Preface to Romans, Luther wrote words which he might well have written in a preface to the Epistle of James:

Oh, it is a living, active, energetic, mighty thing,

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<sup>4</sup>Patrick, op. cit., p. 335.

this faith, so that it is impossible that it should not work what is good without intermission. It does not even ask whether good works are to be done, but before one asks it has done them, and is ever doing. But he who does not do such works is a man without faith, is fumbling and looking about for faith and good works, and knows neither the one nor the other, yet chatters and babbles many words about both.<sup>5</sup>

In his own way, James makes it abundantly clear that there is a vast difference between the faith that a man who has no works in his life claims to have, 2:14, and the faith of him who believes in Jesus Christ, 2:1, and is an heir of the Kingdom which God promised to those who love Him.

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<sup>5</sup>Quoted by R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), pp. 587, 588.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ORIENTATION OF JAMES 2:14-26 IN THE EPISTLE

Many students of the Epistle of James seem to find little order or logical sequence in the Letter. Subjects are taken up and discussed, dropped, picked up again without any apparent plan or purpose. The student who makes only a superficial study of the Letter will be likely to concur in this opinion. But a more thorough examination of the Epistle will lead the student to a very different conclusion. The following statement, taken largely from Zahn, on the succession of ideas in our Epistle is instructive and helpful:

The word of greeting,  $\chi α ι ρ ε ι ν$ , in 1:1 is echoed immediately in  $π α ρ α ν χ α ρ ι ν$ , the opening words of the first section, 1:2-18, which set forth and urge the right attitude toward the trials of Christian life. Special mention among God's gifts of the regenerating Word, 1:18, forms the transition to the second section, 1:19-27, dealing with the right acceptance of the Word in heart and life. The care of orphans and widows, 1:27, leads to a reproof of the wrong attitude toward both the rich and the poor in the third section, 2:1-13. The contrast between believing and doing, pointed out in the opening verses of this section, becomes the theme of the fourth section, 2:14-26. This passage in

which dead faith expresses itself in words and not in deeds (2:14,16,19), is followed by a fifth, 3:1-18, rebuking the tendency to instruct others (cf. 1:19) and pointing out the danger of sins of the tongue (cf. 1:26). In 3:13-18, James does not lose sight of its immediate occasion but becomes so comprehensive and passes into such urgent commendation of peaceableness that it brings to mind in contrast the many disputes among the readers dealt with in the sixth section, 4:1-12. The desire for the betterment of external conditions as the chief ground of these dissensions appears among merchants, 4:13-17, and landowners, 5:1-6, but also among farm hands, 5:7-12. To these, the seventh section, 4:13-5:12, with its three sub-divisions refers. Job and Elijah are examples to be considered in learning the important lessons of patience and prayer. Earthly suffering, patience, and prayer are dealt with in the opening section of the Epistle and again in the closing section, 5:13-20, making the cycle complete.<sup>1</sup>

There is a close connection between the passage, 2:14-26, and the preceding section. In 2:1, James exhorts his readers to have no respect of persons along with their faith in Christ. In the verses which immediately follow this exhortation, he deals with respect of persons. But he realizes

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<sup>1</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), I, 117, n. 3.

that the faith which he has mentioned in 2:1 needs some attention also; for there are some among his readers who are satisfied with a sort of intellectual faith which, they believe, assures them of salvation. Their faith, in their judgment, is specifically Christian. They believe that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah; that He is the King and Judge of all men. They may even regard Him as their Redeemer. They hold that this faith which they have, unaccompanied by a moral life, procures eternal salvation for them. It is to this situation that James turns in the second paragraph of the second chapter.<sup>2</sup>

James, in this passage, is as practical in aim as in any part of the Letter. He is not setting forth his views on faith. He has indicated earlier in the Epistle what he regards as true Christian faith. In this section he is dealing with the problem of people who claim to have an orthodox creed but whose orthodoxy is as barren as a dead tree. What needs to be produced in their case is not right belief - at least as far as it affects the mind - but a living faith that issues in right action. The problem with which James seeks to deal, in this passage, colors his use of the word,  $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ , in this section of the Letter.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>William Patrick, James The Lord's Brother (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), p. 324.

<sup>3</sup>Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1900), p. 136.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FUTILITY OF FAITH WITHOUT WORKS ILLUSTRATED BY A PARABLE OF MERELY VERBAL CHARITY, 2:14-17

"What is the profit, my brothers, if a man says that he has faith but does not have works? Is that faith able to save him? 15) If a brother or a sister is naked and in lack of daily food, 16) and one of you say to them: 'Go in peace, be warmed and fed,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what is the profit? 17) So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself."<sup>1</sup>

James opens this section of his Letter with a question which serves to introduce the subject which he is about to discuss, namely: Is a faith that does not produce works a faith that saves? It is important that we notice that he is referring in this question to a faith that a person says that he has. James has earlier in the Epistle referred to true Christian faith. This is something different; and what is here said of the faith that this man claims to have should not be understood to apply to the faith of a true Christian. The man who claims to have faith is described as a man who does not have works; for example, he does not restrain his tongue, 1:26; he does not visit orphans and widows in their

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<sup>1</sup>The writer's translation from the Greek.

affliction and does not keep himself unspotted from the world, 1:27; he is not concerned about keeping the royal law, 2:8; he shows respect of persons, 2:9; and he fails to show mercy toward his fellow-men, 2:13.<sup>2</sup> He has failed to do the things which James has been encouraging his readers to do and he has not shunned the things which James has pointed to as being inconsistent with faith in Jesus Christ. It is the faith that such a man says that he has about which James is writing in this section of his Letter.

We have an example earlier in the Letter of the fact that James uses the same word - or, at least, words of the same family - with different meanings. In 1:3,12, James uses the noun,  $\pi \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \tau \alpha \sigma \mu \acute{o} \varsigma$ , to refer to a trial or a testing which can be of great blessing in building up the child of God in his Christian life. In 1:13-15, he uses the verb,  $\pi \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \tau \alpha \acute{\iota} \gamma \omega$ , to refer to a temptation to fall into sin which has its source in the person's own lust. There, the change from one meaning to the other is made without warning unless the change from noun to verb can be regarded as a warning. Here, the change in the meaning of  $\pi \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \tau \iota \varsigma$  is indicated by the announcement that James is here writing about the faith that a man says that he has.

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<sup>2</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 586.

James is following the example of Jesus when he indicates that not all who claim to have faith do actually have the true faith. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Not every one who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter in to the Kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in the heavens," Matthew 7:21. And in the parable of the two sons, Matthew 21:28-30, He shows that the action which follows words is more important than the words themselves. In answer to the father's request to go to work in the vineyard, one son refused to work but then repented and obeyed his father. The other son answered: "I go sir," but he did not go.

James raises the question of what profit there is in the faith of a man who says that he has faith but does not have works. His opening words in this section are:  $\tau \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \sigma$ . These words occur again at the end of 2:16. The only other passage in the New Testament in which  $\tau \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \sigma$  is found is 1 Corinthians 15:32.<sup>3</sup> In the preceding verses in this latter passage, Paul has been asking why, if the dead are not raised, some are baptized for the dead; why he lives constantly in danger so that he, in a real sense, dies daily; and in verse 32, he goes on to ask in similar vein what profit there was for him in fighting,

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<sup>3</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. 93.

humanly speaking, with beasts in Ephesus. Then he goes on to write that if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. The answer that Paul expects to his question in verse 32 is clearly a negative answer. His struggles in Ephesus with men who have lowered themselves to the level of beasts were without point and of no value if the dead are not raised. Similarly, the answer that James expects to his first question in 2:14 is a negative one. The faith which a man claims to have but which produces no good works is of no value.

That this is the answer which James expects to his question is confirmed by the fact that the second question of the verse which is closely related to the first is introduced by the interrogative, *μή*, indicating that a negative answer is expected to this second question.<sup>4</sup> The close relationship between the two questions is seen in the fact that the pronoun, *αὐτόν*, in the second question, has as its antecedent, *τις*, in the first question. Also, it can hardly be otherwise than that *ἡ πίστις* in the second question refers to the faith which the person of the first question says that he has. In the first question, *πιστεύει* is

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<sup>4</sup>Mayor, *op. cit.*, p. 93, and George Benedict Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, edited by Gottlieb Lünemann; English translation edited by J. Henry Thayer (Seventh Edition; Andover, Mass.: Warren F. Draper, 1889), p. 511.

introduced without the article as a new idea.<sup>5</sup> In the second question the article before  $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  is called by Lenski the article "of previous reference."<sup>6</sup> The article is best rendered in English as "that": "Is that faith (referred to in the first part of the verse) able to save him?" The infinitive,  $\tau\acute{\omega}\ \tau\alpha\iota$ , should recall to our minds what James has written in 1:21. There it is said that the implanted Word is able to save the souls of those who receive it in meekness. This "receiving" is true Christian faith and in a real sense this faith can be said to save the man because it lays hold on the Word of truth implanted by God at the time of the new birth, 1:18. Now James asks of the faith claimed by the man who has no "works" in his life: "Can that faith save him?" The answer that he would give to that question and the answer that he expects from others is "No!" Such faith is of no value; it cannot save the soul of a man. In allowing it to be called "faith" in some sense, James is like John in his use of the word, "love." In 1 John 3:18, we read: "Little children, let us not love by word neither with the tongue, but in work and truth."

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<sup>5</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 203.

<sup>6</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 586.

In verses 15 and 16, we have a concrete illustration of the abstract principle stated in verse 14.<sup>7</sup> Those who are in need of food and clothing will receive small comfort from a person who says: "Go in peace, be warmed and fed," but who does nothing to help them in their need. His charity consists in words only; it does not issue in deeds. His charity is therefore very much like the faith of the man of verse 14. His faith is also a matter of words only; it does not make its presence known by producing works. He claims that he has faith but the proof of the truth of his statement is not forthcoming. But charity which does not issue in deeds of helpfulness toward those who are in need is not charity at all. In no sense can it be called charity. Therefore, the logical conclusion which follows from the parable is that the faith which the man of verse 14 says that he has is no faith at all. Yet, James does not make the declaration either concerning the charity or the faith: "It has no existence." He is content to ask the question again: "What is the profit?" Clearly, the answer is: "There is no profit." There is no profit in the faith that produces no works, which a man claims that he has, 2:14a. Nor is there any profit in charity which offers soothing words but no food or clothing, 2:15,16.

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<sup>7</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 93.

In verse 17, James makes a declaration concerning the state of the faith which he has been discussing: "So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself." The uselessness of the faith in question shows that it is dead. It is like the love of which John writes in 1 John 3:17:

"Whoever has the goods of the world and sees his brother have need and shuts up his compassion from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" Such a course of action shows that the love of God does not exist in the man. There may be some sort of love - a kind of self-love - but it is a love that is false. As Zahn writes: "False faith is to true what words are to helpful love."<sup>8</sup>

Lenski translates the last two words of verse 17,  $\kappa\alpha\theta' \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ , "according to itself." He writes that these words do not

mean, "dead in itself" (nothing is ever dead in any other way), but "according to its own showing." Having a special and an easy opportunity to show its life, it shows the very opposite. A dead tree, a dead branch fails to show (sic) life by bearing fruit.<sup>9</sup>

Lenski does not, however support his statements with linguistic evidence and with references to parallel passages. The present writer has failed to find such evidence.  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha'$  with the accusative is, of course, used with the meaning:

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<sup>8</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), pp. 129, 130, Note 1.

<sup>9</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 589.

according to something as a standard (cf. Mark 7:1; Rom. 8:4; 14:15; 2 Thess. 3:6; Eph. 2:2).<sup>10</sup> But in all examples examined by the writer, *κατά* is invariably followed by a noun - never by a reflexive pronoun. Winer states that *καθ' ἑαυτοῦ*, and the like, "properly means in reference to one's self, whereby something is restricted to a single subject."<sup>11</sup> Here "deadness" may be said to be restricted to the faith that does not have works.

The translation of *καθ' ἑαυτήν*, "in itself," to which Lenski objects, is the reading of the American Revised Version of 1901. Such passages as the Septuagint reading of Genesis 30:40 and 43:32 and the New Testament passages, Romans 14:22 and Acts 28:16, give support to this translation. Thayer gives James 2:17 as an example of *κατά* being used with the accusative "of that which so joins itself to one thing as to separate itself from another."<sup>12</sup> Thus, Mayor writes that *καθ' ἑαυτήν* is not a mere repetition of *ἐὰν μὴ ἔχη ἔργα*. He writes that "the absence of fruit shows that it is not merely outwardly inoperative but inwardly dead."<sup>13</sup> Patrick writes in

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<sup>10</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1889), p. 328.

<sup>11</sup>Winer, op. cit., p. 410, footnote.

<sup>12</sup>Thayer, op. cit., p. 327, *κατά*, II, 1, e.

<sup>13</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 95.

similar vein: "A faith without works is dead; it is as a body without a soul. It is not only dead as regards the effects which it produces on others; it is dead in itself."<sup>14</sup>

Tielemann writes:

Wie der Glaube schlechthin nutzlos ist, so ist er auch tot, in einer besonderen Beziehung. Der Ausdruck "in Beziehung auf sich selbst" ist ganz wörtlich zu nehmen. Dem tatenlosen Glauben fehlt es an einer ihn selbst, seine eigene Weiterentwicklung, Vollendung und Anerkennung fördernden Lebenskraft.<sup>15</sup>

The American Revised Version of 1901 is not alone in rendering  $\kappa\alpha\theta' \ \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta\varsigma$ , "in itself." The Norse Version of 1930 is the same: "...döð i sig selv." Luther's translation is similar: "...ist er tot an ihm selber." Schlatter translates the verse: "Ebenso ist auch der Glaube, wenn er keine Werke hat, für sich tot."<sup>16</sup> Hauck's translation is: "So verhaelt sich's auch mit dem Glauben; fehlen ihm Werke, so ist er fuer sich allein tot."<sup>17</sup>

Schlatter calls attention to three instances of  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha'$  being used with the accusative in the Epistle of James:

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<sup>14</sup>Wm. Patrick, James The Lord's Brother (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), p. 335.

<sup>15</sup>J. Tielemann, "Zum Verständnis und zur Würdigung des Jakobusbriefes," Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift, XLIV (May, 1933), 264.

<sup>16</sup>A. Schlatter, Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1921), III, 186.

<sup>17</sup>Friedrich Hauck, "Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Judas und Johannes Kirchenbriefe," Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), Teilband 10, 17.

κατὰ τὴν ἰσχυρίαν, 2:8; καθ' ἑαυτοῦ, 3:9; and καθ' ἑαυτήν, 2:17, our passage.<sup>18</sup> Of καθ' ἑαυτήν, Ropes writes that it "strengthens νεκρά, 'inwardly dead,' not merely hindered from activity, but defective in its own power to act."<sup>19</sup> Ropes goes on to write:

Of the various renderings proposed the only other one deserving mention is that of Grotius and others, who give it this meaning of "by itself," "alone" (ff sola), but interpret, "faith without works is dead, being alone." This involves tautology, and in strictness would require the addition of the participle οὕτως.<sup>20</sup>

The King James Version has the rendering: "...is dead, being alone." The Revised Standard Version of 1946 has essentially gone back to this translation: "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." This latter rendering avoids the need of the participle, οὕτως, referred to by Ropes but does not avoid the tautology. Moreover, it takes καθ' ἑαυτήν with ἡ πίστις instead of with νεκρά ἐστίν to which it naturally belongs because of its position in the sentence. In the opinion of the present writer, the translators of the Revised Standard Version would have done better if they had retained the reading of the 1901 Version.

<sup>18</sup> Adolf Schlatter, Der Brief Des Jakobus (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1932), p. 191, footnote.

<sup>19</sup> Ropes, op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER XVI

### UNFRUITFUL FAITH CANNOT PROVE ITS EXISTENCE AND IT CAN BE COMPARED TO THE FAITH OF DEMONS, 2:18,19

But some one will say, You have faith and I have works. Show me your faith apart from works, and I by works will show you my faith. 19) You believe that God is One; you do well; the demons also believe and shudder.

Our English versions of the Bible have been out of step with other versions in refusing to translate 'αλλ' in this passage with the word "but." The Revised Standard Version of 1946 has fallen into line with other versions in this matter. Both the King James and the American Revised of 1901 translate 'αλλ' "Yea." This is in accord with Mayor's view who, however, writes "Nay" rather than "Yea." He regards 'αλλ', not as an adversative but as a word having a strengthening force like  $\pi\lambda\gamma$  in Matthew 26:64. He calls attention to the use of 'αλλ' with such a force in John 16:2; Luke 17:8; 2 Corinthians 7:11, and other passages.<sup>1</sup> Zahn, too, states that the words 'αλλ' ἐπεὶ τὸς do not introduce an objection to the author's preceding statements.<sup>2</sup> Maclaren

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), p. 97, Note 4.

has a similar view.<sup>3</sup> According to Ropes,<sup>4</sup> De Wette and Bey-schlag also interpreted  $\tau\iota\varsigma$  as referring to an ally of James rather than an objector to his earlier assertions.

The words,  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha \epsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\iota \tau\iota\varsigma$ , are used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:35. There they introduce an objection by one who is sceptical about the resurrection of the dead. The objection gives a new turn to Paul's discussion of the resurrection. The use of  $\alpha\lambda\lambda'$  by James in 2:18 and the introduction of another speaker can hardly be regarded otherwise than as an interruption of the argument which James has been carrying on against the man referred to in 2:14 who says that he has faith but has no works in his life. The passages which Mayer and others refer to are not true parallels of our passage here. They are alike in that  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha'$  occurs in them, but they are different in that another speaker is not introduced. For instance, in John 16:2, the words of Jesus are recorded, continuing the same line of thought as that expressed in words of Jesus recorded in the first verse of the chapter. The passage, 1 Corinthians 15:35, is a better parallel, having identical wording. It is admitted by all that an objection

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<sup>3</sup>Alexander Maclaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1938), XV, 417.

<sup>4</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 213.

is there raised. As Ropes writes, the only natural way of taking the words, ἄλλ' ἐπεὶ τὸς, in this passage is to understand them as raising an objection of some sort.<sup>5</sup> "If they are not so understood, then ἄλλ' is not only an interruption, but inexplicable."<sup>6</sup> James, no doubt, expected his readers to understand his meaning without difficulty. Therefore, we should understand his words in the most obvious way unless that is rendered impossible by insurmountable obstacles. There are no such obstacles here.

The next question to consider is this: To whom do the pronouns, οὗ and καὶ αὐτοῦ, in 2:18a refer? If the third person who is introduced as the speaker is speaking to James in direct discourse, it seems that he is doing some reversing of roles. He refers to James as the one who has claimed that he has faith and he himself claims to have works. But to understand the first part of verse 18 in this way would be doing violence to the whole passage. The man of verse 14 must be kept in the picture. It is he who claims to have faith; the pronoun, οὗ, must refer to him. Then, we must keep in mind the fact that it is James who is reporting this statement of the third person. He can do this in at least three ways.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>6</sup>Joh. Ed. Huther, "Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), p. 90.

He can hold strictly to direct discourse, reporting what the third person said to the man who claimed to have faith but did not have works: "You have faith; he (referring to James) has works." But the reader would then be at a loss as to whom he meant when he said "he."<sup>7</sup> Secondly, he could say: "You have faith; James has works." But since it is James who is reporting the statement of this third person, it would be a bit awkward for him to leave his own name in the statement as the third person used it. He might choose to modify the direct discourse somewhat and use the first person singular in place of his own name; and that is apparently what he has done.

Ropes, following Pott in Koppe's Novum Testamentum, 1816, and H. Bouman, Commentarius perpetuus in Jacobi epistolam, Utrecht, 1865, takes וּ and כַּאֲשֶׁר as referring merely to two representatives of different types of religion - not to the writer of the Epistle and the objector himself.<sup>8</sup> This seems to be the view taken also by Hauck in Das Neue Testament Deutsch series.<sup>9</sup> But what warrant do we have for taking the pronouns in this way? There is nothing in the context to in-

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<sup>7</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 591.

<sup>8</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 211.

<sup>9</sup>Friedrich Hauck, "Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Judas und Johannes Kirchenbriefe," Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), pp. 18, 19.

dicare that we are to so understand James' words. Only theologians would think of anything like that and, very likely, James wrote his Letter primarily for ordinary Christian readers. Of course, if Ropes insists that  $\epsilon\upsilon$  must be taken to refer to James and  $\epsilon\gamma\omega$  to refer to the third person who raises the objection to what James has written in 2:14-17, then it might be necessary to resort to this idea of representatives of two classes of religionists but, as we have tried to indicate above, there is another solution of the problem. In the words of Huther, the meaning of 2:18a is as follows:

But some might say in answer to what I have just stated, defending thee, thou (who hast not the works) hast faith, and I, on the other hand (who affirm that faith without works is dead), have works; my one-sided insistence on works is no more right than thy one-sided insistence on faith.<sup>10</sup>

Lenski's view is essentially the same as Huther's.<sup>11</sup> Ropes declares that this explanation is exposed to the fatal difficulty that the objection of the defender is given in direct discourse so that  $\epsilon\gamma\omega$  cannot possibly refer to James.<sup>12</sup> But Ropes himself holds that the words introduced by  $\epsilon\gamma\omega$  do not extend beyond 2:18a, for  $\delta\epsilon\tau\gamma\omega$  and the words following are evidently spoken in the interest of James' main

<sup>10</sup>Huther, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>11</sup>Lenski, op. cit., pp. 591, 592.

<sup>12</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 211.

contention.<sup>13</sup> In other words, it is James who again addresses the man of verse 14 in the second part of verse 18.<sup>14</sup> He has introduced the third person to defend the man who claims to have faith though he does not have works. It is James also who reports the words of this third person and it would be natural for him to change the pronoun in that part of the third person's statement which referred to James himself. The situation should be reconstructed as follows: James is alone with the man who is referred to as  $\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  in verse 14. He has addressed the words recorded in verses 14-17 to him. Then he says: "Some one (the third person is not actually present; he is an imaginary person) will say: 'You (James points to his companion) have faith; I (pointing to himself) have works.' But in answer, I say: Show me your faith apart from works, and I by works will show you my faith." If we say, with Ropes, that the words introduced by  $\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\gamma$  do not extend beyond 2:18a and say, in opposition to him, that James speaks in his own person again in 2:18b, rejecting as arbitrary and foreign to the context his statements re-

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ropes is here rather vague. On page 209, after stating that  $\sigma\upsilon$  and  $\kappa\alpha\iota\epsilon\upsilon$  refer to two imaginary persons, he goes on to write: "Very much the same is true of 'thou' and 'I' in the second half of the verse, where James has no idea of emphasizing his own uprightness." But if the person referred to as  $\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  ceases to speak at the end of verse 18a, who other than James can be the speaker in the latter half of the verse?

garding imaginary representatives of two religious groups, then we will understand  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\omega$  in 18b as referring to James himself and  $\sigma\upsilon$  in the same part of the verse as referring to the man designated by the word,  $\tau\omicron\varsigma$  in verse 14. But if James' argument is to be effective,  $\sigma\upsilon$  and  $\epsilon\gamma\omega$  in the two parts of the verse must refer to the same two persons.

The substance of this argument of James is this: "You claim to have faith but you do not have works. Therefore you cannot prove that you are telling the truth. You cannot show me your faith so long as it is separated from works. I, on the other hand, can prove to you by my works that I have faith." In discussing 2:18,19, Tielemann writes: "Wo kein Schein ist, ist das Vorhandensein von Licht mehr als fraglich. Dagegen wo Schein ist, ist das Vorhandensein von Licht sicher gestellt."<sup>15</sup> In English we may say it in this way: "Where there is no shining, the existence of light is more than questionable. On the other hand, where there is shining, the existence of light is proved certain."

We should take note of the fact that James emphasizes, not only that faith cannot be proved without the presence of works but also, that there can be no works of the type that James encourages without faith. Where there is fruit, there

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<sup>15</sup>J. Tielemann, "Zum Verständnis und zur Würdigung des Jakobusbriefes," Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift, XLIV (May, 1933), 267.

is also the source of that fruit. Where there are works, there must also be faith to produce those works.

The second argument which James advances in this section of his Letter is this: Some type of unfruitful faith may exist, but it is like the faith that demons have. The first step in the argument is the statement of the fundamental article of all true religion - monotheism.<sup>16</sup> James remarks that his opponent does well in believing that God is One. But then he goes on to the statement that the demons also have a definite faith concerning God and what He will do in bringing judgment upon them. Their faith does not save them. It only makes real and vivid to them the judgment which in due time will break upon them and, as a result, they shudder. The word used by James, *φύσσωσι*, signifies the physical signs of terror, especially of the hair standing on end.<sup>17</sup> Bede suggested that the demons referred to by James in this verse are demons who had possessed people - such, for example, as those referred to in Matthew 8:29 and Mark 1:23, 24. Very likely James had seen the expression of fear and horror on the faces of demoniacs and had heard their terrified confessions of faith with regard to Jesus when He came in contact with these demoniacs. It may be to these demons that

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<sup>16</sup>William Patrick, James The Lord's Brother (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), pp. 325, 326.

<sup>17</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 98.

James is referring. If some of the readers had similarly been witnesses of these things, it would be an especially apt illustration.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1900), pp. 153, 154.

## CHAPTER XVII

### TRUE FAITH ILLUSTRATED BY THE EXAMPLE

#### OF ABRAHAM, 2:20-24

Are you willing to recognize, O empty man, that faith apart from works is barren? 21) Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar? 22) You perceive that faith was working together with his works, and by works, faith was perfected; 23) and the Scripture was fulfilled which says: "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness," and he was called "Friend of God." 24) You see that by works a man is justified and not by faith alone.

As we go into an examination of this passage, it is well to remind ourselves that James is dealing with a man who claims that he has Christian faith, a faith that saves, although he has no works or fruits of faith in his life, 2:14. James has been seeking to impress upon this individual the truth that he is leaning upon a broken reed that cannot possibly support him and keep him from falling into hell. First, he likens this faith to the benevolence of a man who sees fellow-men in sore need of food and clothing and speaks soothing words to them but does not lift his finger to supply any of the things that they need for their bodies, 2:15, 16. Then, he challenges the man to demonstrate to others the fact that he has faith and seeks to drive home to him the truth that faith can be shown to exist in the heart of a man only by outward good deeds in that man's life, 2:18. Next, he reminds the man that even demons have a type of faith in

God; yet they are not saved through that faith. They believe that God will punish them as they deserve to be punished and as they think of this they shudder, 2:19. After bringing his argument up to this point, James asks: "Are you willing to recognize, O empty man, that faith apart from works is barren?" A faith that is dead, 2:17, will of course be barren, 2:20. A dead tree produces no fruit and so it is also with faith. James calls the man an empty ( *κενέ* ) man - empty-headed in being so deluded as to suppose that a dead faith can save his soul; empty-handed in being void of true spiritual riches; and empty-hearted in having no real love either for God or man.<sup>1</sup> Instead of being an empty man, he should have his head and his heart filled with the Word of truth, 1:18, and the implanted Word, 1:21;<sup>2</sup> his hands filled with the care of orphans and widows, 1:27, and other deeds of love in keeping with the royal law, 2:8; and his heart filled with love for Him Who, through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2:1, made him an heir of the Kingdom which He promised to those who love Him, 2:5.

James has now presented the negative side of the argument. He wishes to set forth also the positive side and he

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1900), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 595.

turns to the Scriptures and the example of Abraham. To introduce this evidence as a part of his argument, he asks another question: "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar?" The reference is, of course, to the testing of Abraham by God as it is recorded in Genesis 22:1-18. In obedience to God's command, Abraham took his son, Isaac, to the land of Moriah, built an altar on a mountain designated by God, laid the wood in order, bound Isaac and laid him on the altar over the wood. The knife was in his hand and he was about to slay Isaac as an offering to God when the angel of Jehovah called to him and said: "Lay not thy hand upon the lad," Genesis 22:12. The angel of Jehovah called to Abraham a second time and said:

By Myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.<sup>3</sup>

Referring to this account, James asks: "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar?" Before taking up the question of what James means by justification "by works," let us notice what he writes in the remainder of this passage which deals with

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<sup>3</sup>Gen. 22:16-18, according to the American Revised Version of 1901 (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons).

Abraham.

James does not leave faith out of consideration even in this passage in which he seeks to take away the false security of those who claim that they have faith but do not have any fruits of faith in their lives. He writes: "You perceive that faith was working together with his works," 2:22a. The verb,  $\sigmaυνεργεῖν$ , used here by James is used by Paul in Romans 8:28: "We know that to those who love God, all things work together ( $\sigmaυνεργεῖ$ ) for good..." It is used by Paul also in 1 Corinthians 16:16, where the Apostle asks the Corinthian Christians to be subject to every one who helps in the work ( $\sigmaυνεργουῦντι$ ) and labors; also in 2 Corinthians 6:1, where he refers to the working together with Christ of himself and his fellow-workers ( $\sigmaυνεργουῦντες$ ). It is also used in Mark 16:20<sup>4</sup> of the ascended Lord working with His apostles as they carried out His command to preach the Gospel to the whole creation, Mark 16:15. According to Ropes, these are the only passages in the New Testament, besides James 2:22, in which  $\sigmaυνεργεῖν$  is used.<sup>5</sup> As we consider these passages, we see that the verb does not imply that those who work together are necessarily

<sup>4</sup> J. B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1897), p. 100, and James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 220.

<sup>5</sup> Ropes, op. cit., p. 220.

equal partners in the task which they do together, for, in two of the five passages in the New Testament, it is used to refer to Christ working with His merely human disciples and fellow-workers. Therefore, its use by James in 2:22 does not imply that he considers faith and works to be equal to one another.

James does not here define the relationship between faith and works other than to write that faith was working together with his works. But in referring to the story of Abraham's great trial, he calls our attention to the words in Genesis 22 which served to introduce this story: "And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham."<sup>6</sup> These words, in turn, remind us of James' own words in 1:2-4: "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various trials, knowing that the proving of your faith works patience. And let patience have its perfect work in order that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." In view of this passage, we may conclude that James regarded the trial of Abraham: 1) as a good thing - an experience to rejoice in; 2) as a testing of faith; 3) as an opportunity to develop patience; and 4) as an opportunity for Abraham to become a stronger and more mature man of God. But if James regarded Abraham's trial as a testing of his faith, it follows that

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<sup>6</sup> Gen. 22:1, according to the American Revised Version of 1901.

he regarded the works which Abraham performed in successfully meeting the trial to which his faith was subjected as the fruits of a genuine faith. Abraham's faith worked with his works in the sense that it held firm in a time of severe testing. Even though God commanded Abraham to do something which seemed unreasonable and wicked, and which seemed to nullify God's promise that He would establish His covenant with Isaac as "an everlasting covenant for his seed after him" (Gen. 17:19), Abraham's faith in the goodness and power of God and in the promises of God held firm. If his faith had wavered in this time of trial, Abraham would not have been obedient to the command of God and there would have been no works to record in connection with this proving of Abraham.

James goes on in the same verse to write: "And by works was faith made perfect." The question that arises is this: What does the verb,  $\epsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\omega\theta\eta$ , mean in this verse? Lackmann mentions two ways in which it may be translated: 1) faith came to its goal; and 2) faith became perfect or complete; and he writes that both translations are possible.<sup>7</sup> He translates the verb: "wurde er vollständig."<sup>8</sup> Lenski asserts that  $\epsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\omega\theta\eta$  means that Abraham's faith

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<sup>7</sup>Max Lackmann, Sola Fide (Guetersloh: G. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1949), p. 50.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

"was brought to its goal."<sup>9</sup> Mayor writes: "As the tree is perfected by its fruits, so faith by its works."<sup>10</sup> Ropes translates "was perfected" and goes on to state "not as if previously, before the works, it had been an imperfect kind of faith, but meaning that it 'was completed' (almost supplemented), and so enabled to do its proper work."<sup>11</sup> Schlatter translates: "...durch die Werke wurde der Glaube vollendet."<sup>12</sup> Hauck translates: "...aus den Werken kam der Glaube zu seinem Vollbestand."<sup>13</sup>

The verb,  $\tau \epsilon \lambda \epsilon \iota \sigma \acute{\omega}$ , is found in the New Testament twenty-four times.<sup>14</sup> In Luke 2:43, it is used to refer to the days which Joseph, Mary, and the boy, Jesus, spent in Jerusalem at the Passover feast. The American Revised Version<sup>15</sup> has: "when they had fulfilled the days..." In Luke 13:32, the word is used to record the words of Jesus in

<sup>9</sup> Lenski, op. cit., p. 602.

<sup>10</sup> Mayor, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>11</sup> Ropes, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>12</sup> A. Schlatter, Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1921), III, 190.

<sup>13</sup> Friedrich Hauck, "Die Briefe des Jakobus, Petrus, Judas und Johannes Kirchenbriefe," Das Neue Testament Deutsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament, edited by George V. Wigram (4th edition; London: Walton and Maberley, 1864), p. 727.

<sup>15</sup> The following Scripture quotations are also from the American Revised Version of 1901.

answer to the Pharisees who told Him that Herod wanted to kill Him. He said: "...and the third day I am perfected." (In the margin we read: "end my course.") In John 4:34, the word is used to record Jesus' words about accomplishing the Father's work. The same thought is present in John 5:36 and 17:4. The American Revised Version of 1901 translates *Τελειόω* "accomplish" in all three of these passages. In 17:23, the verb is used to record Jesus' prayer for the unity of believers: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." In 19:28, it is used instead of *πληρῶω* of fulfilling the Scriptures. The Revisers of 1901 have: "...that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst." In Acts 20:24, words of Paul are recorded: "...so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus..." In 2 Corinthians 12:9, in connection with the thorn in the flesh, Jesus says to Paul: "For My power is made perfect in weakness." In Hebrews 2:10 we read: "For it became him...to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The verb is used in a similar way of Jesus in 5:9 and 7:28. In 7:19 we read that "the law made nothing perfect." Similarly, in 9:9, it is stated that gifts and sacrifices cannot "make the worshipper perfect." Again, in 10:1, it is said that the law with its sacrifices cannot "make perfect them that draw nigh." In 10:14 we are told that by one offering Jesus "hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

In 11:40 and 12:23, reference is made to believers being "made perfect." In Philippians 3:12,  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\lambda\acute{o}\omega$  is used by Paul to disclaim perfection: "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect..." In 1 John 2:5, we read: "...in him verily hath the love of God been perfected." In 4:12, it is said that God's love "is perfected in us." Again, in 4:17, we read: "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment..." And in 4:18: "He that feareth is not made perfect in love." In summarizing, then, we can say that the verb,  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\lambda\acute{o}\omega$ , is used to record Jesus' reference to the carrying out of the work that the Father had given Him to do (John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4). Luke used the word to record a similar reference of Paul to the work given him by Jesus to carry out (Acts 20:24). In one passage the word is used of the fulfillment of Scripture (John 19:28). Once, the verb is used to refer to the passing of time (Luke 2:43). In the other eighteen passages in which the verb occurs in the New Testament, including James 2:22, it is translated with some form of the verb "to perfect" in the American Revised Version of 1901. The passages which are most closely parallel to our passage in James 2:22 are 1 John 2:5; 4:17,18. There it is love that is "perfected." In James it is faith that is perfected. In these passages in 1 John the verb,

, is used to refer to the growth or maturity of love.  
Does the same verb refer to the growth and maturity of faith

in James 2:22? We leave that question unanswered for the moment.

The verb,  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\acute{o}\omega$ , is used by James only in 2:22. But, as Lackmann remarks,  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{o}\varsigma$  and  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\acute{o}\varsigma$  are important favorite concepts in the whole Letter (1:4,15,25; 3:2; 5:11).<sup>16</sup> In 1:4,  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\acute{o}\varsigma$  is used twice: "And let patience have its perfect work in order that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." The testing of faith in trials produces patience - much patience - and as the Christian grows in patience, he becomes a well-developed and mature Christian. In 1:15, the related verb,  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\acute{o}\omega$ , is used of sin which has run its course and has become mature. In 1:17,  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\acute{o}\nu$  is used to describe a gift ( $\delta\acute{\omega}\rho\eta\mu\alpha$ ) that comes down to us from God. It is parallel with  $\lambda\alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{\eta}$  which modifies another word ( $\delta\acute{o}\tau\iota\varsigma$ ) meaning gift. The thought expressed by the adjectives is that gifts which are good in every way and to the highest degree come to us from God. In 1:25,  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\acute{o}\varsigma$  is used to modify  $\nu\acute{o}\mu\circ\varsigma$  which is used in such a sense that it is further described as "the law of liberty." As we trace the thought and language of James from 1:18 to 1:21,22, and on to 1:25, it becomes evident that the expression,  $\nu\acute{o}\mu\circ\nu \tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\acute{o}\nu \tau\acute{o}\nu \tau\eta\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ , refers to the whole Word of God with its complete Gospel message. Again the

<sup>16</sup>Lackmann, op. cit., p. 50.

thought of maturity, completeness, perfection, is present. In 3:2 we read: "If some one does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect (τέλειος) man, able also to bridle the whole body." If a man has reached such a point of development in his Christian life that he is able to bridle his tongue, he is a mature (τέλειος) Christian. In 5:11, James refers to the patience of Job and goes on to write: "You have seen the end (τέλος) of the Lord, that the Lord is full of pity and merciful." James apparently has in mind Job 42:10-17, especially verse 12, ὁ δὲ Κύριος ἐλάλιεν αὐτὸν ἐν ὅσιν ἐπάτατο τὸν Ἰωβ.<sup>17</sup> In the Version of 1901, the first part of the verse reads as follows: "So Jehovah blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." In 5:11, James is encouraging his readers, who are experiencing difficulties and trials, with the thought that God, who is merciful, has good things in store for those who endure faithfully to the end. God abundantly blessed Job after he had come through his trials a chastened, stronger, and more mature man of God.

It seems clear from this survey of passages in which τέλειος and related words are used, that in the New Testament, and especially in the Letter of James, the most persistent and characteristic thought expressed by this family of words is that of maturity, completeness, perfec-

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<sup>17</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 299.

tion. This idea should therefore be favored in considering the meaning of James 2:22, and this thought suits the passage very well. It will be consistent with the thought of the  $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\varsigma$ , etc., passages in James if we translate the second part of verse 22 thus: "And by works faith was perfected."

In what sense can James say that faith was perfected by works: Weiss answers:

Faith cannot be made higher or more perfect by the works it itself brings forth; it can only, by the bringing forth of these, exhibit its true nature as a living (i. e. operative) faith, prove itself to be actually existing, and in so far be made perfect by works.<sup>18</sup>

The present writer agrees in part with this statement. Works which are fruits of faith are proof of the vitality and genuineness of faith. A fruit tree proves that it is a good and living tree by bearing abundant fruit. But the statement that faith cannot be made higher and more perfect by the works which that faith brings forth may be questioned. The man who brought his son, who was possessed with an evil spirit, to Jesus as recorded in Mark 9 had some kind of a faith in Jesus. The work which his faith brought forth was the bringing of his son to our Lord. That his faith was weak is indicated by his words addressed to Jesus: "If You are able (to do) anything, have compassion on us and help us," 9:22b;

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<sup>18</sup>Bernhard Weiss, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, translated from the Third Revised Edition by David Eaton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, n.d.), I, 255, n. 1.

and: "I believe! Help my unbelief!" 9:24b. We are not told by any of the Evangelists (Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9) what effect the miracle of Jesus in casting the demon out of the boy had upon the boy's father. But we can be certain that he departed with a stronger and more perfect faith in Jesus than he had when he came to Him. The strengthening of faith was due largely to the work of Jesus, not to his own work. And yet, since it was the man's work of faith in bringing his son to Jesus which enabled him to have this experience with the Son of God, it can truly be said that through the work produced by his weak and wavering faith that faith was strengthened and perfected.

Is not this the meaning of the words of Jesus recorded in John 7:17? Jesus said: "If any one wills to do His will, he will know concerning the teaching, whether it is from God or I speak from Myself." If anyone has enough faith to will to begin to do the will of God as it has been revealed to him, his faith will be strengthened so that he will become assured that the teaching of Jesus is divine truth, not just the word of a mere man. If the above is the true interpretation of these words of Jesus, who can say that faith is not perfected by the works which faith itself produces?

We may be permitted to ask why God led Abraham through this experience of bringing his son to the altar as a sacrifice to God. The emphasis in the Scriptures in connection with this experience is upon the testing or proving of Abra-

ham, Genesis 22:1, and upon the promises that were given to him after he successfully met this very difficult test, Genesis 22:16-18. Therefore, we must conclude that it was mainly for the sake of Abraham himself that God led him through this experience. Should we not then take the statement of James, a straightforward preacher of righteousness and an inspired writer of God's truth, as being literally true? Through Abraham's works, especially his great work of offering up his beloved son as a sacrifice to God, his faith was perfected. It became more mature; it was strengthened; it was purified; it enabled Abraham to live closer to God than ever before. In a word, it became more nearly perfect.

When Abraham's faith worked together with his works and by these works was perfected, Scripture was fulfilled, writes James, 2:23. What Scripture? The message recorded in Genesis 15:6 which James quotes from the Septuagint: "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness." At the time in the life of Abraham to which this statement refers, his faith was far from perfect. This is shown by his question recorded in Genesis 15:8: "O Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" after God had again promised that Abraham would inherit the land of Canaan. Therefore, the words in Genesis 15:6, though they stated a present truth, yet received their larger fulfillment when Abraham's faith had become stronger and more nearly perfect.

In view of Matthew's reference to the words of Jeremiah, recorded in Jeremiah 31:15, as a prophecy fulfilled when Herod killed the baby boys in Bethlehm (Matthew 2:17,18),<sup>19</sup> James' reference to Genesis 15:6 as a prophecy should not surprise us. The prophecy received its fulfillment, says James, when Abraham's faith had been tested and perfected through the offering of Isaac. The latter part of this Scripture, Genesis 15:6, was also fulfilled when Abraham had come through this strenuous test with flying colors. That God counted Abraham's faith, tested and perfected by his offering of Isaac, to him for righteousness is indicated by the fact that God states with an oath that He will abundantly bless him. Not only will his descendants become as numerous as the stars of the heavens and as the sand upon the seashore, but in his family the Savior will be born who will bless all the nations of the earth, Genesis 22:16-18. James surely has reason to see in these words the fulfillment of words spoken with regard to Abraham many years earlier while Abraham was still comparatively weak in faith and inconsistent in behavior. Now, after Abraham's faith has survived a crucial test, God speaks words to him which indicate that He counts Abraham's faith for righteousness.

In the Epistle to the Galatians Paul, in dealing with people who had been visited by false teachers and who had

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<sup>19</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 100.

been led into a false trust in circumcision and the keeping of the Law, brings into his discussion the Scripture passage (Gen. 15:6) which James refers to as a prophecy. Paul uses this passage to show that it is those who have faith who are true sons of Abraham (Gal. 3:6-9). The passage is a good one for Paul's purpose because it plainly indicates that God accepted Abraham as a righteous man on the basis of his faith in the promises of God. James, on the other hand, is dealing with people who put their trust in a faith which produces no fruits. He refers first to an outstanding deed of Abraham - the sacrifice of his son in obedience to the command of God. Then he points to the words recorded in Genesis 15:6. It was a faith that led Abraham to do this great work which was counted to Abraham for righteousness. Since James' argument in this passage (2:14-26), is that a faith that saves is a faith that bears fruits in works, the two passages, Genesis 22:1-18 and 15:6, serve his purpose well also.

In Romans 3, Paul develops the thesis that a man, whether he is a Jew or a Gentile, is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law. In the fourth chapter, he appeals to the example of Abraham for confirmation of this thesis. Paul's statement in Romans 4:2 may be a reference to James 2:21. That is the view of Mayor<sup>20</sup> and of

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. xcii.

Zahn.<sup>21</sup> But to assert this confidently is hazardous, to say the least. We can with as much reason believe that Paul, knowing well the attitudes and tendencies of Jews and Gentiles, whether Christians or non-Christians, developed his arguments in Romans 4 on the basis of the Old Testament without being conscious of any particular statement in a Letter of one of his fellow-workers in the Kingdom. Paul again calls attention to Genesis 15:6 (Romans 4:3) and proceeds to show from this Scripture that Abraham was justified by grace when he believed the promises of God. Abraham had no right to glory in his justification as something that he had earned by his own efforts (Romans 4:2,4). Paul confirms the conclusions at which he has arrived concerning the justification of Abraham by referring to the words of David in Psalm 32: 1,2. It certainly must be admitted that if James tried to prove from Genesis 15:6 that Abraham was justified by works, he chose the wrong Scripture passage. But when we recognize that James is seeking to show that Abraham was justified by a faith that bore fruit in works - a faith that was active, growing, and becoming more mature and perfect as Abraham met the trials of life - then we see that the two Scripture passages which he chose (Genesis 15 and 22) served his purpose well.

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<sup>21</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), p. 132.

After quoting Genesis 15:6, James writes that Abraham was called the "friend of God." He does not include this as a part of the quotation nor does he say by whom Abraham was so called. The expression, "friend of God" with reference to Abraham does not occur in the Hebrew or Greek Old Testament although the Hebrew of 2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8 is so translated in our English versions. Also, the Norse Version of 1930 has "venn" which means "friend." The Septuagint reading of 2 Chronicles 20:7 is Ἀβραάμ τῷ ἡγα-  
 πημένῳ σου and of Isaiah 41:8 is σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ  
 ὃν ἡγάπησα. From these readings to "friend of  
 God" is not a big step and there is much in the Old Testament besides these two passages to justify the conclusion that Abraham was loved and treated by God as a "friend." For instance, in Genesis 18:15, we read: "And Jehovah said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?'" God was about to bring destruction upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and He made known to Abraham what He was about to do. In thus making known to Abraham His plans, God was treating him as a friend, according to Jesus' own words, for in John 15:15 we read: "No longer do I call you servants because the servant does not know what his Lord is doing; but I have called you friends because I made known to you all the things which I heard from My Father." In the fact that Abraham was called the "friend of God" the promise implied in *ἐξ ἰσθμοῦ* was fulfilled. When God reckoned Abraham's faith for right-

eousness, He could accept the justified man as His friend.

Philo, in quoting Genesis 18:17, substituted  $\phi(\lambda\sigma\upsilon$   
 $\mu\sigma\upsilon$  for  $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\acute{o}\varsigma \mu\sigma\upsilon$  (De sobr. 11, M. p. 401).<sup>22</sup>

Philo was born about 20 B.C. and died about 42 A.D. He lived in Alexandria during the greater part of his life, although he sojourned in Palestine for a time - the time of this sojourn being uncertain.<sup>23</sup> Since Philo was roughly contemporary with James, the writer of this Epistle, and lived most of his life in Alexandria, it may be questioned if James was familiar with his writings when he wrote this Letter, possibly about the year 47 A.D. Ropes states that Abraham is referred to as "Friend of God" in Jubilees 19:9 and 30:20, and in various places in the Testament of Abraham,<sup>24</sup> - Apocryphal books which may have been written during the second or first centuries, B.C.<sup>25</sup> The expression, "Friend of God," with reference to Abraham apparently was common among the Jews in the period in which James lived.

In verse 24, James gives his formal answer, on the basis of Abraham's experience, to the question raised in verse 14.

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<sup>22</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>23</sup>O. Zockler, "Philo of Alexandria," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), IX, 38, 39.

<sup>24</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>25</sup>G. Beer, "Pseudepigrapha, Old Testament," The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, IX, 339, 340.

There he raised the question: Can a faith that does not produce works save a man? Now he answers: No! A man is justified by works and not by faith alone. In other words, he says that a faith that does not produce works cannot save a man.

Before going into the question of what James means when he writes that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone, it may prove illuminating to make a brief study of the word  $\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon$  on the basis of the material presented in Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament.<sup>26</sup>

### 1. Greek and Hellenistic Usage

The verb,  $\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon$ , comes from the adjective,  $\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma$ , and means "to set right" or "make valid." Pindar, in the fragment quoted by Plato (Gorg. 484b), says that convention, king of men and gods, pronounces right what otherwise would be called an act of violence. Philo often uses the word for the divine ordinance in the Law. From the legal sphere  $\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon$  comes into general use to denote holding a thing to be right, reasonable, suitable. This is its most common meaning in Philo and Josephus as well as in

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<sup>26</sup> Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, translated and edited by J. R. Coates (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), Book IV, Righteousness, pp. 56-66.

Greek classical authors. Applied to persons, is widely used for doing justice and so comes to mean passing sentence (Thuc. III, 40), punishing (Herod. I, 100), executing (Jos. Ant. xvii, 206), defending (Polyb. III, 31). It is only in the Septuagint and in the New Testament that it means justifying a person. In the Hermetic tractate on Regeneration (Corp. Herm. xiii, 9), the word is used in a formula meaning "we have become sinless."

## 2. Septuagint

In the LXX,  $\delta\iota\kappaαιο\delta\upsilon\iota$  is a forensic term, always favorable in meaning (absolve, justify, vindicate). Its object is always personal. In the active, it is used with the following meanings: acquit, pronounce righteous, secure justice - always for those who are righteous (1 Kings 8:32), never for the wicked (Ex. 23:7); show to be righteous (Jer. 3:11); get justice done for (Isa. 1:17); cleanse (Ps. 73:13); judge (1 Sam. 12:7, A; B has  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega$  ).

In the Passive, it is used with the following meanings: To be shown to be righteous, to be justified - of God (Ps. 51:4, LXX 1:6) or of man (Ps. 143:2, LXX 142:2). In the last example the Septuagint is more sweeping than the Hebrew, and influences Paul in his doctrine of justification (Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:20) though he always adds "by works of the Law." The perfect passive means: to be righteous (Gen. 38:26; Ps. 19:9, LXX 18:10); to be legally innocent (Micah 6:11); to

Justify oneself (Gen. 44:16; Cf. Luke 16:15).

### 3. New Testament

In the New Testament,  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon\nu$  almost always implies the forensic metaphor, as it does in the Septuagint. It never has the ordinary Greek sense of holding right and reasonable.

In Revelation 22:11,  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omega\theta\eta\tau\omega$  means "practice righteousness." This is exceptional. The justification of God (Luke 7:29), Wisdom (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35), Christ (1 Tim. 3:16), means recognition of divine justice. The juridical reference is more marked in Romans 3:4 (Ps. 51:4). The self-justification of the lawyer (Luke 10:29) still echoes the forensic; that of the Pharisees (Luke 16:15) comes nearer New Testament usage, suggesting as it does, the usurping of the divine prerogative of judgment. Justification in the sense of being saved, with a definitely forensic reference, is found in the Synoptics as well as in Paul. The publican (Luke 18:14) is judicially absolved on the spot, the only difference from Paul being that there is no reference to the Cross. Matthew 12:37 speaks only of the last judgment.

In Paul's letters the forensic idea is clear and indisputable. The opposite of  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon\nu$  is  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$  (Rom. 8:34). Justification, with Paul, is the absolution and acquittal of the wicked, when he becomes a believer, on the ground of God's justifying action in the death and resurrec-

tion of Christ. Paul's originality lies in his use of  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\upsilon\tau\epsilon\alpha\iota$  to denote that which God does as Savior now - leaving open the question of the relation of this to the last judgment, in which he still believes. It is impossible to separate justification once for all in the Cross from personal justification in faith. God laid the basis for justification in the Cross once for all; He makes the Cross meaningful to the individual through the gift of faith in Christ. The idea of justification according to works at the last judgment finds expression in 1 Corinthians 4:4 (Cf. Matt. 12:37): judicial approval and absolution in the full sense can only be given when a man's whole life is under review. "The divine absolution of sins, made effectual in the Cross and accepted by faith here and now, is expected to reach its final consummation in acquittal at the Last Judgment."<sup>27</sup> The time-process is implied in Romans 3:30; 5:19; and 8:33. The note of redemption is struck when the preposition, ἀπὸ, is used with the verb,  $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omega\theta\eta\kappa\alpha\iota$  (Acts 13:38,39). Paul brought justification and atonement together; justification rests on propitiation.<sup>28</sup>

We turn now to the question: Just what does James mean when he says that a man is "justified by works?" First of all, let us seek an answer to the question: What does James

<sup>27</sup>Kittel, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

mean when he uses the word, "justify" (δικαιόω)? As we have seen, the word, as it is used in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, usually has a forensic sense and means to pronounce righteous. This may refer to a pronouncement either of man, with regard to the innocence of those who are wrongly accused, e.g., Deuteronomy 25:1; Psalm 82:3, or of God with reference to the status of man as God sees him, e.g., Exodus 23:7; 1 Kings 8:32; Isaiah 45:25; 50:8; Acts 13:39; Romans 3:28; 4:2,5; Galatians 2:16, and many other passages. It is with God's pronouncement that James is concerned. A number of things in the passage, 2:14-26, make this clear. James raises the question of the salvation of a man's soul, 2:14, and this is a matter between a man and his God. The demons shudder because they believe that God will execute judgment upon them, 2:19; it is Abraham's relations with God which James discusses, 2:21-23. There is nothing in the passage to suggest that James is concerned with a pronouncement of man. If a person is justified by God, that is the important thing. And what James is concerned about is that some may be putting their trust in something that will not procure for them God's verdict of "not guilty." They may lull themselves to sleep with the false assurance that an intellectual assent to the claims of Jesus as the Messiah and as the Savior of men is sufficient to secure justification in the sight of God.

Preuss maintains that James writes about a public justification of Abraham. After quoting some of the words of promise spoken by God through His angel, following Abraham's offering of Isaac, Preuss writes:

What kind of justification is this? Were more sins forgiven here to Abraham on account of his obedience? The text does not say one syllable about that; but the Angel of the Lord declares publicly and distinctly, in the presence of Isaac and therefore, of all men, that Abraham feared God. However, he who fears God in the Scriptural sense is justified. This justification took place in secret continuously - ever since Abraham went out of Chaldea and never on the basis of good works, but, as Genesis 15:6 testifies, by faith. Here, however, on the occasion of the humble obedience of Abraham, which at the same time was both a confession of God and a good work, it is p u b l i c l y declared. Therefore St. James must have meant public justification, Jas. 2:21, otherwise he would have arbitrarily distorted Gen. 22 against the clear words of the text.<sup>29</sup>

This view is rather ingenious but even Preuss can find little to support it. If James was writing about a public justification, why did he not make that clear? There is nothing in the text of James to suggest the intention that Preuss ascribes to him. And as we go back with Preuss to Genesis 22, we ask: How can anyone say that a statement made in the presence of a man's son is a public justification of the man? The record in Genesis 22 does not even make it clear that Isaac heard the words spoken by the Angel of the Lord as recorded in Genesis 22:12,16-18. Both in verse 11 and in

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<sup>29</sup>Ed. Preuss, The Justification of the Sinner Before God, translated by Julius A. Friedrich (Second Edition; Chicago: Mimeographed and Published in a Bilingual Edition by F. Allermann, 1934), pp. 178-9.

verse 15, we read that the angel called to Abraham. Isaac is not mentioned; he may not have heard the words spoken from heaven (cf. John 12:28-30; Acts 22:6-9). But even if Isaac, as well as Abraham, heard the words spoken by the angel, that does not make the proclamation a public statement. No one would think of asserting that Paul writes of the private, secret justification of the sinner and James about a public justification - no one would think of such a thing if he were not trying to harmonize the statements of the two writers. The desire to harmonize the assertions of the sacred writers, praiseworthy as that desire is in itself, hardly justifies the making of arbitrary statements about the intention of the writer of the Letter of James.

There are some who contend that James is referring, in this passage, to the verdict pronounced at the final judgment - the judgment pictured by Jesus in Matthew 25:31-46. Lenski claims that Paul, when he writes about justification in his Epistles, refers to the first verdict pronounced by God upon a man the moment that the man is brought to faith; and that James is writing of subsequent verdicts of God pronounced upon the man who has earlier been led to faith.<sup>30</sup> Lenski continues:

Paul presents this first verdict of God fully and with vigor in various portions of his epistles. James presents God's subsequent verdicts. The last subsequent

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<sup>30</sup>Lenski, op. cit., pp. 598-9.

verdict is the one which we all expect at the last day. We have it recorded in advance in full in Matth. 25:31-46. As James says, it will be rendered "not out of faith alone" (v. 23). Certainly not. If any subsequent verdict finds us without the works of faith, it will find us with a faith that is at best dead and barren. The verdict on that faith is condemnation, since such a faith could embrace Christ only outwardly. Every subsequent verdict that finds us with the works of faith acquits us, declares us righteous, for the works of faith attest the genuineness of the faith which inwardly and truly clings to Christ. The most notable of these subsequent verdicts is the final one at the last day.<sup>31</sup>

The distinction that Lenski makes between the verdicts of God, about which Paul and James write, is interesting but arbitrary. What proof can he assemble to support the statement that such a distinction exists? Can anyone imagine that Paul, in speaking to an old man who had lived his life in humble Christian faith and in obedient service to Christ, would say: "As you approach the time when you must go down into the valley of the shadow of death, and draw near to the time that you must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, you can have the assurance that you will be justified by your faith and by your works?" Or, can anyone imagine that James, in speaking to a person who has just been converted, would say: "You have just come to faith in Christ. You have not had time to do any works yet. You can believe that you are justified by faith without works?" On the basis of what we know of Paul and James from the Scriptures, we can believe

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

that Paul would say to this fine old Christian man: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ! Hold fast to Him, and you will be saved. You are justified by faith alone;" and that James would say to the new convert: "You have a faith that bears fruit in works: you are taking your stand on the side of Christ and His followers. You have a faith that saves you, a faith that justifies."

It seems to the present writer that there is little need of discussion on the point of time in man's experience to which James refers in this passage. James nowhere disputes or disparages the truth that man is saved by faith. His whole argument in this passage hinges on the kind of faith that saves. His contention is this: A faith that does not produce works is not a faith that saves; a man with such a faith is not justified by God. But just as God immediately recognizes false faith, so true faith being, of course, His own gift, is instantly recognized by Him. He does not need to wait until that faith produces fruit in good works before He justifies the believer - if indeed there is any interval of time between the moment that a person comes to faith and the moment that that faith begins to bear fruit in good works. The malefactor on the cross is often cited as an example of a man who was saved without any opportunity to do good works, Luke 23:39-43. But is it true that he did no good works? Did he not seek to defend the suffering Savior from the verbal abuse of the other male-

factor? Did he not acknowledge Jesus as King of a Kingdom not of this world? Did he not pray in faith to this King, doubting nothing? On the basis of what James writes in his Epistle, we can say that he would label these things "works." We can say that James would regard such a faith as the male-factor had as a faith that saves. Therefore, whether we think of a man who has just been converted from a life in sin to a life with Christ, or think of that man after he has lived a fine, maturing Christian life for twenty years, or think of that man before the judgment-bar of Christ on Judgment Day, we can say that James, in discussing the matter of salvation and justification with men who were inclined to put their trust for salvation in a mere intellectual faith which produced no fruit in their lives, would say that this man in each one of the three stages mentioned was justified by works and not by faith alone.

James can speak or write in this way because true faith is always accompanied by good works. Where the works are lacking, that is a clear indication that true faith is absent. If faith is "alone," it is not a saving faith. John expresses the relationship between a man who is righteous and righteousness of life in this way: "Little children, let no one lead you astray; he who does righteousness is righteous even as that One is righteous; he who does sin is out of the Devil, because the Devil sins from the beginning," 1 John 3:7,8a. According to John too, a man's life is an

indication of right or wrong relationship with God, of justifying faith or lack of it.

In considering the language of James in this passage, then, we must always keep in mind the fact that he is combating the error of verbal orthodoxy; he is addressing himself to those among his readers who claim to have faith but whose faith is producing no fruit in their lives. These do not need to be told that man is saved by faith in Christ. They have an intellectual knowledge of this truth but they need to be jarred into the realization that they do not have saving faith in Christ. If they had this faith, it would bear fruit in their lives. Since they do not have this fruit, according to their own admission, they cannot comfort themselves with the thought that they are justified before God. Abraham who has the testimony of Scripture that his faith was counted to him for righteousness, had a faith which led him to submit his own will absolutely to the will of God and offer up the son for whom he had longed and waited many years. He had a faith which influenced his life. Others who have a saving faith will likewise be influenced by it in their daily living. To emphasize the vital relationship between true faith and works as the fruit of faith, James writes: "You see that by works a man is justified and not by faith alone," 2:24.

One more question remains to be considered before we bring this chapter to a close. The question is this: Is

there a conflict between Paul and James as to the basis of the sinner's justification? Does James teach that man is justified by works in opposition to the teaching of Paul that man is justified by faith in Christ? Luther thus understood the teaching of James. He wrote of the Letter of James, among other things, these words: "Die Epistel St. Jacobi ist keines Apostels Schrift, weil sie wider St. Paulum und alle andere Schrift den Werken die Gerechtigkeit gibt."<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, Melancthon in The Apology of the Augsburg Confession showed that the Roman adversaries could not justly use James 2:24 to prove that Luther's teaching of justification by faith alone should be condemned. He shows first that James does not omit faith, or present love in preference to faith. He writes of both, just as Paul does in 1 Timothy 1:5. Secondly, he points out that in James 2, such works as follow faith are spoken of - such works as show that faith is not dead but living. He writes that James speaks of works of those who have been justified - have obtained remission of sins. Thirdly, he mentions that James has shortly before spoken concerning regeneration (James 1:18), and indicated that it occurs through the Gospel.

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<sup>32</sup>Joh. Georg Walch, Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften, Neue, revidirte Stereotypausgabe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1910), XXIII (Hauptregister), Col. 845.

When he says that we have been born again by the Gospel, he teaches that we have been born again and justified by faith. For the promise concerning Christ is apprehended only by faith, when we set it against the terrors of sin and of death. James does not, therefore, think that we are born again by our works.<sup>33</sup>

He points out that James says that that is dead which does not bring forth good works and that that is living which brings forth good works. James, he says, is right in denying that we are justified by such faith as is without works.<sup>34</sup>

In view of the fact that the question of contradiction between the teachings of James and of Paul is continually being raised, the following paragraph in Coates' translation of a part of Kittel's Wörterbuch is very interesting:

Do the passages so far adduced show the way to righteousness in the sight of God? Matthew says clearly that it is the gift of the Kingdom of God, and 1 Peter (2:24) connects it impressively with deliverance from sin through the Cross. This points definitely, though not dogmatically, in the direction of Pauline doctrine. John also connects true righteousness exclusively with the revelation in Christ, by making it the result of union with him as the righteous one. But Israel's old problem of justification before God was only really settled by James and Paul.<sup>35</sup> (Italics mine)

Schrenk, the writer of this portion of the Wörterbuch, then goes on to discuss the expression "righteousness of God" in James 1:20 and states that it

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<sup>33</sup>Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, edited by F. Bente (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 191.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 189-92

<sup>35</sup>Gottlob Schrenk in Kittel, op. cit., p. 38.

cannot be identified with Paul's watchword which conveys the essence of his doctrine of salvation through the Cross. The reference must be to works of righteousness, which is said to be of God because its definition and demand are from him alone...What is remarkable is that this saying puts good works under the heading of divine, and not human righteousness. This is well on the way towards Paul's concern for subjection to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3).<sup>36</sup>

Moving on to the second chapter of James, Schrenk continues his discussion in this way:

While James thus shares the prevailing view of those parts of the N.T. so far considered (that is, the N.T. apart from Paul), he goes beyond them when he says of Abraham, "it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (2:23), providing an answer to the question concerning the way of salvation. This hotly disputed passage brings us close to Paul's great subject of justification...The subject is treated polemically, and an attack made upon the dead orthodoxy, which certainly talks about "faith," but is not interested in work. A strong point is therefore made of the marriage of faith with work. The reference is not to carrying out the details of the Law in a Rabbinical sense, but to practical love and obedience, the sort of thing that Paul describes as the fruit of the Spirit, the hallmark of a Christian. The whole epistle teaches the same lesson, which is as far removed from the Jewish idea of merit as from Greek ethics. James simply demands, in a direct, untheological way, that faith shall not be distorted into a substitute for work. Abraham is righteous in God's sight because he is credited with the faith that is accompanied and perfected by work (2:23). It is perfectly true that this way of putting it is more like the Jewish view than Paul's way, lacking, as it does, the contrast between grace and works; and it cannot be denied that James here presents a conception of faith which differs "theologically" from that of Paul. But it must be remembered that this is a popular piece of practical polemics, directed against the attempt to set up a doctrine of faith without work, and has nothing to do with what Paul says about faith

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

"apart from the works of the Law."<sup>37</sup>

The present writer feels that Bible students are inclined to make rather sweeping statements with regard to the differences between James and Paul - statements which might be shown to be exceedingly rash if we had more evidence at hand. For instance, Mayor states that the differences between Paul and James may be partly explained by the difference in the spiritual experiences and development of the two men: Paul's spiritual experience had been broken by a violent shock. James' spiritual development was smoother and less eventful.<sup>38</sup> But how do we know? There is very little recorded about the spiritual experience of James. That means only that the Holy Spirit did not consider it essential for the development of the Christian Church that James' spiritual experiences be recorded. Apparently, He considered that the situation was different in the case of Paul. Yet, somewhere between the time referred to in John 7:5 and the period following the Ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:14), James may have had an experience very similar to Paul's experience on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-9). Paul's reference to the appearance of the risen Savior to James (1 Cor. 15:7), may be a hint of such an experience. In any case, we do not know enough about James to assert that his

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 39, 40.

<sup>38</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 212.

spiritual experience was radically different from that of Paul. How much would we know about Paul if we had only 1 Timothy of Paul's writings and had no more about Paul in the Book of Acts than we have about James? In view of the great difference in the volume of the writings of James and Paul preserved in the New Testament, we ought to speak with caution when we compare the one with the other.

As we check the writings that we have of these servants of Christ, we find that both teach that all men are sinners (Rom. 3:9-12; James 3:2). Both teach that sinful man enters upon the new life with Christ through the new birth (Tit. 3:5,6; James 1:18). With both writers, Christ is the Person in whom Christian faith is centered (Gal. 2:20; James 2:1). James and Paul agree in teaching emphatically that those who believe in Christ as their Savior should live lives that are radically different from the lives of those who are strangers to Him (Rom. 12:1-21; James 2:1-26).

With respect to the justification of the sinner, we can say that both Paul and James present this as a forensic act of God (Rom. 4:3; James 2:23). Both regard justification as an act taking place during the earthly lifetime of the sinner (Rom. 4:5; James 2:21,25). This is taken for granted as far as Paul is concerned. It should also be obvious that James refers to the justification of Abraham and Rahab during their lifetime on earth, for it was during their sojourn on earth that Abraham offered up his son, Isaac, and Rahab

shielded the spies sent out by the Israelites. Man is justified by God when he has faith, according to both Paul and James (Rom. 3:28; James 2:23). According to both, this faith which is necessary for justification is a faith that produces fruit in good works (Gal. 5:6; James 2:24).

In the writings of Paul and James that we have in the New Testament, the greatest stress is placed by Paul on the truth that the sinner is justified by faith in Christ apart from the works of the Law, and by James on the truth that justifying faith is productive of good works. As Lenski writes:

Paul lays stress on what must be removed if a man is to have and to retain this faith, James on what dare not be absent when a man has and wants to retain this faith. Paul roots out what destroys and excludes faith; James stimulates sluggish faith.<sup>39</sup>

Paul struggled against those who insisted that faith in Christ was not enough for salvation - those who insisted that a man who wanted to be saved must also be circumcised and keep the Law. James struggled against those who insisted that a mere intellectual belief in Christ which produced no fruits in the life of the believer was a saving faith. This accounts, in large measure, for the different manner in which the two men stated the same truth.

The present writer places a question mark after the following statement of Schrenk:

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<sup>39</sup>Lenski, op. cit., p. 587.

At the same time it must be granted that Paul could never have stood for the contention that Abraham was justified on the ground of the work which accompanied and authenticated his faith.<sup>40</sup>

Much depends on just what Schrenk means when he says "on the ground of the work which accompanied and authenticated his faith." If he means that the work of Abraham is substituted for that of Christ as the basis of justification, Paul, of course, could not stand for that. But neither is it at all probable that James could stand for it. If, on the other hand, Schrenk means that Paul could not stand for the statement that God justified Abraham because of the work which accompanied and authenticated his faith in the promises of God concerning the Savior who was to come, the statement can certainly be questioned. Would there be any real difference between this statement and the statement that God justifies those who believe in Christ as their Savior? Did not Paul himself write in one of his Letters: "For not the hearers of the law are righteous before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified?" (Rom. 2:13). Of course, Paul would not express himself in exactly the same terms as James, no matter how close an agreement existed between the views of the two men. But it is rash to say that Paul would not express truth in a way similar to the way it is expressed in James' Letter if he were writing to a similar group of people

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<sup>40</sup>Schrenk in Kittel, op. cit., p. 40.

and knew that there were some in the group who claimed that they had a saving faith, though this faith bore no fruit in their lives.

The best evidence that we have of the agreement in faith and teaching that existed between Paul and James is given in Acts 15 and Galatians 2. If there had been any disagreement between James and Paul about so vital a truth as the justification of the sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, it is not likely that James would have supported Paul and Barnabas in an address at the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:13-21) and joined with others in writing the letter addressed to the congregation in Antioch (Acts 15:23-29). Nor is it likely that Paul in writing about the Conference in his Letter to the Galatians could have written that "James and Cephas and John...gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship..." (Gal. 2:9). Paul had his difficulties with Judaizers, but James was not one of these Judaizers. He preached the same Gospel - the same way of salvation - as Paul preached (1 Cor. 15:11). But he preached to a different group of people in his own way and therefore he emphasized a different side of the same truth in his preaching. If James had written other letters to groups similar to the groups addressed by Paul in some of his letters, these additional letters of James might have been much more like Paul's letters than the one letter of James that we have. Indeed, James may have written such letters but because

they have not been preserved we know nothing about them. Paul may have written letters much more like the Letter of James than the Pauline Letters in the New Testament but again we know nothing about them because they have not come down to us. The Holy Spirit saw fit to have these particular Letters preserved for our teaching, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16). He in His wisdom, no doubt, saw that we need the emphases of both Paul and James as well as the emphases of all the other writers of the Old and New Testaments.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF TRUE FAITH FURNISHED BY RAHAB, 2:25,26

And in like manner was not also Rahab, the harlot, justified out of works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26) For as the body apart from spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

In language that is very similar to his statement with regard to the justification of Abraham in 2:21, James brings forward another example of a person who was justified because her faith produced the fruit of works, 2:25.

Rahab, this second example, is outwardly very different from the first example brought forward from the Scriptures. Abraham was a man; Rahab was a woman. Abraham was old - more than a hundred years of age; Rahab was apparently a young woman, with her parents, brothers, and sisters round about her, Joshua 2:12,13; 6:25. Abraham was the man chosen by God to be the father of His special covenant-people; Rahab was a Canaanite - one of the people whom God had marked for destruction because of their wickedness, Exodus 23:23; Deuteronomy 7:2; 9:5; 20:17. Abraham had lived his life in obedience to God for many years; Rahab had lived as a harlot before the Israelites took the city of Jericho.

But Rahab had been led to faith in God. She confessed that she believed that the God of Israel was "God in heaven above, and on earth beneath," Joshua 2:11. God was merciful

to her and gave her an opportunity to demonstrate her faith - to act upon it; the spies sent out by Joshua came to her house. She carefully hid them, shielded them from her own people, and sent them to a mountain to hide until their pursuers gave up the search for them, Joshua 2:1-24. Because she gave this aid and protection to the spies, Joshua and his men spared the life of Rahab and the members of her family who were with her in her house when Jericho fell into the hands of the Israelites, Joshua 6:25. Her faith in God had blossomed forth in works. As a result of these works, her physical life was spared and she was given an opportunity to live in peace in the midst of the people who, under the guidance of God and with the power which He gave, had conquered her own people and destroyed them. According to Matthew 1:5, she became the wife of a man named Salmon and gave birth to a son named Boaz, who became the great-grandfather of King David, Ruth 4:20. She became then, an ancestress of Jesus - this heathen woman who, before she was led to faith in God, had been a harlot. Her faith was a faith that produced works and through these works she was delivered from physical destruction and - almost certainly - from eternal destruction also.

And now, having presented positive evidence from the Scriptures as well as negative evidence from experience and reason, James sums it all up in a comparison: "As the body apart from spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is

dead," 2:26. The essential idea in the term "death" is separation. Spiritual death is separation from God, Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13. Eternal death is eternal separation from God, Matthew 25:41. Physical or temporal death is separation of body and soul, 1 Kings 17:21,22; Luke 23:46. And now James emphasizes the truth that faith separated from works is like the body after the spirit has departed from it. The two - faith and works - must be together if there is to be a true and vital relationship between a man and his God. Since some of the people to whom James addressed his Letter apparently were putting their trust in a faith which was not at all a true and living faith, it is the deadness of faith that James emphasizes. It is like the corpse that we see in the coffin at a funeral. If James had been writing to people who were putting their trust in works which had no connection with a living Christian faith, we can be quite certain that he would have been just as quick to emphasize that these works were like a corpse because they were separated from faith.

When we see clearly that it is the inseparableness of faith and works that James is emphasizing, then we cease to find fault, as many do, with James' comparison. According to these critics, James should have compared faith with spirit and works with the body instead of doing the opposite - faith with the body and works with the spirit. But the faith which James is criticizing is not a matter of the

heart, a dynamic, productive, living, growing force, but a "mere externality."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, James does well to compare it, not to the soul or spirit but, to a lifeless body from which the spirit has departed. Also, when we note that it is the inseparableness of faith and works that James is emphasizing we will not with Lenski,<sup>2</sup> Peile, Bassett,<sup>3</sup> and others, need to insist that *πνεύματος* must here be translated "breath." There are examples of this in the Scriptures, e.g., Psalm 146:4; Isaiah 11:4; Revelation 11:11; 13:15.<sup>4</sup> But usually the word *πνεύμα*, in the Scriptures, means "spirit;" in a few places the context forbids such a translation but that is not the case here. James' thought is this: As the body separated from the spirit is dead, so also faith separated from works is dead.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan and Company, Limited, 1897), p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), pp. 607, 608.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Mayor, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



## CHAPTER XIX

### WARNING AGAINST OVER-EAGERNESS TO TEACH, 3:1,2

Be not many (of you) teachers, my brothers, knowing that we shall receive greater judgment; 2) For in many things we all stumble. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

Many Old Testament passages deal with the tongue and its use. Since James deals mainly with the wrong use of the tongue, it may be well to glance briefly at some of the Old Testament passages on this subject. A sin of the tongue which comes up for attention again and again is the sin of deceit, lying. In Psalm 56:5, David complains that his enemies "wrest" his words. In Proverbs 6:16-19, "a lying tongue" is second in the list of seven things which God hates. God complains that His people have "spoken lies" and that "their tongue is deceitful in their mouth" (Micah 6:12). Jeremiah complains that his people "bend their tongue" as if it were a bow "for falsehood" (Jer. 9:3). A little later he speaks of the tongue as an arrow: "Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaketh deceit..." (Jer. 9:8).

A tongue may be wicked and mischievous: "An evil-doer giveth heed to wicked lips; and a liar giveth ear to a mischievous tongue" (Prov. 17:4). The tongue, also according to the Old Testament, wields great influence (cf. James 3:5). In Proverbs 18:21 we read: "Death and life are in the power

of the tongue."

The enemies of Jeremiah plotted to use their tongues in a destructive way against the prophet. They said: "Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah...Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words" (Jer. 18:18).

The wrong use of the tongue brings judgment upon those whose tongues do evil. In Proverbs 10:31 we read: "The perverse tongue shall be cut off." And God, through His prophet, says of the wicked rulers of wicked Israel: "Their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue" (Hos. 7:16).<sup>1</sup>

Turning to the New Testament, we recall the words of Jesus in Matthew 12:36,37: "I say to you, that every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account concerning it in the day of judgment; for by your words you shall be justified and by your words you shall be condemned." Not only lying and evil words, but also idle, vain, barren, empty words must be guarded against by him who would do the will of his Lord.

In 1:19, James writes: "...Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak..." He then proceeds to develop the idea of right hearing, which includes also doing the Word,

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<sup>1</sup>Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1933), I, 720-1.

in 1:19-27. This doing of the Word is intimately bound up with a person's faith, 2:1, so that if he truly believes in Christ he will not be a respecter of persons but will be a doer of the royal law, 2:1-13. But if there is to be such fruits of faith, the faith cannot be a shallow "say-so" faith, but must be a faith like that of Abraham and Rahab, 2:14-26. After warning against a barren faith in the second half of Chapter 2, James goes on in Chapter 3 to warn against careless and irresponsible speaking and thus develops at greater length the "slow-to-speak" admonition of 1:19.

"Be not many teachers," writes James. His meaning seems to be: Do not be hasty in taking upon yourself the responsibility of a teacher. In the Jewish synagogues, anyone who wished to teach had the privilege of coming forward and making his contribution to the education and edification of those who were gathered for instruction and worship (cf. Acts 13:14,15). The same was true in the Christian congregation of Corinth, 1 Corinthians 14:26-31, and, no doubt, in other early Christian congregations also. Paul found it necessary to lay down certain rules to follow in this free and informal teaching in the congregation in Corinth, 1 Corinthians 14:32-40. James may have had similar situations in mind, as well as teaching of a more private character. In the letter written at the Conference in Jerusalem, Acts 15, in which James very likely had a hand, if not the most prominent part, reference is made to certain people who had

taken upon themselves the responsibility of teaching others without authorization from the congregation in Jerusalem and had taught things which the conference could not sanction, Acts 15:1; 15:24. This is an example of what James is warning against. This took place after James wrote his Letter if, as we suggested in Chapter IV, the Epistle of James was written about the year, 47. But similar instances of over-eagerness to teach undoubtedly had come to the attention of James before he wrote the Letter that we are studying. James himself was a very conscientious teacher, we can be sure, and he felt that a heavy responsibility rested upon him. He warns others against rushing into places of great responsibility without serious consideration.

For, he continues, you know that we who are teachers must expect a heavier sentence of judgment if we are not faithful to our trust. As, in many passages in the Epistle of James, we note echoes here of Jesus' words - such words as we read in Luke 12:48b: "From every one to whom much is given shall much be required, and from him to whom they intrust much, will they ask more." Those who should be teachers have special talents for this type of work; they have had special opportunities to prepare for their responsibilities. To them much has been given; from them shall much be required. If they are not faithful in discharging the responsibilities of their position, the sentence of judgment which will fall upon them will be heavier than that falling

upon those who have not undertaken to be teachers of others. Plummer has a passage that is worth repeating in this connection. After writing about the responsibility which rests upon every one of us, he continues:

Heaviest of all will be the condemnation of those who without being called or qualified, through fanaticism, or an itch for notoriety, or a craze for controversy, or a love of fault-finding, push themselves forward to dispense instruction and censure. They are among the fools who "rush in where angels fear to tread," and thereby incur responsibilities which they need not and ought not, to have incurred, because they do not possess the qualifications for meeting them and discharging them. The argument is simple and plain: "Some of us must teach. All of us frequently fall. Teachers who fall are more severely judged than others. Therefore, do not many of you become teachers."<sup>2</sup>

James includes himself among those who receive heavier judgment. He is a teacher and if he is not faithful to his trust, he will be judged with severity just as those to whom he is writing who take upon themselves the responsibility of teaching others. He includes himself also when he goes on to write in the second verse that all stumble. There are no exceptions: "In many things we all (<sup>C/</sup> ἅπαντες ) stumble." Like Paul (Phil. 3:12), James does not claim that he has reached perfection. Far from it! With all others he stumbles in many things. He agrees perfectly with John when he writes: "If we say that we do not have sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," 1 John 1:8. We all

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1900), p. 169.

need to pray daily the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. Since we all stumble, we are in danger of causing others to stumble, especially the little ones who believe in Jesus, and that is serious indeed (Matt. 18:6,10). The danger of causing these little ones to stumble is greatest when we are teachers. Therefore, do not push rashly and carelessly into the place of teachers.

When James goes on to write in the second verse that if a person does not stumble in word he is a perfect man, able to control the entire body, we must, of course, understand this statement in the light of the truth that he has just stated: "In many things we all stumble." He does not mean that such a one has attained perfection and is without sin - has gotten beyond the stage of stumbling. He means that such a person has reached a high degree of maturity in his Christian life since he has received the grace necessary to control the member of the body which is most difficult for man to control. The control of this member is difficult even for the man who has been born again through the Word of truth (1:18), is receiving the implanted Word (1:21), and is a doer of the Word (1:22). When such a one has reached such a stage of Christian development that he is able to control his tongue - then he is what James calls a perfect (τέλειος) man. He is a mature Christian man.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE TONGUE COMPARED WITH THE BIT IN THE MOUTH OF A HORSE AND THE RUDDER OF A GREAT SHIP, 3:3-5a

For lo! we put bits into the mouths of the horses that they may obey us and we turn about their whole body.

4) Behold the ships also, though they are of great size and are driven by violent winds, are turned about by a very small rudder wherever the touch of the steersman wishes; 5) so also the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.

It would seem that the best manuscript evidence should be set aside for the reading at the opening of verse 3, and the  $\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon'$  of Nestle's text (as well as the text of Westcott and Hort) be changed to  $\iota\delta\epsilon\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ . The Mss. C and P, together with many minuscules have  $\iota\delta\epsilon$ . This reading is also supported by early Syriac versions and the Sahidic version. Codex Sinaiticus has  $\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ , and it is supported by the Syriac Peshito. The third reviser of Codex Aleph has dropped the  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$ . Minuscule 36 and a few other Mss. have  $\iota\delta\epsilon\upsilon$ . The reading  $\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon'$  is supported by the Mss. B, A, K, L, the minuscule 69, and the majority of the remaining witnesses, the Vulgate and some old Latin Mss., and the Bohairic version.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eberhard & Erwin Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece cum apparatu critico (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Wuertembergische Bibelanstalt, 1936), p. 578.

James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 229.

Mayor sees it in this way: The insertion of  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\phi$  in Codex Sinaiticus seems to show that the preceding  $\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon$  should be taken as an imperative. This view is supported by some of the oldest versions. The change of  $\iota\delta\epsilon$  to  $\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon$  is explained by itacism, the change from  $\iota$  to  $\epsilon\iota$ , especially in Codex B, in which such itacism is very common. Since  $\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon$  was read as two words, the superfluous  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\phi$  was dropped. It is plain that  $\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon$  is not suited to the text. But  $\iota\delta\epsilon\ \gamma\acute{\alpha}\phi$  gives exactly the right meaning and is in harmony with the writer's style.<sup>2</sup> Schlatter<sup>3</sup> and Ropes<sup>4</sup> read  $\iota\delta\epsilon$  without the  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\phi$  of Codex Sinaiticus.  $\iota\delta\epsilon$  is not found elsewhere in the Letter of James. But that does not rule it out as a reading here, for James uses a number of words in his Epistle only once, including some not found elsewhere in the New Testament<sup>5</sup> - for example,  $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\gamma\eta$  in 1:17.<sup>6</sup> There is a particular need of both  $\iota\delta\epsilon$  and  $\iota\delta\epsilon\iota$  in this passage. James is comparing

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Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan and Company, Limited, 1897), pp. 104, 105.

<sup>2</sup> Mayor, op. cit., pp. 104-6.

<sup>3</sup> Adolf Schlatter, Der Brief Des Jakobus (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1932), pp. 214, 215.

<sup>4</sup> Ropes, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 25. Ropes states that 73 words in James are not found elsewhere in the New Testament.

<sup>6</sup> Mayor, op. cit., p. 57.

the tongue both to the small bit in a horse's mouth which turns the whole body of the horse and to the small rudder which turns the large ship. To introduce the first, James uses  $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ ; to introduce the second, he uses the more common  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\acute{\upsilon}$ . The  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  after  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\acute{\upsilon}$  in verse 4 seems to look back to the preceding  $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ . The two occur together in Ecclesiastes 2:1 where  $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  comes first; Mark 3:32 and 34; Matthew 25:6 and 22; 26:51 and 65, in which passages  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\acute{\upsilon}$  comes first; and in John 16:29 and 32 where we find  $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  first. Paul uses  $\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\acute{\upsilon}$  in Galatians 1:20 and  $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  in Galatians 5:2.<sup>7</sup> The use of the two together is, therefore, rather common in the New Testament.

The present writer believes, with Mayor,<sup>8</sup> that  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  should be retained even though Codex Aleph is the only witness for it. If  $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  is read rather than  $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\epsilon\acute{\nu}$ , there is no word to connect verse 3 with the preceding two verses of the chapter. This is unusual in Greek. The word  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  furnishes such a connecting word and indicates a connection which makes good sense: "If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. For lo! we put bits into the mouths of the horses that they may obey us and we turn about their whole

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 104-6.

body." Secondly, Codex Sinaiticus is one of the oldest and best manuscripts that we have. The fact that the original copy of the manuscript has  $\gamma\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho$  and the third revision omits it, shows the trend. When, through itacism the  $\epsilon$  was changed to  $\epsilon\iota$ ,  $\epsilon\iota\delta\epsilon$  was read as two words and the  $\gamma\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho$  became superfluous. Therefore it was dropped. What happened in the case of Codex Sinaiticus apparently happened also to the other older manuscripts and the newer ones were copied from these "corrected" copies.<sup>9</sup>

James points to the fact that a small bit placed in the mouth of a horse turns the whole body of the horse in obedience to the driver's touch on the reins. In the second illustration he focuses attention on the small rudder of a great ship which, reacting to the touch of the steersman, turns the great ship in any direction desired by the ship's captain. James then applies the illustrations to the tongue. It too is a very small part of the body but it boasts great things. Plummer sees in this first statement of verse 5 a transition in the discussion from the great influence of the tongue to its inherent malignity: "There are great things done; that shows the tongue's power. And it boasts about them; that shows its bad character."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-6.

<sup>10</sup> Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1900), p. 173.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE TONGUE AS A FIRE, 3:5b-6

Behold, what a small fire kindles what a large forest!  
6) And the tongue is a fire. As a world of iniquity is the tongue established among our members, which defiles the whole body and sets on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by Hell.

The fact that the tongue is small, yet wields a mighty influence is emphasized also in the second part of verse 5. But now James thinks of the tongue as a fire. This is not a far-fetched thought since, as Schlatter remarks, a flame is also a tongue.<sup>1</sup> Besides, the idea was not new to a man familiar with the Old Testament, as James surely was. We read, for instance, in Proverbs 16:27: "A worthless man deviseth mischief; and in his lips there is a scorching fire." From the latter part of verse 6, we learn where this fire is kindled. The tongue is set on fire by Hell. "As  $\sigma\upsilon\gamma\alpha\rho\acute{o}s$  stands for  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}s$ , so  $\gamma\epsilon\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$  for  $\delta\iota\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron s$ ."<sup>2</sup> In 3:15, James states that the "wisdom" which produces bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in the heart, is not wisdom that is from above but it is earthly, sensual, devilish; that is, it is from below, from Hell.

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<sup>1</sup>Adolf Schlatter, Der Brief Des Jakobus (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1932), p. 217.

<sup>2</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1897), p. 114.

Therefore, when he writes here that the fire is kindled by Hell, we can be sure that he means that it is kindled by the prince of Hell, the Devil ( *δὲ αἰβόλος* ), James 4:7.

When James states that the fire which is the tongue is kindled by Hell, he means, then, that it is kindled by Satan.

The fact that the fire is kindled in Hell accounts for the use of two seemingly divergent figures in this brief passage. Both fire and iniquity are concepts suggested by the term Hell. Both are here used with reference to the tongue which is under the influence of Satan.

Since James writes that the tongue is set on fire by Hell, that is, by Satan, we should realize that he is not thinking of the tongue merely as a physical organ. The Devil was apparently one of the angels who sinned and who were cast down to Hell by God (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). He is the prince of the demons, that is, of the evil spirits (Matt. 12:24-26). He is prince of the powers of the air (Eph. 2:2). He is then an evil spirit, the prince of the evil spirits. But a spirit, whether good or bad, can have significant contact only with the spirit of man. Therefore, when James writes that the tongue of man is set on fire by the Devil, it must mean that Satan perverts the spirit of man in such a way that he uses his tongue, a physical organ, as an instrument to bring about destruction. In other words, the Devil kindles man's tongue into a raging fire through man's spirit. James is writing in a very practical way to

ordinary, practical people. He writes as if the tongue and the other members of the body are the seat of man's defilement instead of being only the instruments controlled by the defiled spirit of man which is really the seat of man's sin and defilement. But when he indicates that the fountain of defilement, the source of the destructive fire, is in Hell, he shows in a very few words that he recognizes that the seat of corruption in man is not the body but the spirit. Paul uses language similar to that of James in such passages as Romans 6:6; 8:13; 1 Corinthians 9:27; and Colossians 2:11.

The tongue is one of the members of our bodies. It has a regular, legitimate place in the body as God created it. But when the tongue has become a destructive fire, kindled by the Devil, then we have established among the other members of the body a "world of iniquity." James has, in verses 3-5a, compared the tongue to the small bit which turns the whole body of a horse and the little rudder which turns about a large ship. That is, he has pictured it as small in size but mighty in influence. In line with this idea he now refers to it as a "world" ( *κόσμος* ).<sup>3</sup> But since it has been contaminated by Satan, it is a world of iniquity, that is, an iniquitous world, a sinful world (Cf. Luke 16:8, 9, 11: *ἡ μάμμη τῆς ἀδικίας* and *ἐν τῇ*).

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<sup>3</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 615.

ἡ δὲ κόσμος ἡ μακρὴ).<sup>4</sup> It is in the sense of an iniquitous world, a world estranged from God, that James uses the word, *κόσμος*, throughout the Epistle, except in one place. In 2:5 he refers to the poor of the world who have been chosen by God to be rich in faith. Here he means either the poor people living in the world or the people who are poor in material things - the things of the world - which amounts to the same thing. In the other passages in James' Letter in which *κόσμος* occurs, it refers to the world of ungodly men, the human beings estranged from God. One of the characteristics of the person who has the pure and undefiled religion is that he keeps himself "unspotted from the world" (1:27). The friendship of the world is enmity with God and he who becomes a friend of the world "makes himself an enemy of God" (4:4). This use of the word *κόσμος* is found also in the fourth Gospel, e.g., John 15:19: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of this world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." It is common in the Epistles of Paul, Peter (2 Peter),

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<sup>4</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 109.

and John,<sup>5</sup> especially 1 John, e.g., 1 John 2:15: "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The tongue represents the world because it is the member by which we are brought into communication with other people; it is the organ of society, the chief channel of temptation from one person to another.<sup>6</sup> Having this world of iniquity established among our other members is a serious and dangerous situation. It brings defilement upon the whole body; it has a bad influence upon the whole person.

But the tongue that is set on fire by Hell and is thereby defiled by the Devil, influences not only the whole person of the individual. It affects other people too. "It sets on fire the wheel of nature." The expression,  $\tauὸν \text{ τροχόν τῆς γενέσεως}$ , is one of the most discussed phrases in James. Most commentators agree that it is better to read  $\tauὸν \text{ τροχόν}$  "wheel" than  $\tauρόχον$  "course,"<sup>7</sup> although Ropes states that in view of the derived senses of

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<sup>5</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), pp. 184-5.

George V. Wigram, The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament (London: Walton and Maberly, 1864), pp. 429-30.

<sup>6</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Mayor, op. cit., p. 112; Ropes, op. cit., p. 235; and Lenski, op. cit., p. 617.

Τροχός "wheel," the distinction is unimportant.<sup>8</sup> The caluse is evidently meant to be distinct from and stronger than that which precedes, ἡ σπικλοῦσα ὅλον τὸ σῶμα. It cannot therefore be confined to the individual.<sup>9</sup> The context of the passage also forbids us to understand that James is referring to the material world. He is writing about the tongue's power of mischief in the world of human life - in the contacts of the individual with all other individuals.

The word γένεσις is used of "birth" (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:14), "creation" (Gen. 2:4 in LXX), and, especially by Philo, of that which is seen and temporal as opposed to that which is unseen and eternal. Philo uses the word to refer to the whole life of man upon earth.<sup>10</sup> Ropes states that what is enkindled by the tongue is mankind and human society. The phrase is more inclusive, he writes, but "in such a rhetorical expression the exaggeration is pardonable."<sup>11</sup> But if we remember what Paul writes in Romans 8:19-22 about the effect of man's sin upon the creation, we will hesitate to accuse James of exaggeration.

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<sup>8</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 235.

<sup>9</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>11</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 235.

The picture that James wants to give his readers and the picture that he expects an ordinary Christian reader to receive from his words is perhaps the following: Human beings and the material things which influence them and which are affected by them are inter-related with one another as the different parts of a wheel. They are like a wheel in motion, moving onward together toward eternity, and as they thus move, the circumstances of different individuals in the "wheel" of mankind change, just as the position of different parts of the wheel is changing - now moving downward, now upward. The tongue, representing as it does, the chief means of communication between individuals, is thought of as being at the axle of the wheel where all the spokes come together. When this axle is set on fire, the fire spreads to all parts of the wheel. The fire is fanned by the turning of the wheel so that it burns furiously and spreads rapidly. Self-appointed teachers of other people who go about from community to community, pressing their teachings upon others (James 3:1,2), - if their teaching or their manner of teaching is not of God but of the Devil - fan the fire kindled by Hell so that it spreads more widely and burns more furiously.

In summarizing our discussion of James 3:5b-6, we can say: The tongue, established among other members of the body, being set on fire by Hell, defiles with destructive fire other members of the body; as the individual comes in contact with other people in the round of daily living, the

fire from Hell spreads to the whole community of human beings. As Lenski puts it:

Each of us is not a house set off by itself, so that if it were set afire, it alone would burn. James thinks of us as houses set together in a great city. A fire that is kindled in any one house will spread and become a great conflagration.<sup>12</sup>

No wonder James writes: "Behold, what a small fire kindles what a large forest!" One little tongue, set on fire by Hell, defiles the whole individual and spreads from individual to individual (from tree to tree in a forest) throughout a whole city, country, the world.

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<sup>12</sup>Lenski, op. cit., pp. 616-7.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE TONGUE IMPOSSIBLE FOR MAN TO TAME, 3:7-8

For, every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8) But the tongue no one of men is able to tame; it is an unprincipled evil, full of death-carrying poison.

James has made strong statements in verses 5b and 6. In verse 7, he goes on to justify these statements, introducing his additional evidence with the word, *ἵνα*. In doing this, he changes the figure from the fire kindled in Hell, 3:6, to that of a wild beast which no man can subdue or control. This metaphor is not entirely unprepared for in the context since he, in verse 2, has referred to the bridling (*χαλινωσάμενος*) of the whole body, and in verse 3 has referred to the bits (*χαλινάκια*) in the mouths of horses. He first writes that all kinds of animals have been subdued by man. His manner of classifying the animals and the content of his statement remind us of Genesis 9:2 where we find recorded God's words, addressed to Noah and his sons, regarding the subjection to them of all kinds of animals. James' words are, in a sense, an acknowledgment of the fulfillment of these words of God. Although man has been able to subdue all these creatures of God, no one among men has been able to subdue and tame his own tongue. James further characterizes the tongue as an

"unprincipled evil,"<sup>1</sup> full of death-carrying poison." We may well see in this latter expression a reference to the words of the serpent spoken to Eve in the Garden of Eden which led Adam and Eve into sin and brought death upon the whole human race, Genesis 3:1-5. The words of the Psalmist in 58:4 and 140:3 may also have been in the background of the writer's mind as he penned these words.

The big question that arises in connection with this passage is this: In view of what James has written in verse 2, how can he write in verse 8 that "no one of men" is able to tame the tongue? In verse 2 he writes: "If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body." Of course, he does not here state that there is any one who does not stumble in word. But the possibility of there being such a one is implied. In verse

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<sup>1</sup>Schlatter translates ἀκατάστατον κακόν "das haltlose Uebel." One of the meanings given for "haltlos" in the Oxford German Dictionary is "unprincipled" and that is the best translation into English of ἀκατάστατον as used here that the present writer can think of or find. In commenting on James' characterization of the tongue as an ἀκατάστατον κακόν, Schlatter writes: "Jakobus erinnert an die zerfahrene, unstete Art unseres Worts. Es flackert hin und her; jetzt ist es fromm, dann unfrohm, jetzt lieblich, dann giftig, jetzt freundlich, dann durchsäuert von Hass und Neid. Es will nicht gelingen, unser Wort einträchtig zu machen, so dass einzig der Geist der Wahrheit und Liebe in ihm wohnt. Geist und Fleisch bemächtigen sich seiner; was von oben und von unten stammt, gieszt sich darin aus; wir geben es Gott und dem Teufel zum Werkzeug hin. Darum ist es ein haltloses Uebel, in dem ein hässlicher Zwiespalt zutage tritt." (Adolf Schlatter, Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1921), III, 196-7.)

8, he emphatically states that no one of men is able to tame the tongue - presumably, his own tongue. In that case, it follows that there is no one who does not stumble in word. But not only does James himself imply that it is possible to avoid such stumbling, but passages in the Psalms and Proverbs also take it for granted that such a possibility is open to human beings. For instance, in Psalm 17:3, David declares: "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress." And when David undertakes to teach children the fear of the Lord, he says to them: "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile," Psalm 34:13. In Psalm 39:1, using language that reminds us a little of the language of James, David says: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me." He takes it for granted that it is possible for him to control his tongue even when a wicked person is in his presence, provoking him to speak hastily and harshly. The possibility of controlling the tongue seems to be taken for granted also in Proverbs 13:3: "He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction."<sup>2</sup>

The solution of the problem is suggested, in part, by

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<sup>2</sup>This passage and the above passages are quoted from the American Revised Version of 1901.

the emphatic position of the word, <sup>3</sup>ἀναρῶπῶν. No man, in his human strength, is able to subdue and control his tongue. Man gets off to a bad start in life; he is born sinful and his sinful nature soon begins to produce fruit in actual sins of the tongue as well as of the hand and the foot. He must be born again (1:18) before he, with the strength which God gives in answer to prayer, begins to bridle his tongue and to avoid stumbling in word (3:2). The development of his spiritual life may be slow, so that his tongue may send out much poison (3:8) into the community of human beings before he reaches such a stage of spiritual maturity that he does not often stumble in word (3:2). He cannot call back this poison; it continues to carry spiritual death to fellow-human beings long after the individual has repented of the sin of sending it forth. Therefore, it is true that no man can tame his tongue in the sense that he exercises complete control over it throughout the whole period of his life, even though he may finally reach such a point in his spiritual development that he stumbles comparatively little in word. The man who is τέλειος (3:2), whose faith in Christ (2:1) has been tested in trials so that he has developed patience (1:3) to the point of becoming a well-balanced, mature Christian (1:4), - such a one

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<sup>3</sup> ἀναρῶπῶν is given a position between δύν-  
αται and γὰρ αὐτοῖς by the Koine group of Mss. and  
some others, but all of the better Mss. agree in placing  
ἀναρῶπῶν in third place - the place of emphasis.

is able to control his tongue through the power of God received in answer to prayer (1:5). It is to this Source of strength that the Psalmist, David, points also when he, in Psalm 141:3, speaks of the control of his own tongue: "Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; Keep the door of my lips." (A. R. V., 1901.) But since no one in this life reaches the stage of perfect sanctification (Phil. 3:12; 1 John 1:8,10), no one can honestly say that he does not stumble at all in word (3:2).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Important points in this discussion of the problem, including the Scripture passages, were suggested by statements of Joseph B. Mayor in The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1897), p. 116.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE TONGUE USED BOTH TO BLESS AND TO CURSE, 3:9-12

With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who are made after the likeness of God; 10) out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not so to be. 11) Does a spring, out of the same opening, gush forth fresh and bitter water? 12) Is a fig tree, my brothers, able to yield olives or a vine figs? Neither is salt water able to yield fresh.

In verse 9, James links up with 3:1,2 after the discussion on the tongue which we find in 3:3-8. In 3:1, James cautions his readers against over-eagerness to thrust themselves forward as teachers, reminding them that teachers must expect to be judged more strictly than ordinary people. In verse 2, he makes the statement that all of us, including himself, stumble in many things. The teacher uses his tongue to communicate his teaching to his pupils; and the tongue is the most difficult of all one's members to keep in check and to use properly. If a person has reached the point of being able rightly to use his tongue, he has arrived at a high point of Christian maturity (3:2). To emphasize the difficulty of the task which a person has when he seeks to make the right use of his tongue, James launches into his discussion on the tongue found in 3:3-8. These verses should be a special warning to him who is desirous of coming forward to teach others because the tongue is the tool with which the teacher does his work. In verses 9-12, the dis-

cussion of the tongue is continued but now it is brought back again more specifically to the situation of the would-be teachers of others referred to in 3:1,2. The first person plural is again used as in the three opening verses of the chapter.

With the tongue "we bless the Lord and Father," writes James. Ropes and most other commentators see in these words a reference to the Jewish custom of adding the words "Blessed be He," whenever the name of God was mentioned. Illustrations of this practice are found in Romans 1:25; 9:5; and 2 Corinthians 11:31. Ropes also sees included in this reference other liturgical ascriptions of praise such as those found in 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3; and Psalm 145:21.<sup>1</sup> In the case of Christians, the reference certainly should not be limited to this Jewish custom nor to set liturgical forms. Since James includes himself and his readers, some of whom surely were true Christians (1:1,18,21; 2:1,5), we should understand these words to include the spontaneous, unstudied expression of praise and thanksgiving which the Christian pours out of his heart through his lips in private and family prayer (cf. e.g., 2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3).

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<sup>1</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), pp. 241-2.

But James goes on to write that with the same tongue that we use to bless God, we curse men who are made in the likeness of God. He adds earnestly that these things ought not so to be. James is here following the same line of argument that was followed by God when He said to Noah and his sons: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man," Genesis 9:6. Since man was made in the image of God, his life is sacred and his right to live must be respected by fellow-men. Another illustration of the same type of reasoning is found in Proverbs 14:31: "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker; but he that hath mercy on the needy honoreth Him." Jesus clearly indicates in the Sermon on the Mount that sins of the tongue make a person guilty of breaking the Fifth Commandment and therefore subject to the penalties pronounced upon those who break this Commandment. He says: "I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whoever shall say to his brother 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council; and whoever shall say 'You fool!' shall be in danger of the Hell of fire" (Matt. 5:22).<sup>2</sup> In the preview and the prophecy of the Last Judgment, recorded in Matthew 25, Jesus tells us

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<sup>2</sup>This passage was called to the attention of the writer by Professor Franzmann, his advisor in preparing this thesis. New Testament passages in this paragraph are translations by the writer. Old Testament passages are from the American Revised Version of 1901.

that He will say to those on His left hand: "Depart from Me...for I was hungry and you gave Me nothing to eat...Since you did not do it to one of these lowliest of folks, you did not do it to Me," Matthew 25:41-45. Earlier, He has said that He will invite those on His right hand to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. For, in that they have showed kindness to the lowliest of His brethren, they have showed kindness to Him. James is following the Lord Jesus also in this way of putting the matter both here in the third chapter and in 4:11,12. In the latter passage, James declares that he who takes it upon himself to speak against his fellow-man and pass judgment upon him, speaks against the Law and against Him who gave the Law and who is the sole Judge of those who are under the Law. The argument of John is similar in 1 John 4:20: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for, he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."<sup>3</sup>

Zahn reminds us that the continuity of thought in 3:1-18 is unbroken and that this fact determines the meaning

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<sup>3</sup>The Bible passages in the above paragraph, with the exception of the one indicated in footnote 2, were brought to the attention of the writer through references in Joseph B. Mayor's book, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1897), p. 118.

of particular sentences in it.<sup>4</sup> If this is true, we must not fail to see that there is a relationship between the teaching referred to in 3:1,2 and the blessing and cursing referred to in 3:9,10. In this teaching, whether it is public or private, the teacher speaks highly of God; he ex-tols Him to those whom he is seeking to teach. But if these raise objections to his teaching or refuse to accept it, the teacher is in danger of becoming angry and consign-ing those whom he has undertaken to teach to the depths of Hell. In this connection, we should also recall what James has written in 1:19,20: "Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God."

Schlatter sees in this passage something of a parallel to Romans 7:19 which he inverts in quoting: "Das Böse, das ich nicht will, tue ich und das Gute, das ich will, tue ich nicht."<sup>5</sup> Translating the verse from Nestle's text, we read: "For the good which I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, this I practice."<sup>6</sup> As in the Romans 7 passage,

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<sup>4</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), I, 95, Note 2.

<sup>5</sup>Adolf Schlatter, Der Brief Des Jakobus (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1932), p. 230.

<sup>6</sup>Eberhard and Erwin Nestle, Novum Testamentum Graece (Editio sexta decima; Stuttgart: Privilegierte Wuertembergische Bibelanstalt, 1936), p. 405.

there is indicated in these verses in James 3 a contradiction in the life of a Christian. We cannot dismiss the matter by saying that the cursing of men proves that the blessing of God is not sincere and that, therefore, James is writing about men who really are not Christians at all. For James includes himself as well as the true Christians among his readers in both the blessing and the cursing. He goes on to write that such cursing and blessing should not come forth from the same mouth and he shows by examples from nature that such a thing is a monstrosity: A spring does not pour forth from the same opening in the rocks both fresh and bitter water; a fig tree does not yield olives or a grapevine, figs; nor does salty water yield sweet water.

Every reader of these words of James in 3:9-12 ought to be led to serious self-examination. If he finds in his life such contradictions and monstrosities as James here points out, he must surely agree with the earnest statement of James: "My brothers, these things ought not so to be." Schlatter translates these words of James: "Es muss nicht so sein."<sup>7</sup> And he goes on to write that James does not point out how the situation can be changed; he does not show how a man who has been led to see his sin can be delivered from that sin (Rom. 7:24,25). This is, of course, true. But it is also true that our great need, when we find such

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<sup>7</sup>Schlatter, op. cit., p. 230.

contradictions in our lives, is not knowledge of how to deal with the situation. Our great need is, first of all, honesty in facing the situation. And, secondly, willingness to have the situation changed. If we have this honesty and this willingness, we will know what steps to take in order that the situation may be changed. Apparently, James felt that the same was true of the readers whom he had especially in mind when he wrote the Letter. As in the entire Epistle, his plea is for sincerity and whole-heartedness in our relationship with God.

James has not, in these verses, told the whole story of how a man may sincerely and heartily bless God and be delivered from the sin of cursing men who are made in the likeness of God. But he has called attention, in a striking way, to a serious condition which may exist in the life of an individual and has pointed out the contradiction in this situation, so that the individual reader will be driven to self-examination and will be led to seek the way out of this situation which he now sees as being not only contradictory but also desperate as far as his own eternal welfare is concerned.

## PART V

### WISDOM THAT IS FROM BENEATH AND FROM ABOVE,

#### JAMES 3:13-18

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct his works in meekness that is appropriate to wisdom.

We have taken note of the fact that James has been elaborating his threefold admission in 1:19.<sup>1</sup> In 1:21-22, he has developed the admission: "...Let every man be quick to hear." This hearing includes the receiving of the implanted word (1:21) in faith so that the hearer believes in our Lord Jesus Christ (1:22). This hearing also includes a doing of the word (1:22-27) so that the hearer lives a life that is consistent with his faith in Christ (1:21-26). In 1:28-30, James develops the second part of his threefold admission: "...Let every man be...slow to speak." The "many" are urged to refrain from becoming teachers who must use the tongue in doing their work (1:28, 30). The dangerous possibilities of the tongue are dealt with at some length (1:19-27). In the last paragraph of Chapter 3 (verses 13-18), James begins to elaborate the third part of the threefold admission of 1:19: "...Let every man be...slow to wrath." A man must be truly wise in order to carry out this admonition. Therefore, it is fitting that James brings into his

<sup>1</sup>See second paragraph of Chapter III.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### LET A MAN SHOW HIS WISDOM BY GOOD WORKS, 3:13

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct his works in meekness that is appropriate to wisdom.

We have taken note of the fact that James has been elaborating his threefold admonition in 1:19.<sup>1</sup> In 1:21-2:26, he has developed the admonition: "...Let every man be quick to hear." This hearing includes the receiving of the implanted Word (1:21) in faith so that the hearer believes in our Lord Jesus Christ (2:1). This hearing also includes a doing of the Word (1:22-27) so that the hearer lives a life that is consistent with his faith in Christ (2:1-26). In 3:1-12, James develops the second part of his threefold admonition: "...Let every man be...slow to speak." The "many" are urged to refrain from becoming teachers who must use the tongue in doing their work (3:1,2). The dangerous possibilities of the tongue are dwelt upon at some length (3:3-12). In the last paragraph of Chapter 3 (verses 13-18), James begins to elaborate the third part of the threefold admonition of 1:19: "...Let every man be...slow to wrath." A man must be truly wise in order to carry out this admonition. Therefore, it is fitting that James brings into his

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<sup>1</sup>See second paragraph of Chapter XIX.

Epistle at this point a discussion on wisdom; he writes about wisdom that comes from beneath and wisdom that comes from above.

James introduces this discussion by asking a question: *Τίς σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν*; Minuscule 436 and a few other Mss. have in place of *Τίς* . *ἐξ* *Τίς* .<sup>2</sup> The latter reading is too poorly supported to merit much consideration. It obviously represents an attempt by a few copyists to make less abrupt the transition from the discussion on the sins of the tongue to the discussion on wisdom. This abruptness, however, is characteristic of James' style, being noticeable at the beginning of almost every new paragraph, but especially at 2:1; 4:13; and 5:7. Lenski's comments on this introductory question of James are to the point:

To regard this as equivalent to an indefinite relative clause; "whoever is wise," etc., or to a conditional clause: "if one is wise," etc., is to lose the power of the question. "Who is wise," etc., asks every reader to examine himself: "Am I wise and understanding? do I lack wisdom?" At the same time the question bids the readers to examine each other and to note well those who are wise among their number, for these would be the models to follow. Moreover, the question indicates that all ought to be wise, yet that by no means all are wise as they ought to be. James has touched on wisdom in 1:5, and has shown how lack of it in understanding trials may be supplied by praying to God. Here the connection takes in the whole extent of wisdom

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<sup>2</sup> *Novum Testamentum Graece cum apparatu critica*, edited by Eberhard and Erwin Nestle (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1936), p. 579.

in regard to true Christian conduct.<sup>3</sup>

In A Theological Word Book of the Bible, E. C. Blackman writes under "Wise, Wisdom:"

A number of Heb. words here call for consideration, but the most important are two: chokmah and binah. The latter is usually translated "understanding" and is considered under that heading. The meaning of chokmah (and its adjective chakam) is wisdom, esp. in the sense of sagacity, skill in making thought issue in the appropriate action, ability; it has a practical rather than a theoretical reference and is thus different from the wisdom of the Greek philosopher.<sup>4</sup>

The Platonic Socrates says: "Whithersoever reason logos leads, thither we must go."<sup>5</sup> That would have seemed incomprehensible to the Hebrew mind, which was incapable of thinking without clear theological presuppositions. Even Philo, the most Hellenized of the Jews, set forth his wisdom in the form of Commentaries on the Mosaic Law. For the Hebrew, true wisdom was rooted in a right attitude to God (Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10; 15:33). It was considered a gift of God (1 Kings 3:5-15; Eccles. 2:26; Isa. 11:2; Dan. 1:17; Acts 7:10; Eph. 1:17; James 1:5; 3:17).

The word ἐπιστήμη is found only here in the

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<sup>3</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), pp. 624-5.

<sup>4</sup>E. C. Blackman, "Wise, Wisdom" in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, edited by Alan Richardson (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), p. 282.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

New Testament. Moulton and Milligan,<sup>6</sup> Ropes,<sup>7</sup> and others call attention to the fact that it is used in the Septuagint of Deuteronomy 1:13,15 and 4:6. Mayor<sup>8</sup> also calls attention to its use in Isaiah 5:21. In these passages it is used together with τοπος or τοποςια, except that in Isaiah 5:21 the words ος ουκ εστις are used together with εστις. Blackman states that the Hebrew word bin means discern, consider; and that the cognate nouns, binah, tebunah, can mean both the act and the faculty of understanding and also the object understood. The relevant Greek verbs are similar in meaning (νοεω as in Mark 13:14; ουκ εστις as in Mark 4:12). Faith, contact with God, is the spring of understanding as of wisdom. In Proverbs 28:5 we read: "Evil men understand not justice; but they that seek Jehovah understand all things."<sup>9</sup> God is the most important object of understanding (Isa. 43:10; Jer. 9:24); however, in a more intellectual sense, God is beyond man's understanding (Isa. 40:28; Rom. 11:33-36). The verbs

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<sup>6</sup>James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 246.

<sup>7</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 244.

<sup>8</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan and Company, Limited, 1897), p. 121.

<sup>9</sup>American Revised Version of 1901.

"understand" and "know" are often used together, especially in the Old Testament, and their meaning often is synonymous.<sup>10</sup>

In answering the question: τίς σοφός καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν, James singles out for special attention not wisdom but the meekness that is appropriate to wisdom.<sup>11</sup> James does not write δεῖξάτω τὴν σοφίαν but δεῖξάτω ... τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἐν πραύτητι σοφίας. In 2:18, James writes: δεῖξτε ἐκ τῶν ἔργων μου τὴν πίστιν. Here, he goes a step further and emphasizes the truth that it is works done in meekness that show that there is faith in Christ and true wisdom in the heart of the person who does these works in meekness. He who receives in meekness (1:21) the implanted Word will bring forth in meekness the fruit of such a reception of the Word; he will do good works in meekness and will thereby show that he is truly wise. A person who is meek in his relations with God and fellow-men will be "slow to wrath" (1:19). He will not quickly lose patience with those who refuse to accept truth as he sees it and turn away from them in anger. Rather, he will be driven to self-examination, seeking to find in his own weaknesses and shortcomings the reason for failure to lead others on the right

<sup>10</sup>E. C. Blackman, "Understand" in A Theological Word Book of the Bible, p. 273.

<sup>11</sup>Ropes, op. cit., pp. 242-5.

way. He will pray God to over-rule the harm that might be done by his incompetence and to rescue lost souls in spite of the bunglings of His servant. The meek will inherit the earth, says Jesus (Matt. 5:15). In their meekness, they will accept the gracious gifts of God unto their own salvation. In their meekness, they will serve humbly in the Kingdom of their Father - humbly, and therefore to the glory of God and the salvation and edification of souls. He who resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (4:6), will on the last great day of reckoning say to the blessed meek: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over few things; I will place you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matt. 25:21).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>The writer's translation from the Greek.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FRUITS BORNE BY DEMONIAL WISDOM, 3:14-16

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not glory and lie against the truth. 15) This wisdom is not the (wisdom) that comes down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16) For where there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there is confusion and every evil deed.

It is well for us to remember, as Zahn emphasizes,<sup>1</sup> that there is continuity of thought throughout Chapter 3 of James' Letter. We should recall at this point especially 3:1: "Be not many (of you) teachers, my brothers..." The matter under discussion in 3:13-18 is not the behavior of Christians toward one another, as it is from 4:1 on, but rather the attitude of one who desires to teach another the truths of Christianity and to lead him into the fold with other Christians. If he seeks to do this, not with the meekness that is a fruit of true wisdom, but with bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in his heart, then his efforts will not be crowned with blessed results. Such a one is surely among the "many" whom James admonishes to refrain from stepping forward as teachers.

For they who, with bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in their hearts speak highly and exaltingly of the Gospel,

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<sup>1</sup>Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), I, 95, Note 2.

work against the Gospel. They carry out in reverse the principle stated by Jesus in Matthew 5:16. He says to His disciples: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in the heavens." Those who harbor bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in their hearts and who undertake to teach others, reveal the blackness of their own souls to those whom they seek to teach. Instead of being drawn to the Father in heaven, these pupils of the would-be teachers are driven farther away from Him. They argue that if Christianity makes people like these self-appointed teachers, they are better off without it; they are confirmed in the resolve that they want nothing to do with it. The result is, therefore, that though these people think that they are glorying in the Gospel truth, they are, in fact, glorying against it.

James goes on to put the case in an even more serious light. These self-appointed teachers of others lie against the truth. The Savior said to His disciples: "...You shall be My witnesses..." (Acts 1:8). But they who do not have the meekness that is the fruit of true wisdom do not know Christ; they cannot be witnesses of Him. When they undertake to speak of Him, they inevitably say that which is not true. Therefore, they not only put the truth in the wrong light but they actually contradict the truth.

Ropes writes that *κατακαυχᾶσθαι* "seems here to relate to the browbeating on the part of the Wise Man who

haughtily forces his own views on others."<sup>2</sup> He does not state why he thinks that this verb "seems" to have this meaning. James would not sanction the practice of brow-beating under any circumstances. He is here referring to those who lack the meekness which is the fruit of true wisdom - to those who, instead of being meek, have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in their hearts. To them he says: "Do not glory against the truth." Do not step forward in the role of teachers and speak highly of the Truth. You will be doing injury to the Truth by so doing. Ropes finds fault with connecting  $\mu\eta\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon$  directly with  $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ , as Winer,<sup>3</sup> Huther,<sup>4</sup> and others do, on the ground that "the idea of 'boasting over (or against) the truth' is out of place in the context, and is itself unnatural."<sup>5</sup> But such an objection deals arbitrarily with the Greek text. Both  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\alpha\sigma\theta\epsilon$  and  $\psi\epsilon\upsilon\delta\epsilon\sigma\theta\epsilon$  are finite verbs connected

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<sup>2</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James," The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 246.

<sup>3</sup>George Benedict Winer, A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament, Seventh Edition edited by Gottlieb Luenemann, English translation edited by J. Henry Thayer (Andover, Mass.: Warren F. Draper, 1869), p. 470, Note 3.

<sup>4</sup>Joh. Ed. Huther, "Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), p. 121.

<sup>5</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 246.

by καί . μή before the first verb is not repeated and is apparently meant to modify both verbs. If the phrase, κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας, is not meant to go with both verbs, there is nothing to indicate it. In the absence of such an indication, we should take the phrase with both verbs unless the context absolutely forbids it. That is not the case here. As Winer writes, James, to explain κατὰ-καυχᾶσθε, "thrusts in forthwith a stronger expression."<sup>6</sup>

Mayor states that ψεύδεσθε κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας "is no doubt pleonastic: it would have been enough to say 'your boast of wisdom is at variance with the truth'..."<sup>7</sup> He believes that κατὰκαυχᾶσθε must be taken absolutely and not with κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας. Mayor's separation of κατὰκαυχᾶσθε from κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας seems arbitrary; and as we have sought to indicate above (pp. 210, 211), the use of the two verbs is not mere redundancy.

Lenski writes that in Kittel's Theologisches Woerterbuch ἀληθείας in this verse is taken to mean Rechtschaffenheit, uprightness, honesty. Lenski properly asks the question: "Why then have we 'the truth' with the

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<sup>6</sup>Winer, op. cit., p. 470, Note 3.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. 123.

article?" And he states that "the lack of uprightness is contained in the verb 'be not lying.'"<sup>8</sup> With Lenski, we take *Τῆς ἀληθείας* to refer to Gospel truth - the Good News of Jesus Christ. Those who speak highly of this truth without proper meekness, but with bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in their hearts, glory against the Gospel and speak falsely about it. James does not want such teachers to work in Christian congregations or as representatives of such congregations.

The bitter and selfish manner of speaking which these teachers employ will antagonize those whom they seek to teach. Both teachers and pupils will become angry, and the "wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God" (1:20). The efforts of these teachers will not result in the turning of souls to faith in Christ and to a life of obedience to Him as Lord and Master. As Zahn states, "The *πρᾶξις*, which is the proper disposition for the reception of the word, is the very attribute which is indispensable in the teacher also."<sup>9</sup> The following passages support the above statement of Zahn: Matthew 11:29; 2 Timothy 2:24,25; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 6:1; 1 Peter 3:15; and Titus 3:2.

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<sup>8</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 627.

<sup>9</sup>Zahn, op. cit., pp. 95, 96, Note 2.

The "wisdom" which bears the fruit of bitter jealousy and selfish ambition is not the wisdom that comes down from above, writes James. He uses three adjectives to characterize this wisdom and to designate its source - earthly, sensual, and devilish or demon-like.

<sup>2</sup>ἐπιγῆστος, "earthly." The word is used by Paul in Philippians 3:19 when he refers to people "whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly and whose glory is in their shame, who seek for earthly (<sup>2</sup>ἐπιγῆστα) things." It is used by him in Philippians 2:10 to refer simply to things on earth, together with things in heaven and things under the earth - all will bow in the name of Jesus. In 2 Corinthians 5:1, Paul calls the human body the earthly (<sup>2</sup>ἐπιγῆστος) house of our tent. In 1 Corinthians 15:40, Paul uses the word twice to refer to earthly bodies as contrasted with heavenly bodies. John uses the words τὰ <sup>2</sup>ἐπιγῆστα to record Jesus' words to Nicodemus in 3:12: "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" These are the only passages in the New Testament, besides James 3:15, in which the word occurs,<sup>10</sup> although the idea that <sup>2</sup>ἐπιγῆστος conveys is present also in such passages as Colossians 3:2; 1 Corinthians 15:47; John 3:31;

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<sup>10</sup>George V. Wigram, The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament (Fourth Edition; London: Walton and Maberly, 1864), p. 282.

and 8:23.<sup>11</sup> Ropes is probably right when he states that  
 ὅτι ἐκ τούτου "seems to mean here 'derived from the frail  
 and finite world of human life and affairs.'<sup>12</sup>

ψυχικῇ, "natural," pertaining to the natural  
 life ( ψυχῇ ) which men and animals alike have.<sup>13</sup> In  
 1 Corinthians 15:44 Paul refers to the body that a person  
 has who is in this life as a "natural" ( ψυχικόν )  
 body. In the Resurrection, it will be raised a spiritual  
 ( πνευματικόν ) body. In Jude 19, we read of some  
 people who are described in three ways: 1. They make sepa-  
 rations or cause trouble between people; 2. they are sensual  
 ( ψυχικοί ); and 3. they do not have the Spirit. The  
 adjective is definitely in bad company in this verse. In  
 1 Corinthians 2:14 Paul writes: "The natural ( ψυχικός )  
 man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for  
 they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know them  
 because they are spiritually judged." This "natural" man  
 is one who does not have the Spirit (Jude 19); therefore he  
 is unable to grasp or to appreciate the things of God. He  
 is bound to the things of the senses; he is sensual. He  
 lacks all appreciation of the things of the Spirit.

ὁμοειδής, "resembling," or "pertaining

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<sup>11</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 247.

to" ("proceeding from") an evil spirit.<sup>14</sup> The word is not used elsewhere in the New Testament.<sup>15</sup> However, James has referred to demons ( *δαιμόνια* ) in 2:19 and this word is common in the New Testament, especially in the Gospels. The relation of the three adjectives to one another is stated by Ropes as follows:

These three words, "earthly, sensual, devilish," describe the so-called wisdom which is not of divine origin, in an advancing series - as pertaining to the earth, not to the world above; to mere nature, not to the Spirit; and to the hostile spirits of evil instead of to God.<sup>16</sup>

Proof of the statement in verse 15 concerning the nature and origin of the wisdom which produces the fruit of jealousy and selfish ambition is offered in verse 16: "For ( *γὰρ* ) where there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there is confusion and every evil deed." Where jealousy and selfish ambition are permitted a free rein, there confusion ( *ἁκαταστασία* ) develops, writes James (3:16); and God is not (a God) of confusion ( *ἁκαταστασίας* ) but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33). Therefore, it is clear that the wisdom which produces such fruit is not from God but is from natural man and so ultimately from the evil one who is the source also of every evil ( *ποῦλον* ) deed. Other passages in which the word *ἁκαταστασία* is used are the

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>15</sup> Wigram, op. cit., p. 131.

<sup>16</sup> Ropes, op. cit., p. 248.

following: Luke 21:9, where the words of Jesus concerning the last days are recorded: When you shall hear of wars and tumults (ἀκαταστασίας), be not terrified; 2 Corinthians 6:5, where Paul writes that he and his co-laborers commended themselves as ministers of Christ...in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults (ἀκαταστασίας) ...; and 2 Corinthians 12:20, where Paul expresses the fear that he might find among the Corinthians such evils as strife, jealousy, wraths, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults (ἀκαταστασίας).<sup>17</sup> James has used the adjective, ἀκατάστατος, in 1:8 and 3:8; now he uses the noun, ἀκαταστασία, together with πᾶν φανερὸν πρᾶγμα to describe the fruit borne by the wisdom that has its origin in Hell (3:6).

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<sup>17</sup>Wigram, op. cit., p. 21.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### CHARACTERIZATION OF TRUE WISDOM, 3:17,18

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without vacillation, without hypocrisy. 18) And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

After indicating the fruits borne by wisdom that is "earthly, sensual, devilish," James proceeds to characterize the true wisdom that man may have as a gift from God (1:5), and to indicate some of the fruits borne by this wisdom that is from above. A fundamental characteristic of this wisdom is mentioned, first of all: It is pure ( *ἀγνῆ* ). This word is used eight times in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> Its use in these passages is grouped under three headings in Kittel's Wörterbuch:

1. Perfect moral cleanness and purity: 1 John 3:3; 1 Timothy 5:22; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:2; James 3:17; Philip-  
pians 4:8.
2. Innocence with regard to some matter: 2 Corinthians  
7:11.
3. In the narrower meaning of morality as a synonym for

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<sup>1</sup>George V. Wigram, The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament (London: Walton and Maberly, 1864), p. 9.

chaste: 2 Corinthians 11:2.<sup>2</sup>

This wisdom from above, since it comes from God, is "pure" in the first sense: it is undefiled, free from any such faults as the bitter jealousy and selfish ambition mentioned in verse 14.

ἑπτὰ introduces the following adjectives which form a group separate from ἀγνή, the quality from which they all proceed.<sup>3</sup> These adjectives may be divided into three groups:

1. ἐὶς φηρικὴ, ἐπιτελική, εὐπειθή:

These three indicate most pointedly the contrasts to ἡλιοντικόν and ἐπιθειάαν (3:14) - the fruits of the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, devilish (3:15).

2. μετῆ ἐλέους καὶ κατεπὶ ἀγαθῶν:

These indicate that this wisdom is rich in active love. Compassion is the most direct proof of love; hence is particularly mentioned. Examples of the mercy and good fruits here mentioned are given in 1:27; their absence is shown in 2:15.

3. ἀδιάκριτος, ἀνοπόκριτος : These

<sup>2</sup>Friedrich Hauck, in Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), I, 123.

<sup>3</sup>James Hardy Ropes, "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James" The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 249.

last two are united by similarity of sound as well as sense. They express the contrast to everything of an uncertain and hypocritical nature.<sup>4</sup> Ropes says of James' selection of these adjectives:

These characteristics of true wisdom are selected in pointed opposition to the self-assertive, quarrelsome spirit characteristic of the other sort.<sup>5</sup>

Preisler in Kittel's Wörterbuch, in a study on  $\epsilon\pi\iota\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\alpha$  and  $\epsilon\pi\iota\epsilon\iota\kappa\eta\varsigma$ , makes the following statement: "Jk 3,17 wird die Weisheit als himmlisches Wesen mit allerlei Herrschertugenden geschildert."<sup>6</sup> In a footnote he makes the statement: "Ueberhaupt ist  $\eta\ \delta\epsilon\ \alpha\upsilon\omega\theta\epsilon\upsilon\ \rho\omicron\phi\iota\alpha$  hier christologische Aussage, und alle genannten Praedikate gehen auf Christus in Anlehnung an die Evangelien."<sup>7</sup>

In verse 18, James goes back to the first adjective in verse 17 which follows  $\epsilon\pi\iota\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\alpha$ , that is,  $\epsilon\pi\iota\eta\nu\iota\kappa\eta$ . This adjective indicates most directly the great difference

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<sup>4</sup>Joh. Ed. Huther, "Critical and Exegetical Handbook to The General Epistles of James, Peter, James, John, and Jude," Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887), p. 122.

<sup>5</sup>Ropes, op. cit., p. 250.

<sup>6</sup>Herbert Preisler, in Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 586.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 586, Note 4.

between the fruit of the wisdom which is earthly, sensual, devilish, and the fruit of the wisdom which is from above. The fruit of devilish wisdom is bitter jealousy, selfish ambition, confusion, and every evil deed (3:14,16). The fruit of divine wisdom is peace (3:17,18). The writer of our Epistle has said that the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God (1:20). In other words, men who become angry do not promote the coming of God's Kingdom among men. This is true in a special degree when men who are seeking to teach others the truth of God become angry. The coming of God's Kingdom among men is promoted when men sow the Word of God with a peaceable, kindly spirit. That is the gist of the meaning of this last verse of Chapter 3.

The wording of the verse makes it a bit difficult to get at the exact thought of the verse, although the drift of the meaning is apparent at a glance. The translators of the Revised Standard Version of 1946 have rendered *καὶ πρὸς* in verse 18, "harvest:" "The harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." If this is a legitimate translation - and the present writer believes that it is - the meaning of the verse is simplified and indicated more clearly than if *καὶ πρὸς* is translated "fruit." Those who live, work, and sow the seed of the Word in a spirit of peace, prepare for a harvest of righteousness. Through their life, work, and testimony, the Holy Spirit will lead others to faith in Christ and to a life of obedience to

His will. The lives of those who sowed the Word and the lives of those who received the Word will become more and more sanctified and characterized by righteousness. This is the sort of harvest that James desires to prepare for; it is the sort of harvest that every Christian desires to prepare for. Zahn writes that the conversion of a sinner - bringing about God's righteousness - can be brought about by sowing the Word in a peaceful spirit; the growth and ripening of the seed must be awaited in patience.<sup>8</sup> Mayor writes that "a harvest of righteousness" is the issue of the quiet and gentle ministrations of those who aim at reconciling quarrels and at being themselves in peace with all men.<sup>9</sup> This is the opposite of that to which James refers in 1:20: "The wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God." But when men at peace with God work in a peaceful spirit among men, the results are different.

There is difference of opinion as to what sort of genitive we have in *δικαιοσύνης*. Huther calls it a genitive of apposition.<sup>10</sup> Lenski prefers to regard it as a

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<sup>8</sup>Theodor Zahn, The Interpretation of the New Testament, translated from the Third German Edition (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), p. 96, Note 2 continued from p. 95.

<sup>9</sup>Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James (London: MacMillan & Co., Limited, 1897), p. 128.

<sup>10</sup>Huther, op. cit., p. 123.

genitive of origin.<sup>11</sup> Mayor refers to it as a genitive of definition and calls attention to 1:12 where we find τὸν ὀρέξαντον τῆς ψυχῆς.<sup>12</sup> The present writer favors Mayor's position. The kind and nature of the fruit or harvest (καρπὸς) is made clear by δικαιοσύνης. James is writing about a harvest which certain people have the privilege of gathering in. These people are at peace with God, having the wisdom that is from above which is peaceable (εἰρηνικῇ, 3:17). They are engaged in making peace (ποιοῦσιν εἰρηνικῇ, 3:18). This peacemaking is both vertical and horizontal; that is, the peacemakers make peace between God and man; and between man and man. If they succeed in leading souls to Christ, those souls have peace with God; at the same time these souls who have found peace with God, seek to live peaceably with all men (Rom. 12:18). If the peacemakers succeed in making peace between man and man, they have given testimony for their Heavenly Father while bringing about this result so that the parties are led to glorify God (Matt. 5:16). The result of their efforts is that more men live lives that are pleasing to God. This is the harvest. It is not a harvest of wheat but a harvest of righteousness: Souls are led to

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<sup>11</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938), p. 630.

<sup>12</sup>Mayor, op. cit., p. 128.

Christ; they seek grace to live lives that will glorify Him.

Plummer has some remarks in connection with this passage that will bear repeating. In referring to the sowing and preparing for the harvest of righteousness, he writes: "The whole process begins, progresses, and ends in peace."<sup>13</sup>

As he looks back upon the passage, 3:17,18, he writes:

It is evident that the heavenly wisdom is pre-eminently a practical wisdom. It is not purely or mainly intellectual; it is not speculative; it is not lost in contemplation. Its object is to increase holiness rather than knowledge, and happiness rather than information. Its atmosphere is not controversy and debate, but gentleness and peace. It is full, not of sublime theories or daring hypotheses, but of mercy and good fruits. It can be confident without wrangling, and reserved without hypocrisy. It is the twin sister of that heavenly love which "envieth not, vaunteth not itself, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1900), p. 213.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### CONCLUSION

With the close of the discussion on the wisdom that is from above, we draw this dissertation to a close. Of course, much more could be written even on the portions of the Epistle to which we have given most attention. But perhaps enough has been written to point up a few of the problems that are much discussed in connection with the Epistle of James. The writer hopes that he has made some small contribution toward the solution of these problems in a way that is satisfactory to the conservative, Bible-loving Christian.

The writer trusts that he has shown that there is good reason to believe that:

1. The Letter was written by James, the brother of the Lord, who was a son of Joseph and Mary, born later than our Lord Jesus.

2. It was written early - about 47 A.D. - while the Christian Church consisted almost entirely of Jewish believers in Christ.

3. Consequently, the Letter of James is in no sense an attempt to contradict Paul's teaching of justification by faith alone, but an earnest attempt to admonish church members to be sincere and whole-hearted Christians and to warn

them against the pitfalls which beset their path on every side.

The writer believes that if we take at their face value the brief intimations that James has scattered throughout his Epistle, we will see that James teaches that:

1. God is One in a Trinity of Persons.
2. Christ is the center of a Christian's faith; His Word is divinely authoritative; faith in Him rules out of the believer's life things which are inconsistent with His words and works.
3. All men are sinful, having the roots of wickedness in their own hearts - the source of this wickedness being Hell itself.
4. God, by His own will and through His own Word, brings about the rebirth of sinful men, making them a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.
5. Christians can be patient in the midst of their trials, remembering that their Lord is coming again - this time as a Judge. Those whom He approves will receive the crown of life.

The writer has endeavored to point out that James does not teach salvation by faith and works, but salvation by faith which is living so that it bears fruit in works. He has rejected as arbitrary and without foundation in the Epistles of Paul and James the various explanations of the differences in the use of the word "justify" by the two

writers. The difference in their language is explained by the difference in the errors which they found it necessary to combat, and this is indicated by the context of the passages in question.

The present writer has sought to promote a clearer understanding and a deeper appreciation of the remarkable passage on the tongue in the third chapter of James - a passage which deserves to be read, re-read, and meditated upon much, especially by those who are teachers in the Church and by those who aspire to become such teachers.

This dissertation has attempted to underscore, not only the fact that James has in 3:13-18 a classic passage on the fruits of true wisdom, contrasted by the fruits borne by the wisdom which is from beneath, but also the call to self-examination on the part of those who are engaged actively in the work of the Church to determine honestly before God whether or not they are living and working with that humble spirit which promotes true peace between God and man, on the one hand, and man and his fellows, on the other.

Finally, a word with reference to the title of this thesis: "Doctrinal Peculiarities of the Epistle of St. James." In a sense, the dissertation has refuted its own title. There are no "doctrinal" peculiarities in the Epistle in the sense that James here teaches doctrine that is at variance with the remainder of the New Testament, particularly with doctrine as taught by St. Paul. However, James

teaches this doctrine in a way that is peculiarly his own, even though he echoes the words of our Lord many, many times. He uses striking illustrations to underscore the truth that he is seeking to drive home. He makes every word count and uses no more words than are absolutely necessary to establish the point that he is making. He writes as a practical Christian man to those who will listen or read with a sincere desire to do that which is befitting Christians when they are awakened to the realization that they are going astray from the Lord's way either by omission or by commission. There are peculiarities in the Epistle of St. James, but the present writer maintains that these are not doctrinal peculiarities. They are peculiarities of style, expression, diction, imagery, emphasis, etc. They are peculiarities that are due in part to the conditions which prevailed in the Christian Church in the time that James wrote - conditions which were different from those which prevailed in the largely Gentile Christian congregations which sprang rapidly into being very shortly after the writing of this Epistle. The message of the Letter of James was a message which the Church of that day needed. It is a message which the Church of today needs also.

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