

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



*Buy me a coffee*

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

F. F. Bruce

Oct. 1946

H

Neo

# THE THOUGHT OF ST. JAMES

by  
ARTHUR TEMPLE CADOUX,  
B.A. CAPE, D.D. LONDON

JAMES CLARKE & CO., LTD.  
5, WARDROBE PLACE, CARTER LANE,  
LONDON, E.C.4

*First published, 1944*

*By the same author:*

ESSAYS IN CHRISTIAN THINKING  
JESUS AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT  
THE GOSPEL THAT JESUS PREACHED AND THE GOSPEL FOR TO-DAY  
MORALS FOR MINISTERS  
THE PARABLES OF JESUS, THEIR ART AND USE  
THE SOURCES OF THE SECOND GOSPEL  
A NEW ORTHODOXY OF JESUS AND PERSONALITY  
SHAKESPEAREAN SELVES  
THE THEOLOGY OF JESUS

THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COMPLETE  
CONFORMITY WITH THE AUTHORISED  
ECONOMY STANDARDS

*Made and printed in Great Britain by  
The Camelot Press Ltd., London and Southampton*

## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. ORDER AND UNITY . . . . .	5
II. TO WHOM? . . . . .	10
III. JAMES I. 18 AND 21 . . . . .	19
IV. THE OCCASION . . . . .	25
V. PLACE OF ORIGIN . . . . .	30
VI. THE AUTHOR . . . . .	32
VII. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER . . . . .	39
VIII. METHOD . . . . .	44
IX. WEALTH AND THE TONGUE . . . . .	48
(1) Wealth . . . . .	48
(2) The Tongue . . . . .	49
X. HUMAN PERSONALITY . . . . .	54
XI. GOD, MAN AND THE DEVIL . . . . .	63
XII. WISDOM . . . . .	68
XIII. THE LAW . . . . .	72
(1) Mosaic Law . . . . .	72
(2) The Inborn Word . . . . .	74
(3) The Law of Liberty . . . . .	76
XIV. ST. PAUL AND THE LAW . . . . .	81
XV. THEOLOGY . . . . .	85
(1) The Kingdom . . . . .	85
(2) The Holy Spirit . . . . .	86
(3) The Resurrection . . . . .	87
(4) Christology . . . . .	88
(5) Atonement . . . . .	93
(6) Conclusion . . . . .	99
INDEX OF PASSAGES . . . . .	103

## CHAPTER I

### ORDER AND UNITY

**T**HE Epistle of St. James is theologically notorious for having no mention of incarnation, atonement or future life, doctrines of which the other Epistles of the New Testament are full. It has no mention of the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus, tidings of which the other Epistles are full; but it has many more reminiscences of His teaching—more, it is said, than all the other Epistles together. It is generally conceded that the James named as the writer can be none other than James “the Lord’s brother,” the home-fellow of all His years but the last, and then, before long, head of the Church at Jerusalem until martyrdom in A.D. 62. Many, however, hold the Epistle to be pseudonymous; others see in it the earliest writing of the New Testament.

The first step to measuring the import and validity of the letter is to ask whether it is all by one author. Here we find consistency of style throughout. It is terse, compressed, thought-provoking, full of assonance and parallelisms, full of questions. The most important word of one sentence is often repeated in the next or reflected there by an allied word. There are no forensic or sporting figures as in St. Paul’s writings: the figures are vital, farming, seafaring.

A feature of the letter is the way in which a paragraph proceeds upon the reply of the reader to the last paragraph, a reply sometimes expressed, as in “Let no man say . . .” “Yea, a man will say. . . .” More often it is unexpressed, and is then apt to give an impression of disjointedness. This appears notably in Chapter IV:

**JAMES:** Whence come wars and fightings among you?

**READERS:** We don’t fight: we make friends with the world.

**JAMES:** The friendship of the world is enmity with God.

**READERS:** Of course it is—these ungodly time-servers.

**JAMES:** Who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?

**READERS:** We neither quarrel with each other, nor make

friends with the world, nor judge our neighbours: we make money out of the world.

**JAMES:** And make a drifting vapour of your lives.

Minor points of connectedness are the so-called "capping dicta," as about the doubleminded man, pure religion, the glorying of mercy over judgment, the fruit of righteousness, the sin of godd undone—terse utterances summarising the preceding section and giving a clue to it.

Even a casual perusal notices certain constant interests. More than any other Book of the Bible, it reiterates the danger of wrong use of speech, but the evil is treated from an unusual point of view, that of the effect, not on the hearer, but on the speaker. Another pervading interest is the danger of acquisitiveness, and the painful contrast of rich and poor.

More than any other New Testament writer, the author of this letter thinks of religion in the terms of personality, with a consistent recognition of personality as a unity. There is also an absence of predeterminism and frequent implication of moral freedom. To these we must add, as one of the most prominent features, the already noted, frequent reminiscence of the teaching of Jesus, but not in exact citation.

A strong argument that we have here the work of one mind is the noted absence of all usual reference to incarnation, atonement, the future life, and the death and resurrection of Jesus: for had additions or interpolations been made after the letter had left the hands of the author, they would almost certainly have been in supply of these lacks. That the letter persisted with these lacks unremedied suggests that from the first it was taken as authoritative.

The structure of the Epistle also gives evidence that it is the work of one mind. It is strange that so many writers have found it formless, for it is probably the most completely patterned Book in the Bible. It has four divisions, each containing four subdivisions. The first two divisions are analogous in order and contents, each consisting of first an exposition, then a warning against mistake, then a practical caution as to man's inward life, and another as to his Godward life. The last two divisions of the Book contain each four paragraphs

(so marked in R.V.), the first four being condemnations and the second four exhortations. Thus:

(A) I. 2-12. On temptations.

(B) 13-18. Warning against mistake about temptations.

(C) 19-25. Caution as to reception of inward truth, beginning with danger of much talk.

(D) 26, 27. Caution as to Godward life, beginning with danger of much talk.

(A) II. 1-13. The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and its effect on conduct: the law of liberty, and mercy.

(B) 14-26. Warning as to mistake about faith.

(C) III. 1-12. Caution against talk as destructive of inward and social life.

(D) 13-18. Caution to teachers as to arrogance, incompatible with "wisdom from above."

(E) IV. 1-V. 6. Four paragraphs of condemnation, culminating in "Ye have killed the righteous one."

(F) V. 7-20. Four paragraphs of exhortation, culminating in "shall save a soul from death."

The last two condemnations both begin "Go to now": the last ends, "Ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you," which finds its point in comparison with IV. 1, 2, where rivals in lust for pleasure fight and kill one another. The contrast goes with the severity of condemnation in V. 1-6, where there is no summoning to repent, but only threat of calamity: these men are the merciless to whom "judgment is without mercy," as we have it in the culmination of the second exposition. This culmination, by its position the most stressed point in the Book, completes itself in "mercy glorieth against judgment," with an instance of which the four exhortations and the whole book significantly end: "he shall save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

Each major division ends with matter that becomes the starting point of the next. The first ends with our approach

to God and its relation to conduct (I. 26, 27), the second (II. 1 ff.) begins with God's approach to us in Jesus and its effect on conduct: the second major division ends with theological quarrels (III. 13-18), the third begins with other quarrels (IV. 1 f.). The third division ends with eschatological threatenings (V. 1-6), the fourth begins with eschatological encouragement (V. 7 f.).

The only queries that can be made against the completeness of this order concern the first division. It is sometimes stated that I. 5-8 and I. 9-11 have no connection with their context. But both are connected with it by "but" ( $\delta\epsilon$ ), and both concern major interests of the letter. I. 4 sets the goal of complete perfection of personality, and 5-8 deals with the way to wisdom, the most important factor in achieving inward wholeness. I. 9-11 concerns poverty and wealth, most important occasions of the temptations with which the letter is now dealing; and it is a striking characteristic of the letter to illustrate the matter in hand by concrete instances of poverty and wealth, as here and with the gold-ringed man, and later with the brother or sister lacking necessities, and the labourers defrauded of their hire by the luxurious.

Discontinuity is sometimes urged against I. 14 f. on the ground that temptation here is not the same as in I. 2; but "manifold" (I. 2) means "various," and "I am tempted of God" (I. 13) would refer to all sorts of temptation, nor must we allow the figure used in I. 15 to circumscribe its reference: all temptation involves desire of some sort.

#### *Footnote to Chapter I*

The following commentaries and other books have been found useful, and the author acknowledges his indebtedness to them. References will be under the respective writer's name, and, unless the page is given, the reference, if not of a general nature, may be taken to be to the passage concerned, in that writer's commentary.

Dibelius, M. "Der Brief des Jakobus," in *Meyer's Kommentar über das N.T.* (7th Edition).

Grafe, Ed. *Die Stellung und Bedeutung des Jakobusbriefes.*

Hort, F. J. A. *The Epistle of St. James.*

- Knowling, G. J. *The Epistle of St. James.*
- Mayor, J. B. *The Epistle of St. James.*
- Moffatt, Jas. *James*, in the "Moffatt New Testament Commentary."
- Moulton, J. H. "James," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible.*
- Oesterley, W. E. "The General Epistle of James," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament.*
- Parry, R. St. J. *A Discussion of the General Epistle of St. James.*
- Plummer, A. "The Epistle of St. James," in *The Expositor's Bible.*
- Rendall, G. H. *The Epistle of St. James and Judaic Christianity.*
- Ropes, J. H. "The Epistle of St. James," in *The International Critical Commentary.*
- Weiss, D. B. *Der Jakobusbrief und die neuere Kritik.*
- Windisch, H. "Der Jakobusbrief," in *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament.*

## CHAPTER II

### TO WHOM?

**T**o whom was this letter written?

There is not a phrase in the whole letter that needs or suggests the explanation that it was written to any but Jews, and those who maintain that it was written to Gentile Christians mostly refer to one statement only, the address, which declares that it was written "to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion." They maintain this to be a symbolic expression for the Christian Church as inheriting the privileges of Israel.

It is true that the Church soon came to reckon itself as the true Israel, but in the cases usually adduced on the point in question we find that the context makes it clear whether the terms are used literally or symbolically. The address of 1 Peter "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion . . . unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" makes clear that he writes to Christians. Gal. VI. 16 names two classes, "as many as walk by this rule" and "the Israel of God," the former being apparently Gentile Christians and the latter Jewish. In Rev. VII. 4-9 the twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel stand distinct from the "great multitude, which no man could number out of every nation . . ."; in Rev. XXI. 9 ff. "the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" are upon the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, but change of terms and description of approach indicate that "the nations" that "walk amidst the light thereof" and whose "glory and honour" shall be brought into it" are other than the twelve tribes. The Shepherd of Hermas (Sim. IX. 17, 1) is cited in this connection, but all we have there is "twelve tribes" explained to be "twelve nations" "which inhabit the whole world."

The address is just what we should expect to be used by a Jew writing to his fellow Jews of the Dispersion: there is no hint of symbolism here or elsewhere in the letter: the "greeting" is not, like all other epistolary greetings of the New

Testament, specifically Christian, but is the common greeting of the time. Christians to-day believe that the Church has inherited the privileges of Israel, but if they found a circular letter beginning, "My dear fellow Jews," they would unhesitatingly conclude that it was written by a Jew to Jews; nor is there less reason for taking the address of this Epistle to mean what it says; while that it was originally taken to mean so would account for its early neglect by the growingly Gentile Church, and possibly for its place next to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The epistle is full of passages implying in its readers knowledge peculiar to Jews and sometimes depending for their point upon this knowledge:

Much of the force of the reference to the withering flower in I. 10 *f.* depends upon the recognition that it is a citation from Isaiah.

"This man's religion is vain" (I. 26). "Religion" here means "cult," and "vain" is a common Old Testament adjective for heathen cults (Knowling). The point is aimed at those Jews to whom cult was very much more important than it was to the Christians among them. It would have little meaning for Gentile Christians, who had forsaken all of what cult had meant to them.

If, as many students think, "the glory" in II. 1 means the "Shekinah," the writer is writing to Jewish understanding.

In "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (II. 8), "neighbour" was by the Jew interpreted as meaning fellow Jew: with the narrower Greek sense of neighbour, as one who dwells close by, it would not be to the point here, for rich and poor are not thus neighbours.

II. 8-11, as has been noted by many, is written to those who accept the Mosaic law as the basis from which rightness of conduct may be argued. But how, with respect to circumcision, would Gentile readers understand "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all"? Dr. Oesterley suggests that this passage is aimed at the common Jewish notion of arithmetical merit.

"A law of liberty" (I. 26 and II. 12) would have little

point and be doubtfully wise except to people who felt "the yoke of the law."

The readers are spoken of as using the Jewish valediction, "Go in peace" (II. 16).

"The demons also believe, and bristle"—one class of Hebrew demons was "the hairy ones" (Oesterley).

"Abraham our father," suggests a Jew writing to Jews.

"Therewith bless we the Lord and Father" seems to speak of the Jewish custom of following every reference to God with "Blessed be He."

"Resist the devil." This sudden introduction of the Devil in a discourse concerning the world finds explanation in the Jewish belief that the kingdoms of the world were in his hands, as in the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

"In a day of slaughter," (V. 5) has much of its point from being a phrase used by Jeremiah (XII. 3) for a day of judgment (Oesterley).

Swearing by the heaven or by the earth were peculiarly Jewish oaths (Knowing).

There are appeals to history not found in the Old Testament: Abraham "was called the friend of God"; "it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" is connected with the sacrifice, not with the birth of Isaac; Elijah's drought lasts three and a half, not three years, and is an answer to prayer. This all suggests a Jew writing to those whom he knows to share with him the non-Scriptural Jewish tradition.

To "cover" sins (V. 20) in the sense of making atonement is a Jewish use of the word: to the Gentile it would suggest keeping them secret.

The letter is addressed to communities in which the common relationships of life are understood to be under effective regulation. Nothing is said of the family, of slaves, of sex irregularities or of drunkenness. There is no hint of an idolatrous past or of temptation by idolatrous entanglements. All this argues for readers who are not Gentiles, but Jews.

The absence of reference to the future life would be very strange in a letter to Gentiles, to many of whom the promise of a life to come was the greatest boon of the gospel: it

would not be so strange in a letter to Jews, who already believed in it.

Much of the evidence that this letter was written to Jews only is also evidence that it was written to Jews some of whom were Christian and some not. This is most obvious in a comparison of the four condemnations of IV. 1-V. 6 with the four exhortations of V. 7-20.

IV. 13-17, beginning, "Go to now," describes Jews characteristic of the Dispersion, travelling traders. Its admonishment expects that those addressed will read it or hear it read, but it is not likely that a Christian would write to Christians, "What is your life? For ye are a vapour. . . ."

V. 1-6 also begins, "Go to now," and is evidently of one piece with the foregoing. Two paragraphs so introduced and in such a letter imply very strongly that those here addressed were sections of the whole community to which the letter was addressed, of which therefore the Christians cannot have been more than a fraction. For those here addressed are certainly not Christians. No hope of forgiveness is held out to them: they are not even called to repent: they are the merciless against whom judgment is without mercy. They are Jews, for the term, "the Lord of Sabaoth," would have no meaning for Gentiles: And their defrauded labourers are Jews, for if the Jewish landowners thought that their harvesters were praying to any God but the God of Israel, they would rank them as idolators whose prayers did not matter.

In the first condemnation, "Whence wars and fightings among you? . . . Ye lust and have not; ye kill . . ." can hardly describe Christians, yet they pray. Did any class of men do both save the Jews, and especially those of Jerusalem on the eve of the war with Rome, when Josephus tells of combined fanaticism, robbery, faction and murder? Among the Jews of the Dispersion in other parts of the Empire, where order was better enforced, there would be less of this, though even there phases of it are evident enough in Paul's letters, but there is evidence that this letter was written from Palestine, where this side of Jewish life would be impressive.

It has been suggested by Erasmus and others that  $\phi\omicron\nu\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ ,

“ye kill” (IV. 2) should be emended to φθονεῖτε, “ye envy.” There is no textual warrant for this, and we have seen that the killing of V. 6 seems to refer to an earlier mentioned, less evil, killing. We find also in IV. 8 a reference to both classes just challenged, the fighters of IV. 1-3, and those of IV. 4 who would be friends with both the world and God, and they are charged respectively, “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded,” where apparently the fighters are bidden, as in Isa. I. 15, not to lift bloody hands in prayer to God.

In IV. 4 the writer begins, “Ye adulteresses,” though the rest of the paragraph is in the masculine. To call men “adulteresses” would to Gentiles be nonsense, but Jews would be well acquainted with the prophetic figure of Yahweh as the husband of Israel and of apostasy from Yahweh as Israel’s adultery. These sinners and “doubleminded” are not Christians, for they are called to complete reversal of their ways: they are accused of having ignored their apostasy from God, but there is no hint that they had accepted the way of Christ and then proved renegade. And to revert to an earlier point, the writer here can hardly be thinking of Gentile Christians in terms of Hebrew calling, for though the Church claimed to inherit Israel’s privileges, that was on condition that it did not inherit Israel’s apostasy.

It may perhaps be said that, bad though these things were, Paul wrote of things almost as bad, which had taken place in the Churches he addressed. But in such cases Paul enjoined Church discipline, of which there is no hint here. Also, if this letter is to Christians only, it is to Christians throughout the world, and to make such charges against the Church of Christ in general would, from all we know, be unwarranted, and would be to put a weapon into the hands of antagonists.

All the four condemnations are emphatic: the mildest (IV. 11 *f.*), which begins rather as a warning and alone of the four has the elsewhere usual “my brethren,” ends with the sharp question, “Who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?” and in none is there accusation of unfaithfulness to Christ or of incongruity with faith in Him, as there is in II. 1 *ff.* But we find each of the four exhortations marked by

something characteristically Christian. Dr. Oesterley draws attention to the Jewish eschatology of V. 1-6, "the last days," "the day of slaughter," followed by the Christian eschatology of V. 7-11, "the coming of the Lord." V. 12 has the closest verbal citation of an utterance of Jesus, "Swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth . . . but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay." In V. 13-18 the elders of the Church are bidden anoint the sick man "with oil in the name of the Lord." In V. 19, 20 we have the seeking of the sinner, the outstanding teaching of Jesus as to God, the shepherd who seeks the lost. We note also that, whereas in IV. 12 the judge is God, in V. 9 it is Christ.

It must also be noted that in the four exhortations the matters touched upon stand in the order in which they are found in the earlier chapters, where they are not dealt with in the specifically Christian way that obtains here. It would seem that here the writer goes back over what he has written to Jews more generally and now adds what on certain points he wants to say especially to Christians. So that the οὖν of V. 7 probably refers not merely to V. 6, but to the whole of the Epistle preceding. And although eschatological terms are used in both V. 1-6 and V. 7-11 the situation is not the same, the latter having a wider appeal and quieter tone, while the references to the prophets and to Job speak of ill usage quite other than that told of in V. 1-6.

There is here (in V. 7 ff.) a return to the consideration of patience with which the Epistle began: a different word, μακροθυμία, is used for patience, indicating rather forbearance with persons than the support of circumstance, as ὑπομονή, but the figure of the husbandman's waiting brings the thought near to the patience that has its perfect work. The new feature is the consummation by "the coming of the Lord." V. 7-11 has points of reference to Chapters I and II. "We call them blessed that endure" (V. 11) and "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" (I. 12): "Stablish your hearts" (V. 8) answers to "unstable in all his ways" (I. 8). The unexpected introduction of Job (V. 11) corresponds with the unexpected introduction of the rich and poor in I. 9-11. The unusual phrase in V. 9, translated in the R.V. as

“Murmur not one against another,” is given less intelligibly but more exactly, in A.V. as “Grudge not one against another,” for, as Dr. Mayor says, “the word denotes feeling which is internal and unexpressed.” But II. 12 concludes a discussion on conduct to our fellows by “So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by the law of liberty”: and here, to speaking and doing, the writer, in the manner of the Sermon on the Mount, adds the unspoken thought or feeling.

The “above all things” (V. 12), prefixing the injunction “Swear not,” has puzzled exegetes. But in Chapter III the writer stresses the wrong use of speech as the greatest danger to the social and spiritual life of men, reviewing which, the writer would see that he had there said nothing of the most important thing in speech, the need for simple truth of utterance, which was imperilled by the frequent use of oaths to gain credence for special occasions.

In IV. 1-3 fightings and killings had been traced to lack of prayer or wrong prayer, and there follows the consideration of several common situations, which occasion evil for lack of reference to God. In V. 13-18 other common situations in life are dealt with, and it is promised that they will find their true issue by prayer.

In IV. 11 *f.* James condemned the man who judged his brother. But this is incomplete. How can those who go wrong be helped unless it is judged that they have gone wrong? James now shows that it is not judging in the sense of recognising wrong that matters, but our attitude to it. Judging is the necessary preliminary to the best act of all—“He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins” (V. 20).

That in these four closing hortatory paragraphs, the most markedly Christian section of the book, the writer goes back to add to what he had already written, implies that in the earlier chapters he was writing rather to non-Christian Jews.

Of all the New Testament letters that are not addressed to individuals, this alone, after describing the writer, does not proceed in unmistakably Christian language, which is explicable if he was writing to Jews who were not by any means

all Christian. It is from any point of view remarkable that James in I. 2-27, discoursing of life, temptations, sin, as seen in man's relationship to God, does so without naming Jesus, which he does not do till he comes to the concrete matter of class distinctions in Chapter II, "Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . with respect of persons," as though that faith was not opposed to all evil. How could this be explained in a letter written for Christians only? And those who think so and hold that "brought forth" of I. 18 speaks of rebirth and that the "word" of I. 21 is the gospel, how can they explain the omission of the name of Jesus in these things? But if James wrote to Jews generally, he might wish to engage the large unbelieving section of his readers in the interests of all serious Jews, hoping to provoke question which could find its solution only in Jesus; so that his reference to Jesus would be covert. But in a point like respect of persons, which was fostered by the Mosaic tenet that prosperity was a sign of God's approval, he had a matter felt by all sensitive souls, and one in which "the faith of our Lord Jesus" gave clear direction; so that here it would be to his intent to be explicit. And here, where for a moment he addresses his fellow believers, he writes, "our Lord Jesus Christ," whereas in the address, writing to many who were not of his faith in Jesus, he, contrary to all New Testament custom, writes himself servant of "the Lord Jesus Christ" with no "our."

Even after his mention of Jesus in II. 1 there is a speedy relapse into the inexplicitly Christian, more than one commentator having expressed surprise that there is no mention of Jesus in II. 8-13. But having named himself servant of Jesus and having set "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" at the head of the second section of his letter, the writer knew that all that he wrote would be considered in the light of these utterances, and his object apparently was to engage thought without rousing opposition.

"Do they not blaspheme the honourable name by which ye are called?" (II. 7) speaks to Christians of Jews, for blasphemy against the name of Jesus was much more likely amongst Jews than amongst Gentiles. Jews who rejected the Messiahship of Jesus would be very likely to say what would

be blasphemy to Christians. Some Jews would deliberately do so, as appears in Acts XIII. 45, XVIII. 6, XXVI. 11. Gentiles would have no such motive and are not in the New Testament accused of it, though Paul says that because of Jewish conduct "the name of God is blasphemed amongst the Gentiles." James writes as though this blasphemy was a common thing and characteristic of the people of whom he writes. It describes what we are told Saul of Tarsus did in zeal for Judaism (Acts XXVI. 11).

After speaking especially to those who shared with him "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ," the writer, when he turns to deal with those who think that there is some profit in faith without works, cites as case in point the tenet of which all Jews were proud, the belief that "God is one." He suggests that this faith has small obvious effect on conduct, "The demons also believe, and their hair stands on end." He would hardly write so except to Jews, who were in no danger of losing this tenet. To men recently won from polytheism and surrounded by polytheistic friends and kinsfolk, such a suggestion would be dangerous. Nor would it be to the point, if he was arguing against wrong notions about specifically Christian faith. But the whole of this chapter provides a strong though only implicit argument that this central Jewish article of faith needed completion by one that had more powerful and direct effect on conduct.

Thus if we allow the contents of the Epistle to interpret, the address must be taken literally: to take it symbolically is to make the characteristics of the letter unintelligible. We must therefore take it as written to the Jews scattered through the world, including a certain number of Christian Jews.

## CHAPTER III

### JAMES I. 18 AND 21

THE question as to whether the Epistle was written to Jews, including Christian Jews, or to Christians only is bound up with the question as to whether "brought forth" of I. 18 speaks of creation or regeneration and as to whether "word" in I. 18 and 21 means the gospel or not. And these questions are also most important in arriving at the thought of the writer.

We begin with a passage about which there is no question. In III. 9 James writes, "Therewith [with the tongue] bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the likeness of God," citing the creation story of Genesis, and he goes on: "My brethren, these things ought not so to be." James argues from God as Creator to our duty to our fellow men, just as Paul argues from Christ as Redeemer to our duty to fellow believers. And James does not speak of a long-vanished glory, but of a likeness so patent and valid as to regulate our present conduct.

What does this "likeness of God" mean? Not, of course, the physical, but also not merely mind, which James attributes to the demons (III. 15): he is therefore thinking especially of the moral and spiritual. He speaks in this connection of God as "the Lord and Father," implying command and kinship, so that the making of man is God's impartation of His will and of His being, recalling again the Genesis story, "The Lord breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." In any case, it could hardly be said of a being who knows and wills that he was made after the likeness of God, his Father, unless he was born or made in some sense aware of what in thought and act was consonant or antagonistic to the nature so given him, which awareness would be the highest characteristic of his God-given being. He has an "inborn word" and is "brought forth by a word of truth."

It seems to be this that James speaks of as "the inborn

word" in I. 21. Many students claim that this "word" is the gospel of Christ, and that therefore, contrary to the very much more frequent meaning of the Greek word, we must translate "implanted" and not "inborn." But the context favours "inborn," which is to be reached by discarding accretions—"all filthiness and superfluity of wickedness," and in I. 23 the man who hears this word but does not act on it is likened to a man who for a moment sees himself in a mirror and then goes away and forgets what manner of man he was. He is said to see the face "of his genesis," an addition needless if not emphatic, and the reference seems to be to his creation, as "made after the likeness of God," and, where James later quotes this Genesis story, "made" is the verb corresponding to "genesis."

It is sometimes argued that we cannot speak of "receiving" the "inborn": but there is the same objection to "receiving" the "implanted," for in this figurative sense a word is not implanted till it has been received. And a main activity of our personal development is the receiving into conscious life of our inborn heritage, here considered as the divine intent of our being, interpreting us to ourselves, of which all our life should be a continual appropriation, not to be done except meekly and with resolute repugnance to the inappropriate. James writes here of man's creation somewhat as Paul writes of his redemption: "I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus" (Phil. III. 12). It is the thought that appears in *ὁλόκληρος* (I. 4), given as "entire," which, Dr. Oesterley reminds us, had the original meaning of one who fulfils his lot.

All the context makes it clear that James is not thinking of the gospel in any New Testament sense. He bids, as a preparation to receiving the word, to "put away all filthiness and overflowing wickedness," the very things which, in the usual New Testament sense of the gospel, the man can get rid of only as a result of accepting the gospel. In the same sense, this acceptance is the very salvation of the soul, whereas of "the inborn word" received, all that James says is that it "is able to save your souls." And the condition of its doing so is

not stated, as always with the gospel, to be believing, but doing: "Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only, deluding your own selves," which suggests that "the inborn word" was nearer conscience than gospel. And if by this "word" James had meant the gospel, why, when he comes to describe the man who is blessed in his doing, does he change to "law"? Evidently by "a perfect law, the law of liberty" he means something more than the "inborn" or "implanted word" of which he has just spoken, something that brings this word to effective fullness.

It is generally recognised that the "word of truth" by which we were "brought forth" (I. 18) must mean the same as the "inborn" "word" just discussed. In III. 9 God as Father is spoken of as making man after His own likeness, and here "of His own will He brought us forth by a word of truth": the meaning must be the same, since we, self-conscious beings, could not be made after His likeness without being given power to recognise something of it. The purpose given, "that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures," has its meaning in that firstfruits were offered in recognition and thanksgiving to God, the Giver. Man is the first being of this created world able to recognise God's goodness.

This understanding is implied in the whole passage, which is upon the constitution of man, as divinely given, and as subject to temptation. God is "the Father of lights." Dr. Moffatt reminds us that in the Shema God is called "creator of luminaries"; but to call Him their Father is to regard them, in a way common to the time, as living beings, so that "Father of lights" will mean to us "Father of intelligences," implying that His creative fatherhood would involve impartation of "a word of truth." We may paraphrase v. 17, "Every good thing that comes as a gift to us and all that is part of our very being, by which we are wholly ourselves and which yet is not of our making, all this, by being given and being good, we recognise as the impartation of a divine life, the descent of a divine life into this life, the self-giving of One who is the Father of intelligences, invariable in goodness, and not making it difficult for us by changing His way

with us." After this we do not expect the writer, without further explanation, to speak of rebirth, which is a change of way. Having said that all God's gifts are good and perfect, it would be necessary, in speaking of rebirth, to explain why it was needful after the good and perfect gift of the first birth. Nor, without the power to recognise God's giving, would His gift be perfect. So that the gift of life involves the "word of truth" as constitutional to humanity, constituting him, by right of this spiritual intelligence, the firstfruits of the created world, the dawning recognition of the Creator's goodness.

Other considerations concur to show that in I. 18 James is speaking of creation, not of regeneration:

"Firstfruits of His creatures" suggest comparison between men and the lower animals, rather than between some men and others. "Firstfruits" speaks of the first recognition of God's goodness and thanksgiving, and if the writer is understood to find this only in those regenerate by the gospel of Christ, he ignores the thanksgiving of the Psalms.

The passage concerns the constitution of man and is an answer to the man who says, "I am tempted of God." The answer is that God gives nothing but what is good and perfect. But if v. 18 speaks of rebirth, it goes far to concede the man's plea, for he might argue, "If rebirth is needed, then life as first given is not sufficient for what lies before it. This insufficiency is my temptation." But there is more. If I. 18 speaks of regeneration, then "of His own will brought He us forth" affirms the election of the regenerate, whose happy state lies in God's will, not in their own, while the rest, left outside the scope of that will, might not unreasonably attribute their tempted condition to God. In this case, without the further gift of rebirth, the gift of life is hardly a good and perfect gift. That the writer does not here speak of predestination and therefore not of regeneration is confirmed by his frequent emphasis upon man's power of self-determination.

It is not in the New Testament manner to speak of regeneration in simple terms of birth without some word to indicate that rebirth is meant. When 1 Pet. I. 3 says that God

“begat us again . . .” it implies that without the “again” he would have been speaking of our creation. Also, if Jas. I. 18 speaks of regeneration, it says nothing of what man is regenerated from, nothing of what he is born again to, nothing of the means of rebirth; all of which would be not only very unusual, but very misleading.

Reticence will not account for this. It is true that in “a perfect law, the law of liberty” he speaks of the work of Christ without naming Him, but an un-Christian Jew, reading these words by one who confessed himself the “servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ,” would understand them to refer to that new source of divine law involved in the confession, whereas, reading I. 18, he would take it to speak of creation.

It has been said that “word of truth” is a technical term for the gospel, but Dr. Ropes rejoins that, if this had been meant, the article would have been used. Wherever in the New Testament the gospel is meant by these words, both nouns have the article. The two words, as in James, without any article occur in only one other place, 2 Cor. VI. 7, where they stand for one of the things that commended Paul’s ministrations, “in love unfeigned, in word of truth,” evidently meaning speech whose truth deserved acceptance.

There can be very little doubt that James knew and was influenced by Ecclesiasticus, whose account of Creation is in XVII, 1-10: “The Lord created man of the earth. . . . And made them according to His own image. . . . Counsel, and tongue, and eyes, Ears and heart, gave He them to understand withal. He filled them with the knowledge of wisdom, And showed them good and evil. . . . He set His eyes upon their hearts, To show them the majesty of His works. And they shall praise the name of His holiness, That they may declare the majesty of His works.” Here, as in James, Creation is especially creation of man in the likeness of God, man’s creation and enlightening are one, and the purpose of it is that he may recognise God, as do the firstfruits.

That James meant to speak of regeneration in I. 18 and of the gospel in I. 21 has no support but the expectation of what it is thought he ought to mean: all the evidence is that he is

speaking of man's creation, with its concomitant enlightenment. The importance for the thought of James will be considered later: we must first consider the letter's method and occasion, which also are connected with this and with the foregoing.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE OCCASION

**I**F the Epistle, as it claims to be, was written to Jews only, the Jews of the Dispersion, including Christian Jews, can we find an occasion in the history of the Church that would demand such a letter?

Paul, in Gal. II. 9, writes: "When they perceived the grace that was given unto me, James and Cephas and John, they who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision." This was fourteen years after a visit to Jerusalem made three years after his conversion, or more probably fourteen years after the conversion itself. We may presume this division was still in force when Paul wrote to the Galatians, so that for some twenty-five years at least the heads of the Jerusalem Church confined their attentions to Jews. How did they work? Until the scattering of all but the Apostles at Stephen's death, Acts tells only of preaching in Jerusalem: then, as the result of Philip's preaching in Samaria, Peter and John were sent there. Some of this scattering went further, "speaking the word to none save only to the Jews" (Acts XI. 19). Acts XIII. 1 ff. tells how in Antioch, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. . . . So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews." Not until they were at Antioch in Pisidia was Paul driven by the opposition of the Jews to declare, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." This mission, aimed in its first intent at Jews only, is told as though it was the first enterprise of the sort. And the impression left by Acts is that the Church at Jerusalem had done nothing in this way. What then were they doing in the interests of the gospel? Why did they not anticipate or imitate the enterprise of Paul and Barnabas?

The answer is that the great Jewish feasts brought Jews from wherever they were scattered: in Jerusalem the apostles could preach to the Jews of the Dispersion.

But Paul found letter-writing a valuable addition to travelling, and the same opportunity was open to the pillars of Jerusalem. For besides the Jews of the Dispersion who came to Jerusalem, there were many who did not come, and of whom the Church at Jerusalem must have taken thought. Apart from mission journeys like Paul's, there were only two means to reach them, through those who did come and by letter. Those who came to Jerusalem and there became Christians would want to spread the gospel among their brethren of the Dispersion, and in this they would obviously be so greatly helped by being able to take an authoritative letter back with them, that it is difficult to think that the need was not felt and supplied. Such a letter we seem to have before us, and the likelihood that such a document would be composed is confirmed by the circular letter sent from Jerusalem by the direction of James, as recorded in Acts XV. 13-29.

In the question of the Epistle's occasion is involved that of its date, and from the absence of any reference to the problems created by the incoming of the Gentiles, it has been argued that this Epistle must have been written either before the issue rose or after it had died down. But, in any case, this alternative is not cogent. The omission may be deliberate. By the letter's definition of "pure religion," or "cult," the question would not arise, nor by its notion of the law. Writing to Jews in order to persuade them to consider Jesus, it would be beside the point to discuss the terms on which Gentiles might become His followers. Only if we suppose the letter to be written to both Jews and Gentiles would the omission be significant for the date: it must be taken with the omission of all reference to Gentiles.

There is not much in the letter itself that indicates date, but what there is makes against the late date required by those who maintain it to be pseudonymous, symbolic in address, written to Churches mostly Gentile, after the Gentile question had ceased to be a living one. It may be pointed

out that none of these writers has suggested a likely occasion for such an epistle, or explained why an early date is suggested by indications such as the simplicity of the greeting, the use of the word "synagogue" for a Christian place of worship, the mention of "elders" only as officials of the Church, the absence of any reference to Gnosticism.

There is better evidence in the earlier years of the Church for such cures as are expected in V. 14-16, and the later we put the letter the harder it is to understand how the terms "save a soul from death" and "cover sins" come to be applied to the action of a Church member. "The coming of the Lord" is spoken of without sense of delay, which the husbandman looking for rain cannot long tolerate. The fightings, killings and imminent slaughter described in IV. 1-3 and V. 1-6 are appropriate to the time before the fall of Jerusalem, but hardly after. So also, if we take the address of the letter to mean what it says and therefore to be written to Jews generally, including Christians, it is evidence of a time before believers were conscious of an open breach with Judaism, i.e. before James's own death in A.D. 62.

It is sometimes argued that because James speaks of being "justified by faith" and adduces Abraham as an instance, he must therefore have written with a knowledge of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. This contention has its own difficulties and several alternate possibilities.

There is no attempt in Jas. II. 14-26 to attack the arguments of Romans. It is not aimed at the Christian believer, but at the Jew who thinks that in affirming the characteristic tenet of Judaism, "God is one," there is value even if the tenet has no effect on his conduct. The matter is not discussed in connection with "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ," which, it is shown, ought to have effect on conduct, otherwise the believer contradicts himself. With both of these positions Paul would have been in full accord. And we may also be sure, if so acute a thinker as James had read Romans, that since he saw such danger in religious controversy (Chapter III), he would have avoided terms that might be misunderstood to be an attack upon Paul.

In II. 14-26 James was attacking, not Paul, but an evil

which Paul himself attacked. In Rom. II. 17-24, Paul charges the Jews with glorying in their knowledge of God and being remiss in their doing of His will, so proud of the one that they were unashamed of the other. Paul was here writing, as was James, to Jews of the Dispersion, whose contact with heathen religion made them the prouder of their own faith. We have in this the beginning, at least, of the attitude of mind which Justin Martyr found in some Jews who said that "even if they be sinners and know God, the Lord will not impute sin to them" (*Tryph.*, 141).

The respective value for salvation of faith and works was not a new question when James wrote, as is suggested by his "Yea, a man will say . . ." 2 Esdras IX. 7 speaks of "every one that shall be saved, and shall be able to escape by his works, or by faith. . . ."

But what about "Abraham" and "justified by faith"? Abraham was a stock example in Jewish discussion. "Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness?" (1 Macc. II. 52), which is near enough to "justified by faith" to make it possible that both James and Paul had the phrase from earlier users of it (Windisch, p. 21). In the parable of the Pharisee and publican we read, "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other," and the point of the parable is at this justification was not by works.

But even if we credit Paul with the coining of the phrase, there is no need to suppose that it could not reach James until he had read Romans. Three years after his conversion, Paul was in Jerusalem with Peter for a fortnight, and James, "the Lord's brother," also was there. There can be no doubt that Paul spoke of "his gospel." Years later, after he had "turned to the Gentiles," he was again in Jerusalem, and he says, "I laid before them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles . . . lest by any means I should be running, or had run, in vain." Rom. VII. 7-25 tells us that the gospel of justification by faith was his from the first, and Gal. I. 16 cannot be understood otherwise, as he did not preach to the Gentiles until many years after his conversion. So that on the earlier occasion, either directly or through Peter, James

might hear Paul's term, "justification by faith." We need not depend even on this: Jerusalem was in constant touch with the Jews of the Dispersion, especially in such nearer centres as Antioch, and what Paul preached among them would be reported at Jerusalem. It may well be that James feared that the tendency which both he and Paul found in the Jews of the Dispersion to exalt creed at the expense of conduct might claim support in Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, which was easily misunderstood or misrepresented in that way. Had James known Paul's doctrine clearly, he would probably have been clear about the possibilities of its perversion or misunderstanding and about his own fundamental agreement on this point with Paul. As it is, he merely states his own position. So that it would seem that James's knowledge was at second hand.

## CHAPTER V

### PLACE OF ORIGIN

THE letter gives evidence of having been written in Palestine. "The early and latter rain" (V. 7), as a condition of great agricultural importance, is peculiar to Palestine and Syria, as also was the *καύσων* (I. 11), the scorching east wind from the desert. Dr. Knowling cites Strabo to the effect that a fuliginous vapour rises from the Dead Sea causing brass and silver and gold to rust (the same verb used by Jas. V. 3), probably meaning discoloration. Dr. Knowling also notes "synagogue" as a specifically Jewish Christian word in Palestine, and Dr. Rendall (p. 49) speaks of "demoniacal" as "a genuinely Palestinian touch."

The social conditions reflected in the letter are those of Palestine before the war of A.D. 66-70. They are those of the gospel narrative, and the faults of society are those shown in the teaching of Jesus.

The two sorts of men described in Jas. IV. 13-V. 6 both appear in the parables of Jesus, the man who goes abroad and the farmer employing hired labour. Where, except in Palestine, would a moralist, thinking of the abuse of great wealth in farming, think only of hired labour and not of slavery?

It is thought by many critics that the rich men described with such animus in V. 1-6 are the high-priestly coterie; and the impending doom with which they are threatened repeats Jesus' forecast of Jerusalem's destruction. It may be asked why James, writing to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion, includes what is aimed at the high priests, or at least at a class of men that belonged especially to Palestine. Part of the answer lies in the solidarity of the Jewish people. He who would speak to any class of them effectively must speak to the nation as a whole, including especially those sections on whom the destiny of the nation depended. James in this letter probably gives his message for the nation as a whole: he *writes* to the Dispersion, because to the Jews at home he could speak, and parts of the letter, especially V. 1-6, read

more like impassioned prophecy than letter-writing. It would be good for Jews abroad to know what the followers of Jesus stood for in Palestine. It is good to think that a passage like VI. 1-6 was first spoken in the precincts of its powerful culprits.

The fighters and murderers of IV. 1-3 are probably those of Palestine, especially of Jerusalem, in the years leading up to the war. Josephus gives ample witness of this: Dr. Rendall thinks that  $\xi\eta\lambda\theta\upsilon\tau\epsilon$  of IV. 2 may refer to the Zealots.

In the classes spoken to in IV. 1-V. 6 there seems an alternation between those at home and those abroad—the quarrellers at home, the friends of the world abroad, the rigid-righteous at home, the travelling traders abroad, the great landowners at home.

Many modern critics hold that the explanation of the Parable of the Sower came, not from Jesus, but from the early Palestinian Church, which interpreted it according to the needs of the time. In any case, very much of the concern of the Epistle is with just what this explanation stresses. "Straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word" (Mark IV. 15): James has the hearer who "straightway forgetteth" (I. 24). Those who "endure for a while" (Mark IV. 16 f.) and then wilt under tribulation or persecution are reflected in James's reiterated insistence on patience and endurance: those in whom the word is choked by "the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in" appear in James's repeated warnings against wealth and worldliness. And in the close of the explanation the good ground reminds us of "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace."

## CHAPTER VI

### THE AUTHOR

A LETTER written to the Jews of the Dispersion generally, including Christian Jews, must have been written before the complete separation of Christianity from Judaism, and therefore before the war of 66-70, when the rift long growing became obvious in the flight of the Christians of Judea to Pella.

So that the question of authorship is simple. What "James" of this period was well known enough and authoritative enough to be known merely as "James," without further description? In the early Church there were two great Jameses, the son of Zebedee, who was very early killed by Herod, and James, the Lord's brother, who for the period in question was head of the Church in Jerusalem, gave sentence in the decision on the terms for admission of the Gentiles (Acts XV. 13 *ff.*), and appears in Galatians as one of the three "pillars" who agreed with Paul that he and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles and they to the Jews. From the death of the son of Zebedee for so long as the conditions obtain during which this letter might have been written, there is only one Christian Jew great enough to be known simply as "James," and he is James, "the Lord's brother."

Many considerations support this conclusion. Eusebius cites Hegesippus to the effect that the piety of this man was such that he "was surnamed the Just by all" (*Ecc. Hist.*, II, 23). He is the one James of whom we know, a letter from whom might impress non-Christian Jews (D. Bernard Weiss, *Der Jakobusbrief*, p. 49). His speech and letter as reported in Acts XV. 14-29 are in the same untheological and practical strain as the Epistle. There are likenesses of language. Among the Christian letters of the New Testament the greeting  $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\iota\nu$  is found only in the two letters connected with him. The unusual phrase "to call a name" (God's or

Christ's) "upon anyone" occurs in both the speech and the Epistle (Acts XV. 17 and Jas. II. 7).

Though the social life reflected in the letter is that of Jerusalem, the figures are those of the country and the sea—the flower of the grass, the horse, fire amongst trees, birds, beasts and creeping things, the fig tree and the vine, the husbandman looking for rain, the restlessness of the surge, the fisherman's bait, the ship and its rudder. This is what we should expect from one whose youth was spent in Galilee and near its sea.

The letter is notable in the New Testament for the number of its reminiscences of the teaching of Jesus and because these are not in the verbal form preserved for us elsewhere. The compassionate comparison of the rich man to the wild flower that must soon fade reminds of "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" "which to-day are and to-morrow are cast into the oven." The man who "is a hearer of the word, and not a doer," reminds of "Everyone that heareth these words of mine and doeth them not." "The poor" who are "heirs of the kingdom which He promised to them that love Him" reminds of Luke's beatitude, "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God," and of the sentence, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God," passed upon the lawyer who agreed that love to God and neighbour were the greatest commandments of the law. "Judgment is without mercy to him that showed no mercy" reads like a reference to the parable of the Unmerciful Servant. "Be not many teachers, my brethren" reminds of the condemnation of loving to be called Rabbi. The argument from the tree and its fruit is used by James, as Jesus uses it, to affirm that the deed shows the man, but with difference both in figure and application. The two wisdoms, one from above, remind of "Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." "Them that make peace" recalls the peacemakers of the beatitude. "Ye adulteresses" uses the same figure as "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." James describes penitence by the casting down of the eyes, *κατήφεια*, reminding of the publican who "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven." "Who

art thou that judgest thy neighbour?" reminds of "Judge not, that ye be not judged." "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your silver and your gold are rusted" reminds of "Where moth and rust doth corrupt." James addresses his readers usually as "my brethren," but not the fighters and "adulteresses," nor those who live for money or oppress the poor (IV. 1-V. 6), which reminds of "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother." The unusual comparison of "the coming of the Lord" to the ripening of the harvest finds its fellow in Jesus' parable of the growing wheat. In the injunction against swearing, James comes nearest to repeating Jesus' words as we have them in the Gospels. In the New Testament "gehenna" is used only in this letter and in the Gospels.

Dr. Rendall (p. 102) remarks that the absence of verbal agreement here suggests that when the letter was written the tradition of Jesus' sayings was not yet crystallised. This would account for some of the differences, but there is more than mere difference of verbal form: there is sometimes difference of thought under similarity of form, yet difference which is reminiscent of other thought of Jesus. What we find would be explained by long intimacy with Jesus and shared interest in religion and conduct, such as James would have in the years that preceded Jesus' public ministry. But James was not one of the Twelve, which may be why the most frequent subject of Jesus' teaching is almost absent from the letter, for the proclamation of the kingdom began with the public ministry.

There is resemblance in the epigrammatic form of utterance: many sayings both of James and Jesus read like proverbs. Both use markedly figurative speech, and also concrete instances instead of definition, as in what James says about pure religion and about the gold-ringed stranger, and in Jesus' answer to the question, "And who is my neighbour?"

We shall consider later the likeness between the thought of Jesus and that of James, and the way in which intimate knowledge of the factors that compassed the death of Jesus may have influenced his theology of it. But we may here note that one of the most astonishing things in the Epistle is that,

when addressing more especially his fellow Christians, he writes, "Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord" (V. 10), and does not here speak of Jesus. It may be in view of his larger non-Christian audience that James refers to the prophets rather than to Jesus, but hardly, if, like Peter (1 Pet. II. 21 *ff.*), he had thought of Jesus as the one supreme instance of patience. The reason may lie in his more historical and less theological mind. He was among the kindred, for so the phrase  $\text{οἱ πατέρες αὐτοῦ}$  must be translated, specially in view of what follows (Mark III. 21, 31-35)—who, perturbed by His activities, "went out to lay hold of Him: for they said, He is mad." He would know of the opposition roused by Jesus' freedom with "the tradition of the elders" and with the law, and of Jesus' shattering replies. He would know something of the biting words to scribes and Pharisees. He would know that Jesus went to Jerusalem, took the high priests' prerogative out of their hands in cleansing and taking control of the Temple courts, and, when they sent to question the act, made them publicly ridiculous by His answer. He knew of Jesus' triumphant reply to the high priest's adjuration at His trial. It may therefore not have occurred to him to appeal to Jesus as in especial an example of patience, or it may have seemed to him misleading so to refer to one who took the initiative in attack.

It is not necessary here to discuss the various meanings put upon the word "brother" in "James, the Lord's brother." Some suggest that it means "cousin," but no known Greek supports this. Others think it to mean sons of Joseph by a former marriage. The only evidence adduced in this connection is John VII. 3-5, where "His brethren" advise Jesus to go into Judea, adducing their reason. It is advice that might come from brothers of any age, and, as such, Jesus replies to it. It is not the authoritative injunction of elder brothers, which Jesus would probably have repudiated more in the terms of the Marcan incident (III. 33), where, it may be noted, wanting to be authoritative, His brothers bring His mother with them. Mark III. 31 *ff.* should be decisive: Jesus says, "Who is my mother and my brethren? . . ." where the

point depends upon contrast between blood kinship and spiritual kinship, placing brethren and mother together in the former.

The qualities shown in the Epistle justify the high place given James by history and tradition. He is a penetrative thinker with hatred of self-delusion: he is a literary artist: he is a prophet ablaze with compassion for the oppressed. For years in the Church of Jerusalem his authority was as great, in some respects greater, than that of Peter, which indicates a man of unusual mind and character and knowledge of Jesus. Kinship does not account for it: there were other brothers of whom we hear nothing; and had his position been due to kinship, he would have been given it at once, whereas Acts has nothing to say of him for some time.

His uniqueness is that, of all the writers of the New Testament, he alone for so many years shared with Jesus the intimacies of the home. It is true that during the public ministry of Jesus he was not amongst His followers. But the advice of John VII. 3*f.* shows rather puzzlement than ill will, and Jesus' reply to them is not so sharp as to a similar misunderstanding on the part of Peter. The unbelief of His brothers must be judged with the uncertainty and misgiving and final flight of His disciples. And it must be granted His brothers that at least they did not seek a reflected glory by attaching themselves to Him in the heyday of His popularity. Paul recounts an appearance of the risen Christ to "James" (1 Cor. XV. 7) probably this James, and puts him amongst the list of believers to whom Jesus appeared, making exception only of himself in this respect, "as unto one born out of due season. . . ." which all implies that he thought of James as a follower of Jesus at the time of the crucifixion. The same is implied in Jerome's quotation of a fuller account of this appearance from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, which tells us that James, the Lord's brother, had been present at the Last Supper. And if James was thus a follower before the crucifixion and participated in the resurrection appearances, it would help to account for his high place in the early Church.

His long and intimate knowledge of Jesus before the public

ministry made him better acquainted than any other with the background of thought from which Jesus proceeded, and therefore better able to carry on that thought in its true direction.

Objection has been made to authorship by the brother of Jesus on the grounds that the Greek is too good for a Galilean peasant, that the letter shows the influence of Stoic thought and that its citations show the influence of the Septuagint.

With regard to the Septuagint, it must be remembered that Hebrew at that time was a dead language, and so far as we know there was no current translation of the Old Testament Hebrew into Aramaic, the Jewish language of the time. Greek was very widely known over the whole of the East. One of the superscriptions of the Cross was in Greek, and Greek was so current in Jerusalem that, when Paul spoke to the Jews from the castle steps, they expected him to speak in Greek (Acts XXII. 2). There seems no reason why a Galilean, not of Rabbinic training, should not read the Scriptures in the Greek translation.

Evidence of influence of Stoic or other philosophy is scant and uncertain. Jerusalem, through the pilgrims of the Dispersion, was in touch with every part of the Empire, and an eager mind would come into ample, if second-hand, contact with the commoner current thoughts of the philosophic world.

With regard to the quality of the letter's Greek, we must bear in mind the very evident literary gifts of the author. It is not very much more remarkable that James, peasant of Galilee "of the Gentiles", should write good Greek than that Burns, peasant of Ayrshire, should write good English. But Bernard Weiss (*Der Jakobusbrief*, pp. 44 ff.) points out that fine literary Greek is marked by wealth of particles and complex structure of sentences, neither of which is evident in the letter, and goes on to point out passages which he does not find very "correct." The Greek is blemished by Hebraisms. Dr. Oesterley points out the twofold use of Hebrew perfects in V. 2, and ἐβρέψατε in V. 5, which, in Hebrew manner, speak of that which is to come as already having happened, and in V. 17 we have προσευχῆ προσήύξατο.

There is another consideration. The document is not written to meet a local, passing occasion, but is an encyclical for a period of propaganda. It was important, therefore, that its form should not discredit it, and the writer, if he distrusted his own Greek, might well use the most scholarly help available.

If the letter was not written by James, the brother of the Lord, what is the alternative? That it was written so late that the controversy as to the admission of the Gentiles had become obsolete, that its address "to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion" must be understood symbolically of the Gentile Church as inheriting the privileges of Israel, and that its lack of theology shows that it came from a remote corner of the Christian Church. Yet the address taken symbolically addresses the whole Christian world. Would a man writing from remoteness to the world name himself simply James? The common answer is that the writer wished to gain authority for what he had to say by writing under the name of the great James, the brother of Jesus. If he desired this, it is very hard to think why he did not in his address define the particular James more closely. It is questionable whether the fame of James of Jerusalem would very long survive amongst the Gentile Christians after his death in 62 or the city's fall in 70. Nor is it clear why a writer wishing to get authority for a letter to Gentile Christians should choose, as best suited to his purpose, the name of one who agreed that Paul should go to the Gentiles while he went to the Jews, one to whom the Judaisers in the Church appealed for their authority (Gal. II. 9-12).

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

**T**HE Epistle of St. James and the First Epistle of St. Peter have so many similarities of language and order that to many students it is beyond doubt that the author of one was familiar with the other. This, of course, affects date and therefore authorship, and must be considered before we leave this part of our subject.

An example of similarity is that both letters in the compass of five verses (Jas. IV. 6-10; 1 Pet. V. 5-9) have the same quotation from Prov. III. 34 in the LXX. rendering, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble," the same injunction in very similar words to "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you" and another to resist the Devil.

In many important points the order of the Epistles is the same:

<i>1 Peter</i>		<i>James</i>
I. 6, 7	Manifold temptations and the proof of faith.	I. 2-4
I. 7	The reward of faith, praise and honour, the crown of life.	I. 12
I. 9	The salvation of your souls.	I. 21
I. 14	Children of obedience: doers not hearers only.	I. 22 ff.
II. 1-5	Putting away evil speaking, bridling the tongue, pure religion.	I. 26, 27
II. 11-III. 8	Religion and conduct to others.	II. 1-13
III. 9, 10	The Tongue.	III. 1-12
III. 11-17	Peacemaking, especially as touching religion.	III. 13-18
IV. 2-4	Friendship with the world.	IV. 4-6
IV. 7-19	The end of all things, judgment, persecution.	V. 7-11
V. 1 ff.	Elders.	V. 14 ff.

Besides this similarity of order there are verbal similarities, which in most cases are not found where the order would lead us to expect them, but are by the two letters given different context and application; and it is notable that in every case the Petrine use is the more general and the more usual. James (I. 2, 3) bids his hearers, "Count it all joy when ye fall into manifold temptations, knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience": 1 Pet. I. 6, 7 says that the readers rejoice in their future salvation, though for the present grieved by "manifold temptations" "that the proof of your faith" should find eschatological reward. Jas. II. 1 has "Hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glory, with respect of persons": 1 Pet. I. 17-21 reminds readers that God judges "without respect of persons" and that He "raised" Jesus "from the dead and gave Him glory." Jas. I. 21 says, "Putting away all . . . overflowing of wickedness . . . receive the inborn word": 1 Pet. II. 1, 2 has, "Putting away all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, etc. . . . as new born babes, long for the spiritual milk. . . ." Jas. IV. 1 sees the cause of wars in "your lusts that war in your members": 1 Pet. II. 11 bids, "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." Jas. III. 13 finds the teacher's test in "fair behaviour": 1 Pet. II. 12 enjoins "fair behaviour" upon his readers as able to influence outsiders. Jas. V. 12 bids, "Above all things, swear not": 1 Pet. IV. 8 has, "Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves." The exhortations to be humble and resist the devil which James gives to the "adulteresses" (IV. 6-10), 1 Pet. V. 5-9 addresses to "all of you." James, by his greater originality, shows himself less likely to have been the borrower.

James addresses "the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," an address which, whether literal or symbolic, is unique in the New Testament, where the word "Dispersion" occurs otherwise only in John VII. 35 and in the address of 1 Peter, "To the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion . . ." where it is puzzling, being a technical term for non-Palestinian Jews, and the letter being written to Gentiles (I. 21, II. 10), and is made superfluous by "in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia." It would be explicable as

a symbolically modifying appropriation of James's address, but hardly otherwise. 1 Pet. II. 9, "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession," shows that his readers were to him the true Israel, not merely the Dispersion.

Indication as to priority comes from a comparison of their citation from Isa. XL. 6-8. 1 Pet. I. 24 *f.* quotes more completely, with the original incidence of "all flesh" and with the original end, vital to the prophet's meaning, "But the word of the Lord abideth for ever." James (I. 10 *f.*) has neither the incidence nor the end. It is reasonable that a writer, finding this prophecy truncated in content and application, should correct it into better conformity with the original. The alternative is much less likely, for it would mean that James wrote as he did despite his memory of Isaiah having been recently refreshed by 1 Peter. So it is in their use of Prov. X. 12. 1 Pet. IV. 8 has correctly, "Love covereth a multitude of sins": in Jas. V. 20 it is the man who, by "converting a sinner from his way" "covereth a multitude of sins."

As we have seen, James, surprisingly to readers of the New Testament, bids his readers take "for an example of suffering and patience, the prophets," making no mention of Jesus, whom Peter gives as his only example of suffering and patience. Here it is very difficult to think that James is a correction of Peter.

The Epistle of James is remarkable for its lack of the theology characteristic of the other Epistles of the New Testament. There is nothing of predestination, prophecy, atonement, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the future life, the Holy Spirit. The First Epistle of Peter, especially in its more doctrinal portion, I. 1-II. 10, could hardly be fuller of them: it is recognised as the most Pauline of the general Epistles, as James is the least.

If we compare the earlier portions of the two Epistles, we find that each point of contact is in 1 Peter swathed in choice and elaborately phrased Pauline theology. We compare the simple address and greeting of Jas. I. 1 with its heavily phrased counterpart in 1 Pet. I. 1, 2, and the first paragraph

of James (I. 2-4) with the first paragraph of 1 Pet. (I. 3-12). Or we may compare James on "the inborn word" and "pure religion" (I. 21-27) with the corresponding passage in 1 Pet. II. 1-10 on "spiritual milk" and "spiritual sacrifices." Jas. (I. 18) writing evidently of Creation says, "Of His own will He brought us forth by a word of truth," the counterpart of which in 1 Pet. (I. 23 *f.*) is: "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth . . . and this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." James's almost casual reference to elders in the Church (V. 14) is represented in 1 Peter by the detailed injunction of V. 1-11. It is a canon of criticism that copyists, editors and adaptors are inclined to gloss and elaborate rather than to curtail or condense.

Another point of comparison is that James claims to address Jews only, including Christian Jews, whereas though 1 Peter does not in its address say whether the expected readers are Jew or Gentile, its contents imply Gentiles only: they were "redeemed from the vain manner of life handed down from their fathers," "through Christ they are believers in God," they "in time past were no people, but now are the people of God"—things hardly to be said except of Gentiles. And with this it goes that 1 Peter gives attention to family regulation, fleshly lusts, lasciviousness, wine-bibblings, idolatries, of which we find nothing in James, and on which matters Jews were in their own religion sufficiently instructed.

If it was written by the Lord's brother to the Jews of the Dispersion, and was therefore widespread and authoritative, it is likely enough that, when the Church became predominantly Gentile, this Epistle's lack of the practical injunctions which the Gentiles needed and of the outstanding and generally accepted theological beliefs, would call for its supersession by a writing that supplied these lacks, and such we seem to have in 1 Peter, transforming the covert apology of James into explicit exposition of Christian doctrine, and addressing itself especially to the needs of Gentile converts. If this was so, it is a testimony to the early authority of James

and would supply reason why its acknowledgment in the subsequently entirely Gentile Church was slow.

The alternative to this is almost inconceivable—that the Epistle of James is the product of one who knew the First Epistle of Peter and wished to cover its ground, but in quite different manner, removing all that appertained to Gentiles, removing all that touched on the great doctrines of the Church, all references to the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus. One might as well think of reconstructing Malory out of Tennyson. And this leaves out of count perhaps the strongest reason for the priority of James, the far greater number and free form of references to the teaching of Jesus.

Considerations such as these all indicate that if, as seems indubitable, there is literary dependence between these two letters, James is the earlier. Two minor points confirm this. The term "Christian" (1 Pet. IV. 16) is not used elsewhere in the Epistles: in Acts it appears to be used depreciatively. "Whereunto they were appointed" (1 Pet. II. 8), speaking of the Jewish rejection of Jesus, marks a time when the separation between Christian and Jew became final. In James there is no hint of this nor of the predeterminism called in to account for it.

## CHAPTER VIII

### METHOD

THE letter's claim to be to Jews only, mainly non-Christian Jews, is confirmed by the contents, and this helps to explain its reticence and impact.

The first believers of the Dispersion would be those who came to the feasts at Jerusalem, and by such pilgrims Christian communities abroad would be kept in touch with the mother Church, who would therefore seldom if ever need to write letters to them especially. But the pilgrims who became Christian at Jerusalem would need an authoritative letter to take back with them and assist their appeal to their fellow Jews at home.

Such arguments for the Messiahship of Jesus as were the burden of the earliest preaching would be learnt at Jerusalem and could be supplied by these pilgrims. But James knew enough of his race to know that direct attack on their old positions would be likely to produce little but opposition, as Paul found. The most promising method for such a letter would be not by frontal attack, but by suggestion and provocation of thought, by appeal to the best of what they already had. The aim of the letter is not to present the claims of Christ, nor to give information about Him. It is to remove objections and to create interest by showing the effect of this faith on conduct and personality. "I by my works will show thee my faith." If his non-Christian readers or hearers were provoked to enquire further, those who brought the Epistle could tell much, and, if more was needed, a journey to Jerusalem would fulfil their accepted duty. This aim would affect the whole letter. Even when the Christian section of his hearers is addressed the others must be remembered, so that more is implied than expressed. Also, Israel is his people, and his Messiah is Israel's Messiah, so that he cannot write fitly to Christian Jews except as part of the nation. Both Christian and non-Christian Jews are "my brethren."

He first calls himself "servant" or "slave," owned by and

devoted to the commands of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, which no Jew would understand as divided allegiance, but that the writer found God's activity and the revelation of His character and will supremely in Jesus, who, his readers must have known, had been crucified. Having so confessed himself, he knew that to every Jew all that he now said would be read in the light of this declaration, especially anything that was not found in Mosaic law. At the beginning of his second section, he does much the same by speaking of "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glory," and then, after making one connection—with "respect of persons"—leaves it to the questioning of his readers.

In I. 21-25 the unmediated passage from "the inborn word" to a "perfect law," the law of liberty, no mention being made of the Mosaic law, would provoke question, to which the beginning of the next section hints the answer in "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ"; after which James goes on to speak of the Mosaic law, stressing its condemnatory side, and then tells his readers, "So speak, and so act, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty." He evokes an enquiry that has only one end, whereas open attack on the Mosaic law would preclude enquiry by opposition.

Much of the letter deals with matters on which a sensitive conscience would be likely to feel that the Mosaic code was inadequate. There is reiterated arousal of moral feeling against the Deuteronomic principle that the approval of God was shown by prosperity and His disapproval by adversity, a principle already questioned by Job and II Isaiah. This principle was the great deterrent of the Jew from believing in a crucified Messiah. So James speaks of trials, adversity, poverty, as the way to what God wants a man to be. The poor are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. The prophets who spake in the name of the Lord had to suffer. For the rich landowners he has nothing but unmitigated condemnation. They have condemned, they have killed the righteous one. There is probably no open reference here to the death of Jesus, but his readers knew that such things occurred, and that it was men of this class that compassed the death of Jesus.

Matters of conduct also, in which moral sensitiveness would feel the Mosaic code lacking, are his frequent theme. His definition of "pure religion," the true cult, is in line with the mind of the lawyer who asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment. Mosaic law warned against respect of persons in giving of legal decisions, but its stress upon prosperity as God's reward would rather tend to justify such preferential treatment of the wealthy as is condemned in II. 1 *ff.* James names "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" the "Royal law," probably intimating its supremacy, and by the context implies that "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" secured its observance where it was most likely to be ignored. Mosaic law forbids certain wrong uses of speech—false witness, blasphemy and lying: James goes much further, pressing for complete control, forbidding cursing and oaths. His insistence that there is no authority of truth without gentleness of spirit (III. 13-18) is beyond Mosaic scope. So too is his condemnation of censoriousness (IV. 11 *f.*) and of acquisitiveness (IV. 13 *ff.*). The retrieval of those who had gone astray (V. 19, 20) and the ministry of healing, which was an outstanding activity of the earliest Church, were commended to his fellow Christians, the one going beyond the spirit of the Mosaic code, and the other being evidence of the divine presence to be placed beside the miracles of Elijah.

The main intent of the letter explains the otherwise exaggerated stress that James places on the use of the tongue. His aim was to get men to consider, and intolerance has its readiest expression and growth in argument and obloquy, speedily and calamitously putting an end to all quiet and just thought. He therefore devotes a substantial portion of his letter, first to reminding his hearers of the great and evil possibilities of speech in life generally, and then passing to the particular dangers of religious controversy (III. 1-18). He would have in mind the part that speech played in the opposition that culminated in the death of Jesus. He devotes this long passage to disarming the most serious form of opposition which his cause was likely to meet from his fellow Jews.

What he desired appears in I. 5 ff. He so writes that the non-Christian Jew may say to himself, "This servant of Jesus has some new way of life that enables him to find joy where I have not found it; he has something that enables him to bring into open speech what I have felt to be right; he has thoughts about life and therefore about God that I have not." And James would have him read: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering," let him not be "a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways." If a man desires at all costs to know God, that is just the mind that will find in Jesus the wisdom he seeks.

The warnings against mistake, which form part of the first two sections of the letter, were not only needed by all sections of his readers, but would serve to protect Christianity from being thought to think what it did not think. It is necessary to make known, not only what it believes and enjoins, but also what it does not believe. "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God": "Faith apart from works is barren." The need for the latter we have seen: the former comes near to those who twisted Paul's doctrine to mean, "Let us do evil, that good may come" (Rom. III. 8).

It is said that this letter is unique in the New Testament as containing no praise to the readers. In a letter written to a particular Church praise is good, for the writer knows what is praiseworthy in it, but in an encyclical praise is little more than compliment, and in a letter written by a Christian to non-Christians would probably be discounted as a rhetorical wile. His one ingratiation is, "Ye know, my beloved brethren."

On the whole, the letter resembles the parables of Jesus in its method. It puts no pressure: it sets forth its truth in subtle suggestion, and asks, "What think ye?" and leaves the answer to the reader.

## CHAPTER IX

### WEALTH AND THE TONGUE

#### (1) *Wealth*

THE thought of James keeps so close to experience and is so sparing of abstracts that the best approach to his theology is through what he says of certain practical concerns.

In a people without political power and with strong public opinion against the grosser forms of moral looseness, the chief evils will be connected with what people have and with what they say.

What James writes about possessions reminds of the teaching of Jesus. He sees wealth as temptation to self-exaltation. Therefore "let the rich man glory in that he is made low." It is not very clear what he means by this: he applies to the rich what Isaiah says about "all flesh," and says that the man, not his riches, shall pass away as the flower of the grass, a judgment repeated later to the acquisitive, "What is your life? For ye are a vapour." James's pity for the withering grace of its fashion is pity for the inanition of life's beauty by its possessions, as in the difficult saying of Luke XII. 15, which may be paraphrased, "Of property a man's life needs a little but is choked by much." But what does James mean by the rich man being "made low"? It can hardly mean, let him glory in the loss of his wealth, for such loss without change of mind would be no true reason for glorying, nor does the desirable frame of mind depend upon the loss. It would seem that here to be "made low" is to find something of incomparably greater value than his wealth, something that by its greatness makes him feel small, so that, disillusioned in his old ground of glorying, he attains a basis for a better glory.

The sensitiveness of James on this point is seen in that the only direction to which he explicitly turns "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" is against "respect of persons" for their wealth, and in that the height of his prophetic indignation is against the injustice of the wealthy to the poor.

(2) *The Tongue*

No one can read the Epistle of James without being struck with the number, variety and incisiveness of his utterances about talking. It has been suggested that he must have suffered from the speech of men, but he has no direct mention of slander, and in exchange he could more than hold his own. His main thought is the effect of speech on the speaker. His power of pointed speech must have brought its own frequent temptation, and the economy of his utterance suggests an able speaker habituated to holding his speech under control, to "bridling his tongue."

"Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" suggests that control of speech is the first step to control of anger. This is not always recognised, for speech is often the only expression of anger made otherwise impotent by fear or convention. The advice, "be slow to speak" is seen to be a preliminary to "receiving the inborn word." Ready words and quick anger get between a man and his own soul, preventing him from listening to his inmost and engaging him to the superficial, external, conventional, habitual and animally instinctive.

"If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridlenth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain." "Religion" means "cult," dealing largely with the correct means of access to God, so that this takes us back to Jesus' utterance about defilement, that which was believed to bar from God's presence, "There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man"; and of such wrong use of our initiative the cheapest, easiest, commonest is unbridled speech. Isaiah, in "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips," confessing thus the most God-impeding sin of his race, justifies the attention James gives to it.

In II. 14 *ff.* James suggests that faith without works is mere talk, by which man deceives himself as to the worthlessness of faith without works, telling himself that talking about faith is itself a kind of work, as a man may think himself

kind for wishing good to those he might, but does not help.

His main exposition of the tongue begins (III. 2): "If any man stumble not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also," where "body" means "personality." Control of speech means self-control where most frequently needed, most easily forgotten and often hardest to enforce.<sup>1</sup> The simile of bridling leads him to say that if you do not control your talk, your talk will control you. In what follows, James implies that, as talk may make man deaf to "the inborn word" which is responsive to God, so it may establish a system for our activities in rivalry to the native, inwardly ordered, divinely given system. It is so: we are divided between a rule of what we inwardly apprehend as right and good and a system of conduct held together by what we say (to ourselves and others), what we say to ourselves being often imposed on us by what we think others say of us, or by the desire to think approvingly of ill impulse (i.e. to "rationalise it"). This observable activity in us seems to be what James has in mind in an otherwise difficult expression. After comparing the destructive power of the tongue to a forest fire (for "wood" in III. 5 probably means "forest"), he suddenly changes his figure, "the tongue is the world of iniquity among our members"; then he goes back to the figure of fire, his language evidently being controlled by meaning rather than form. The word translated "world" is "cosmos," meaning originally "order" or "arrangement." The tongue is a fire because it is also a cosmos, so destructive because of its own iniquitous constructiveness. By unjust judgments it creates a system that intrudes cancerously upon the wholesome unity of the personality's elements or "members."

This "world of iniquity" "defileth the whole body," makes the man unfit to approach God. "World" here is the same word as the "world" of IV. 4, the friendship of which is enmity with God, evidently because it imposes an order of life incompatible with God's order. By our fear of the tongues

<sup>1</sup> "The Abbot Hyperichius said, 'The monk that cannot master his tongue in time of anger will not be master of the passions of his body at some other time.'" (Miss Helen Waddell, *The Desert Fathers*, p. 102.)

of men or ambition for their applause, and by what in this connection we say to ourselves, the world makes good its hold upon us, the tongue's "world of iniquity among our members" being its local agent.

James goes on with another difficult phrase, "sets on fire the wheel of nature." "Nature" here is "genesis," with the meaning of "birth" or "creation," and "wheel" may mean "the round" in the sense of inclusiveness. After telling of the tongue's evil effect on the inner construction of a man's life, the thought of the writer would probably pass to its outward setting. The phrase seems to mean the complete wholeness of man's natural life-setting, the God-given connectedness to which a man is born; the sort of construction that the brute preserves and lives in is with man destroyed by the tongue. If bees could talk it would ruin the hive. It is common experience that families are split not by what is done but by what is said.

"And is set on fire by gehenna" probably does not mean that its wickedness has an infernal source, which would be foreign to the New Testament use of "gehenna," the meaning of which always carried a reminiscence of its derivation, *Gehenna*, the place outside Jerusalem where rubbish likely to be offensive was burnt. It stands for the destruction of evil, the reaction of reality against noxious rubbish. The meaning seems to be that as the tongue destroys, so it will be destroyed because it destroys: by dissolving fellowship and credence, it stultifies itself.

So we have the destruction of the fellowship of man with God, and of man with his fellows, in which the tongue destroys all in which its own activities lie. This progress may explain the "for" of v. 7: the tongue goes on to destruction because it cannot be tamed. The thought of James runs to inclusiveness. He has named the whole man and the circle of his human connectedness: now his mind goes out to man's relations to the whole animal world. Man has set himself at the top of them, has mastered his living circumstances, but his tongue is not yet mastered. "The tongue can no man tame" seems to mean, not that it is uncontrollable, but that one cannot trust to its control as habitual: it needs constant

effort, whereas a tamed beast, horse or dog, once taught to obey, maintains the habit. It is possible, however, that by "tamed" James means merely "conquered," in the sense that man has successfully disputed the possession of the whole world with every other form of life, but has in his tongue deadly self-poison which is "restless," not to be dealt with once for all.

Then comes a passage still on the tongue and illuminative of much of the Epistle's thought. "Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the likeness of God: out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." He is evidently describing the action of the "doubleminded man," but he ends by saying we are either one thing or the other, "Can the fig tree yield olives, or the vine figs?" James implies that God is blessed by man in the belief that to bless Him is to do that which pleases Him, despite the same man's cursing his fellow men, whose Lord and Father is God, and who are made after the likeness of God. James assumes that the man knows, or, if he thought for a moment, might know, that such cursing of men is ill pleasing to God, and that he regards both as genuine acts of his spirit, so that he can set the one to balance the other. James says, No, evil is not a fleck but a direction. "The tree is known by its fruit." "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil." It is not separate words or deeds that tell ("in many things we all stumble"), but what a man values supremely, what gives direction to his personality. He who curses men and blesses God is not half good and half bad, but bad at heart, and the worse that he blesses God, for it is treachery to bless the Lord and Father, whom for loving us men we bless, and to curse our fellow men, also His children whom He loves.

The interesting thing here is that James sees it to be speech that blinds a man to the impossibility of at once loving God and hating men. Though we know we might be better, we are making no serious attempt to be so, because we count

ourselves good enough; but the standard here is not the standard of our innermost, it is the convention that lives in the voices of men. We impose upon our conscience the terms of our set—"They will steal anything and call it purchase." To James the man who is not honestly striving (no matter for frequent "stumbings") to do the will of the Lord and Father of all men is a bad man: "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin"—he is the worse for his knowledge. He allows the voice of convention and his own pious talk to delude him.

James sees in talk, including what we say to ourselves, the greatest danger to inward honesty and wholeness. The cosmos of the tongue is the system of false judgments ranged round self-love supported by the world's system of interlocked self-interest. And so it intervenes between man and his true self, and between man and God. But this trenches upon our next chapter. To a future chapter also must be relegated the last paragraph of James's section on the tongue, III. 13-18, about the two wisdoms, as also IV. 11 *f.* on speaking against others.

James's final utterance on speech is, "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." We have seen how this "above all things" marks it the most important caution in the most dangerous field. The importance, of course, turns upon the supreme value of the simple truth of ordinary speech. The conventional use of the oath connived at the lessened sanctity of the ordinary unsworn word, and in so doing made reference to God a convenience to dishonesty. Society condemned the false oath, but winked at untruth, and the man told himself that though he might lie occasionally he never swore falsely, and counted it honour to God that his oaths were sacred. And so, again, we have the cosmos of the tongue conspiring with the world to man's inward dishonesty and separation from God.

## CHAPTER X

### HUMAN PERSONALITY

NO other writer of the Bible shows such interest in the constitution of personality, nor deals with it in a way so free from ancient preconceptions.

He insists upon its unity. Twice he names doublemindedness as the peculiar evil of the spirit of man. And by doubleminded he does not mean part good and part bad, which in one sense all men are—"in many things we all stumble." As we have seen, he holds that every man has one centrally emergent direction or quality of activity, good or bad, as the fig tree bears figs and the vine grapes. This is contrary to common thought: we mostly take it for granted that men, in themselves and in their acts, are mixtures of good and ill. We see no reason why a man should not bless God and curse men: the oldest song in the Bible has "Bless ye the Lord" and "Curse ye Meroz." Yet James finds this absurd: to him man can never be "good in parts," like the curate's egg. Only self-deceiving words, making thought superficial, can persuade us that we are not so bad, when we are not seriously trying to be better, and the recognition of a possible better makes our self-satisfaction a treachery to the good. By doublemindedness James does not mean part good and part bad, but discrepancy between what a man is content to think of himself and the truth of his inner life, of which he is partly aware but tries, often successfully, to forget.

The doubleminded man is unstable. His picture of himself is out of touch with facts, so that he suffers from inward, unacknowledged, but, in the long run, disastrous, division. Of such Jesus asked, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" and in the parable of the two builders depicted the result of this combination as collapse under the very strain which their activity was intended to meet.

Doublemindedness is incompatible with effective faith. "Let him ask in faith, nothing doubting" should rather be, as in A.V., "nothing wavering," or "not divided in his

mind." It does not describe the man who wonders whether God will answer, but the man who is not sure that he really wants what he asks for. The doubleminded man does not really want the best, and God gives only the best, therefore "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."

The doubleminded man's direction of activity is not from his innermost; in fact, he has no true direction at all: he is "like a surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed."

But this takes us to where doublemindedness is considered in connection with faith. "The proof" or, rather, "the genuine, test-surviving part of your faith worketh endurance." It is not the temptation or testing that produces it, but the faith so tested. It is by these stresses that faith becomes conscious of itself, toughens, and so overcomes the threatened division. Such faith is given here as that in which personality finds its stability.

The wisdom to be asked for in faith nothing wavering, and which God cannot give to the doubleminded, is not merely insight to deal with the particular temptation, but knowledge of God, as appears in I. 12, where they that endure temptation are equated to "them that love" God. The inability of the doubleminded to receive that knowledge reminds of the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," where "pure in heart" means wholehearted. In IV. 8 James writes, "Purify your hearts, ye doubleminded," and in III. 17 "the wisdom that is from above is first pure." The beatitude uses a different word, but both are ritual words meaning fit to seek God, and therefore free from admixture.

The thought that human good is inward wholeness and human evil inward division appears again and again. "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed" (I. 14). The momentum of the whole personality dissipates itself upon the pull of a part. Yielding to temptation is regarded as incest committed by the whole man upon a fraction of himself. The result is sin, a living thing become part of himself with a life of its own like cancer, producing death. We have the converse statement of this in "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

“Good” here is clearly the best available at a given time, that in which our capability of recognising values is at one with itself: to leave this good undone and do something else is to set will against choice, to create inward division.

This is the situation involved in being hearers only and not doers of “the inborn word,” “deluding our own selves,” and “forgetting what manner of men we were” (I. 21-4). The recognition of the right tells us of our true self, and to forget and act ignoring it is to create a divergent self. The perfect man (he who stumbles not in word) is he who is “able to bridle the whole body,” in whom the whole personality is made one by an effective central control.

In III. 13 *ff.* James writes of “the wise and understanding,” those thought fit to be teachers, and refuses to acknowledge such fitness in the absence of meekness as the mark of the works of a good life. Then follows the disjointed compactness of “But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth.” The glorying and lying are seemingly both against the truth: bitter jealousy and faction exist in the claim to wisdom (moral and religious) by a pretended zeal for truth, which is really eagerness for self-exaltation, a false glorying which makes truth subservient to itself.

In IV. 1 James does not apparently mean to say that the pleasures war against each other, but rather that they are mobilised for war (στρατευομένων), their field of operations being “in your members” which are the elements of a natural whole. They set up an active *imperium* of their own (like the “world of iniquity” of the tongue) in defiance of the true unity of personality, and thus drive the person into war with other persons.

The gist of the passage on faith and works is in the unity of personality. James does not write to belittle faith or to maintain that a man can be saved without it: both faith and works are inseparable parts of one dynamic self, and cannot exist apart. So we must understand the colloquy: the objector says, “Why all this about faith and works? I am saved by faith, but I have works as well, just as you who stress works will acknowledge that you have faith. Thou hast

faith, and I have works." James answers: "That is not my point, which is that the two cannot exist apart: works, not words, are the vital expression of faith: what other evidence is there? Shew me (if thou canst) thy faith apart from works, and I by my works will show thee my faith." The colloquy proceeds: the objector produces his faith without works, "God is one," the faith on which all Jews prided themselves, but one which, now that it was secure and free from persecution, had little, if any, effect on conduct. James answers: "Your faith puts you in good company: the demons also believe, and all they do about it is to bristle with fear." It has probably puzzled many why James, as his examples, chose such questionable instances as Abraham sacrificing his son and Rahab the harlot. But we find that, after having dealt at length with the faith of Abraham in other respects, the Epistle to the Hebrews, turning now to list the national heroes of faith, begins with Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and ends with Rahab, so that these two instances seem to have been stock examples in the matter. Probably, therefore, we should consider the altercation as proceeding, the objector continuing: "Abraham was not justified by works when he offered up Isaac, for that was not a good work, God would not let him do it: it was a test of faith." And James answers: "Yes, but on your own showing, it was by so much as he did do that his faith expressed and showed itself, and in it was fulfilled the earlier saying concerning the birth of his son, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.' You cannot keep the two apart. By works faith is made perfect, as in Abraham's action." Then James takes another stock example from this school's repertoire: "Rahab being a harlot, how could she be justified by works?" James says, and rightly: "Nonsense: she was saved for what she did in helping the messengers to escape."

The argument's conclusion, "As the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead," is contrary to the ordinary expectation that faith should be compared to the spirit and works to the body. It shows that by works James means the will, personality being to him essentially and centrally an activity. We are reminded of the

common assertion that not until truth is put into action, does it become fruitful of good. Faith without works is an element of personality not contributing to its unitary activity and therefore deleterious.

This passage on faith and works must not be taken apart from the earlier half of the chapter, which begins by reminding that "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" makes us sensitive against class distinctions, and so is a powerful means of clarifying and enforcing "the royal law," "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," at a point where it is likely to be disregarded.

To hold "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" with respect of persons is to be "divided in your own mind": it is to put oneself into a self-contradictory position: "Ye become judges of evil thoughts" does not mean, as it does not say, judges with evil thoughts; nor would there be any sense in saying that they passed judgment on evil thoughts; so the meaning must be that it is evil thoughts that gave them the position of judges. In "respect of persons" we constitute ourselves judges for our own advantage, which is the contradiction of the office.

The whole effect of Chapter II is that "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" has an impact of conduct more direct and forcible than the central tenet of Jewish faith, "God is one," which much more easily becomes faith without works. The implication is that the faith that "God is one," needs "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" to enliven it into activity and make the believer inwardly whole.

Again, in IV. 4 *ff.*, James in worldliness sees double-mindedness, with what we have already seen to be its implications Godward, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" The mutual exclusiveness of God and the world imply that both involve inclusive systems of life, that personality is a system of which the architectonic principle is God or the world, each standing for larger systems into one of which the smaller system of the personality is integrated. The antagonism is not given as God and self; for the system of the self is disintegrated by inclusion in the world and becomes doubleminded, with merely external

cohesion supplied by the world. And, again, it is self-deception that makes this possible, "Know ye not . . .?"

This brings us to another frequently canvassed thought, that only in God can man avoid the self-deception that allows doublemindedness, and only in God can man find the way to conscious, inward wholeness. Over against the doubleminded man James sets the man who, knowing that he lacks wisdom, asks it from God and so gets the wisdom which qualifies him for the reward of "them that love" God, given to "the man that endureth temptation," for ultimately all temptation is to love something more than we love God.

We may ask: If doublemindedness obviates God's help towards inward wholeness, how can man escape it without already having what it denies him? But James does not call him to screwed-up effort, but to honesty. Doublemindedness does not exist without some dim, if ignored, sense of the inward urge to wholeness, and it is a more or less conscious suppression of this that is its evil. What is needed is honest recognition of this, honesty here being the opening for God's ingress. Hence James's reiterated warning against self-deception (I. 7, 13, 16, 22; II. 4).

We have already considered something of what James says about the incongruity of blessing God and cursing men—that he thinks of the doubleminded man as not part good and part bad, but as fundamentally bad, the rift in his doublemindedness being between what he chooses to think of himself and what he most inwardly is. James's view of personality is in his figure for it, the opening of a fountain, the quality of the output of which is given by the reservoir behind, so that it is a thoroughfare. Another figure is the fruit tree, a thoroughfare that transmutes all that reaches it from air and earth and sky, the quality of whose transmutation is given by the lineal life of which also it is a thoroughfare, the tree thus being a transmitting, transforming node or focus. So in the next paragraph personality is the exponent of one of two wisdoms, the wisdom that is from above or that which is earthly, sensual, demoniacal.

Chapter IV describes four sorts of wrong conduct, all more or less explicitly involving doublemindedness and resulting

from or in lack of right attitude to God, as in the just preceding passage (III. 13-18) theological faction and bitterness indicate lack of wisdom from above.

In IV. 1-3 James sees the origin of wars and fightings in the "pleasures that campaign in your members" and in that "ye ask not" or "ask amiss." He implies that to come to God in prayer is to invite divine criticism upon our desires, which, accepted, will transform them into that with which He can and will co-operate. "Ye have not, because ye ask not" implies that the sense of frustrated desire comes from prayerlessness. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend in your pleasures" speaks of prayer which makes God subordinate to self. There can be no true coming to God but one that regards Him as Lord and Father, who commands life to the opposite of selfish ends. When pleasure is made the end of our activity, the service of life is forgotten and the activity becomes inimical to personal integrity and social order, and therefore to the will of the Creator. Pleasure attends all natural activity, but when the attendant leads there is perversion, and with it inward division, social antagonisms and alienation from God.

Those addressed in IV. 4, "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" evidently act as though they thought the two friendships could be combined, which is what James means by being "doubleminded," and calls so in v. 8. And he makes clear his verdict that this is not being part good and part bad, but that the actual attachment is by far the worse because of the acknowledged allegiance, to which it is treachery.

What James says about the man who judges his brother must be considered later, as it deals with the law, but we may here note that he regards this man, who speaks in pretended loyalty to the law, as thereby inverting the whole relationship in which man stands to God, and as himself assuming the place of God. There is discrepancy between his cherished thought of himself and the true nature of his act, with its perversion of his relationship to God. The censorious and the luxurious run together.

With the travelling traders (IV. 13-17) the connection is

less obvious. James tells them that they should not boast of future success and glory in the thought of good profits, but, remembering the uncertainty of life, should say, "If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that," trite, conventional advice, a commonplace of Jewish piety, and no doubt intended as such by James. But he carries it to its conclusion: as with the fighting pleasure-seekers, so with the acquisitive, let them bring their desires before God, and they will see them in different light. The boasting that sustained them will then lose its charm: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." In God they would see the worthlessness of their chase for gain, because they would remember something better to live for. To know that better possibility and not to do it—again we have the rift between recognition and act—is sin, alienation from God.

The good they might do James leaves undescribed. But they could not seriously bring God into the count without remembering God's will for their nation, nor could James think of that without thinking of Christ, and knowing that what he wrote would be read as from one who had declared himself "the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ," the Christ who inaugurated a new era in the nation's destiny.

As we have seen, this statement on sin completes that of I. 14 *f*. There the man is "drawn away by his own lust, and enticed": the whole yields to a partial pressure: it is an affront to the wholeness of personality. And there James argues that the man cannot blame God, whose whole action is in the opposite direction. Here he gives the positive side of this. Human lives find oneness of judgment and activity only in the fellowship and service of God. "Let him glory in this, that he knoweth me," said the Lord, and only in what we rightly glory in can we be at one with ourselves. James does not condemn glorying, but "such glorying."

It will have been seen that at almost every point of his survey James stresses fellowship with God as the condition and crown of inward wholeness. The most explicit expression of this is in the variously translated IV. 5, as given in the R.V. margin, "Or think ye that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit which He made to dwell in us He yearneth for even

unto jealous envy."<sup>1</sup> For more clearly in the Greek even than in the English the main subject of the first sentence of v. 6 must be the same as that of the last sentence of v. 5, God, who is named in v. 6 as resisting the proud. "The scripture" spoken of in v. 5 is probably the often repeated declaration that God is a jealous God tolerating no rivals. God's motive is love: He asks so much that He may give the more: "He giveth more grace." It is this that condemns the fiction of divided loyalty in which the doubleminded live.

Fellowship with God appears in "The crown of life which the Lord promised to them that love him" (I. 12), where James's figure is the special mark of favour given by a king to his most valued friends. Abraham through faith and works "was called the friend of God." The wisdom "that cometh down from above" speaks of something more than verbal conveyance: it is God's sharing His thought with man. So we have seen in what James says to the fighters and to the traders, that any honest contact with God leads on to a consonance of human and divine desire.

Many of the passages dealt with in this chapter give, with some difference of aspect and somewhat greater elaboration, one of the most often reiterated principles of Jesus' teaching, that what we are trying to be to our fellows limits or allows what God is to us—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," "Judge not, that ye be not judged." "Give, and it shall be given unto you," etc. Our outgoing to our fellows and God's incoming to us are a vital unity. Especially is this seen in James's insistence that faith apart from works is dead: in the wisdom from above recognised in our meekness; and negatively throughout Chapter IV, though most obviously in the censorious: we have no true enjoyment of God's good will if we bear ill will to our fellows, it being impossible truly to bless Him and curse them: the fountain's giving and receiving are one: the tree produces what it was born from.

<sup>1</sup> Hermas, who shows the influence of James, has (Mand. III. 1) "the spirit which God made to dwell in this flesh" in a context which makes it clear that he is not speaking of the Holy Spirit.

## CHAPTER XI

### GOD, MAN AND THE DEVIL

To James God is Creator and Father, Giver of all good, especially of wisdom, but he thinks of all these as aspects of one relationship.

On God's goodness the most significant passage is I. 13-18, the whole of which is the answer to "I am tempted of God." He begins, "For God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man." This does not say that God has nothing to do with man's temptation, which would not help a tempted man, who might then think that to be tempted proved that he was no longer in God's hands. It does not mean "God is never tempted to do evil," which would not help the argument, nor would any Jew suggest that God might do evil. Rather it means that man's evil doing can never be desirable to God: He can never be tempted to tempt man to it. Jas. I. 13 reproduces Ecclus. XV. 12: "Say not thou, It is He that caused me to err; for He hath no need of a sinful man."

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above." The Greek is a hexameter, and it may be a quotation. The difference of the two Greek words represented by "gift" is untranslatable, the first word calling attention rather to the giving and the second to the completeness of the gift, reinforced by "perfect," so that the use of the two words calls attention not so much to the divine side of the gifts (sufficiently stressed in "is from above") as to the impression made on the recipient. Some good things come to us; others are part of our being, yet no less given. The gist is that all we know of good may be known as from God, recognised so because they are gifts of "the Father of Lights," i.e. Father of intelligences, who transmits His intelligence to us in our making, "Of His own will He brought us forth by a word of truth." Therefore the tempted man must not go on, "God may be good, but His goodness is of different sort from ours." To James, as to Whittier,

*“Nothing can be good in Him  
That evil is in me.”*

“With Him can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.” He does not move man to sin and then punish him for sinning, or by such change of method make Himself unintelligible to us.

James does not think of God as having nothing to do with our temptations. What he repudiates is that God designs man’s downfall: “drawn aside by his own lust and enticed” (I. 14) describes not mere temptation, but the yielding to it. Temptation is part of the ordering of God’s world, an essential concomitant of the moral freedom by which alone man can make good truly his own, and can therefore receive God’s best gifts: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: . . . he shall receive the crown of life . . .” reiterates the progress of I. 2-4 from being tempted to being “perfect and entire.”

The fundamental truth of our being is God the giver, in creation, in maintenance, in prayer; so that for the wholeness of our being we need the wisdom that is knowledge of Him, which to him who asks wholeheartedly He gives “freely and upbraideth not.” This wisdom is the special promise to sincere prayer, there being no true knowledge of God without supreme desire for Him. Man’s freedom, honestly used, is the condition of God’s self-revelation, the desire for which, coming from man’s feeling tempted to use his freedom wrongly, is desire for active fellowship with God. We have seen how this is stressed in IV. 4-6. Men mistake God if they think they can share loyalty to Him with any entanglement: only in wanting Him above all can they share His friendship, and the best He has to give.

In James’s thought creation and revelation go together. It is by “the Lord and Father” that men are “made after the likeness of God,” and, as we have seen, this implies some knowledge of Him. So the “good and perfect gifts” of “the Father of lights” implies the giving of power to know the good and to recognise it as the gift of God. “Of His own will He brought us forth by a word of truth” implies that He

imparted to us of His will and intelligence. βουληθεῖς ἀπεκύησεν says that He voluntarily put us forth from Himself, so that we are of His being and yet distinct from Him, akin to Him, but with freedom of His self-giving. Creation is thus kinship and revelation.

With James God's fatherhood of man is in man's creation: he has no room for the Pauline idea of adoption or the Johannine idea of our being given "the right to become the children of God" in virtue of our belief. God "yearns unto jealous envying for the spirit which He made to dwell" even in those whom James calls "adulteresses," those who have been treacherous to God and are living in enmity with Him. Here James is in accord with the teaching of Jesus, who said, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him," and who argues man's duty from his kinship with God (Matt. V. 45), and while often speaking of God's fatherhood never speaks of adoption, the salvation of man being the prodigal's return to his father.

The connection of creation and revelation lies behind "One is lawgiver and judge, even He who is able to save and to destroy." The law is the expression of God's goodwill toward us, the revelation of the conduct He wants from us for our own good, the ways in which He seeks our fellow-working, that His work in our creating may go on to perfection. When we refuse this law and will not co-operate with our Creator we uncreate ourselves, or, rather, turn ourselves against His creative powers, and convert His goodwill into destruction: this is His judgment. And it will be noted in I. 15 that "sin bringeth forth death," as inevitable result rather than imposed penalty, while the term "bringeth forth" is the same as that used a little later for God's creation of men.

It is consonant with his stress on man's kinship with God that James stresses human freedom. He presupposes man's power to be a doer, to put aside all filthiness, to resist the Devil, to draw nigh to God, to cleanse the hands, not that this power of initiative is not God's gift, but that it was given in man's making. One of the banes of doublemindedness is that it compromises man's initiative and makes him "like the

surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed." The will is the vital centre of the man, "As the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead." Faith can live only as an element in the living whole of personality whose core is active will. The figures of III. 11, 12 are a progression: it is with man's acts as with water of a spring—the same opening does not produce bitter water and sweet, the quality of the output being given by what lies behind it: as the tree produces fruit after its kind, so man his acts: fresh water is not to be had from the salt sea—the man's act is the man himself.

James's insistence on freedom goes with his insistence on law; if God reveals His will to men, it is because they are free, knowing His will, to do it. It would be absurd to issue commands to those who are unable to choose to obey. Freedom and law imply God's desire for the fellowship of men, that they should freely will what He desires.

This assertion of man's kinship with God and power of initiative stands in strong contrast to the Johannine development with its sheer antithesis of divine and human, heaven and earth, and with its dominating predeterminism.

Man, according to James, finds the right setting only in God's inclusive purpose. Man has an inevitable need to find connectedness in the elements of his interest, which can be effected only by the connectedness of his life's setting, to be found in God or sought in some bad substitute. This appears explicitly in two places. Wisdom is the integrating intelligence of man, but it is of two sorts, the wisdom from above, giving a life in ordered co-operation with the will of God, and the alternative integration which is earthly, sensual, devilish, which triad implies that if the animally instinctive elements of desire are not ordered beneath the purpose of God, they will be ordered from the selfish standpoint ("selfish" being the meaning of the word translated "sensual"), which will betray itself in unnatural and malicious evil, the demoniacal.

So also, as we have seen, in what James writes about friendship with the world (IV. 4-6), he sees two rival systems, the world and the will of God, competing to give a setting

to man's life, for we remember that the word "world," cosmos, implies an order or arrangement. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble," cited in this connection, implies that the world is held together by its appeal to the pride of the individual, reminding of Luke XVI. 15, "That which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." And this connects with the tongue's "world of iniquity," for it is by the world's criticism or plaudits, real or imaginary, that it has its hold on the individual.

It is here probably that we find the meaning of "unspotted from the world," given as one of the conditions of "pure religion." If "friendship of the world is enmity with God," any hold of the world upon us must keep us from God, and "unspotted" is a ritual word for that which is fit for God's presence. It may be as following from this, that the epistle goes on immediately to deal with "respect of persons," one of the commonest impositions of the world's ways on God's. Had James by "unspotted" meant free from sins of sex, he would probably have referred to "the flesh," as in Jude 23, not to "the world."

Here only, in connection with the world, not in connection with temptation, does James write of the Devil. Possibly, as some said, "I am tempted of God," others would say, "I am tempted of the Devil," fear of whom might unnerve their resistance. The connection in IV. 7 is the common Jewish thought that the kingdoms of the world were in the power of the Devil (Matt. IV. 8 f.; Luke IV. 5-7). It may seem to his readers hard to break with the world, but let them understand the alternative. God antagonises the proud: enmity with God is long warfare with a powerful Enemy: but subject to God, with His power to help, let them but make a stand against the Devil and he will flee. "Devil," δίαβολος, means "slanderer," the world's power over us for evil being in its depreciation of life's higher values (the tongue's world of iniquity again), but this depreciation, once repudiated and repulsed, becomes despicable.

But most of what James thought about the relationship between God and man must be dealt with separately under the heads of wisdom and law.

## CHAPTER XII

### WISDOM

As we have seen, wisdom concerns the relations of God and man, a comparison of I. 5 and I. 12 showing that the wisdom to be asked for is knowledge that surmounts temptation by bringing love to God and fellowship with Him, figured by the crown, the honouring mark of friendship.

Again, this wisdom is that no man is tempted of God, and that God is the giver of all that we find good, the Father of lights, who "brought us forth," made us of His own being, imparting to us of His own light in "a word of truth," "the inborn word."

The passage upon the two sorts of wisdom (III. 13-18) follows immediately upon the question, "Can a fig tree yield olives, or a vine figs?" We have seen that this implies that man produces by transmitting. In the passage on the two wisdoms only the good is in this way productive, acting upon "the wisdom that is from above": the alternative wisdom is not from anywhere and is making no whither, but knots up the man's activity upon himself. Wisdom from above is the wisdom of a mind open and sensitive to the greater than itself, and therefore involves the supersession of selfishness and self-glory, for desire lifted above self-bias can find its place only in an all-embracing goodwill. The wise man is agent for the eternal wisdom in fellowship with which he acts.

Wisdom is not here personified, or made intermediary between God and man: it is a human activity that may be good or bad, but, if good, comes into fellowship with God's wisdom, or rather apprehends God's part in the life He has imparted to man. The wisdom that is not from above is man's organising intelligence unifying life from the selfish point of view. James points out that this is not honest, especially where it touches the intelligence itself, for there it pretends to be eager for the truth only that this pretended eagerness may serve self-glory. On the other hand, James's

first description of the wisdom from above—that it must be and is above all things “pure”—seems to imply that honest thought will lead to God. The man who wholeheartedly seeks truth has found God: God has begun upon him.

The whole argument regards wisdom as a mentally unifying process, which organises life either on a basis of self-concern or as instrument and partner with the life and purpose of God. It is an alternative like that of IV. 4, friendship with the world or friendship with God. In III. 13-18 James is speaking of teachers: he denies the theology of the ungentle man, who, he shows, is self-contradictory, lying against the truth, jealous and factious towards his fellows. He passes from this to consider a similar state of things in the man who has no pretensions to teaching. His pleasures mobilise themselves among his “members,” elements of the natural order of his being, and so bring him into conflict with his fellows, and all this because he has not sought in God an ordering interest higher than his pleasures. When the self commits itself to the lead of its lower elements, it at the same time misses its highest possibilities, upsets its own wholesomeness, and is liable to become unintelligibly, unnaturally malicious or demoniacal. Of this we have a complete picture in Iago, scornful of the spiritual, proud of his intelligence, which commits him to unreasonable malice, culminating in a destruction of others involving his own.

In III. 13 James propounds the criterion of true wisdom to be meekness towards others; and in I. 21 meekness is the quality he finds necessary for the reception of “the inborn word.” Meekness is the opposite of arrogance and self-exaltation, and “the inborn word,” the “word of truth” imparted by the Father of lights, must be thought of as in essential connection with the wisdom from above.

More than one writer has said that what James says about wisdom represents in his teaching what elsewhere in the New Testament is said about the Holy Spirit. The description of the wisdom from above as “pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy” is much like Paul’s “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance." But James's description is that of a wise man rather than of abstract wisdom. Pure intelligence is a conception as foreign to James's thought as it is to human nature. To him wisdom is essentially one aspect or element of personality, so that when he writes of "wisdom from above" it is hardly to be distinguished from fellowship of the human mind with the divine. It is man's fellowship with God completing God's original impartation of "the inborn word."

The section ends with "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace," one of the terse, somewhat enigmatic, so-called "capping" utterances, characteristic of James and important for the understanding of what precedes it. "The fruit of righteousness" which is "sown" speaks of the need and power of goodness to propagate itself. Unless it can do so, the righteousness, like the plant, will die out, but to do so both need the right soil, which reminds us of the parable of the Sower.

"The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace"—the righteousness in one life does not evoke righteousness in another unless there is peace between them, fellowship, friendliness. Without peace righteousness is barren and we are apt, especially in our most formative years, to get a dislike for the virtues of the unfriendly; men, therefore, are but half righteous and less, unless they are peacemakers, unless their goodness has an invasive, infective, outgoing quality. It is this evocative, creative quality that seems to be meant in the beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." It means more than being the kindly intermediary between antagonists: it means overcoming evil with good: it means to "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you"; and so "ye shall be sons of the Most High."

This, of course, reflects upon what immediately precedes. Truth is not disseminated by jealousy and party spirit, but only by the wisdom that is peaceable, gentle, full of mercy and good fruits. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

He ends “. . . . is sown in peace for them that make peace.” The translation should (as in R.V.) be “for” and not “of” or “by,” which, though grammatically possible, would be unusual and redundant. The peacemakers are the sowers, and theirs is the joy of harvest. The harvest of righteousness is God’s harvest, and therefore the harvest of His children, the peacemakers, but in widening ownership, for effectively to make peace is to make another peacemaker.

And here is a contrast between the end of Chapter III and the beginning of Chapter IV. The actions of the livingly good are seeds productive of response in like kind, and so sealing fellowship by a common joy in harvest, whereas those who live for their own pleasure are always unsatisfied, and proceed to acts which evoke retaliation and end in destruction of life.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE LAW

#### (1) *Mosaic Law*

THE Law is a chief concern and thought-form of this Epistle, and in the New Testament its treatment of the Law has a freedom found elsewhere only in the teaching of Jesus.

In two places James writes of "the law" simply, evidently meaning the Mosaic law—II. 9-11 about the transgressor, and in IV. 11 *f.* (without the article) on being a judge and not a doer of law. In another passage (II. 8) he writes of a "royal law," the Mosaic commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves, though the supreme emphasis on this particular law cannot be reckoned as Mosaic. But in II. 12 he writes of a "law of liberty," in evident distinction from the Mosaic law just dealt with. And in I. 25 he writes of "a perfect law, the law of liberty," where a "perfect law" from the pen of one that confessed Jesus as the Messiah whose commands he owned as God's commands ("servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ") would be taken to mean the law as made perfect by Jesus.

Where James first writes of the Mosaic law his argument, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one, he is become guilty of all," seems unfair, until we recognise that here, as elsewhere, James looks on the law, not as a number of injunctions, but as a personal relationship: "For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill." To disobey a law of God is to injure a personal relationship, not like an examination, where nine right answers will secure a pass, despite one wrong one, but like a friendship, where a hundred faithfulnesses cannot be set against one treachery.

The personal relationship appears in what immediately precedes. James writes (II. 5) of "the kingdom [βασιλεία] which He promised to them that love Him," and then of the "royal [βασιλικὸν] law," where "royal" seems to mean, not

only supreme, but especially of the kingdom, possibly in reminiscence of Jesus' naming as greatest of all, the two commandments, to love God entirely and to love our neighbour as ourselves, and pronouncing the agreeing scribe as "not far from the kingdom of God." Unless the universe has a personal centre, with whom we can come into fellowship as our supreme good, it is not easy to see where we can find a base for such supersession of self-centredness as is involved in "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

IV. 11, 12 has, "He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth a brother, speaketh against law, and judgeth law; but if thou judgest law, thou art not a doer of law, but a judge. One is the lawgiver and judge, He who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy brother?" Here again the law is not a system of injunctions as to conduct, in which it is quite possible to be both judge and doer, as in our law courts, where the judge's and jury's business is to administer the law in judgment on their brother, without carrying any implication of passing judgment on the law itself. But here, as elsewhere in James, to judge means, when it is man judging, to condemn gratuitously and unhelpfully, so that it breaks the law of loving one's neighbour. When God judges, it is the destruction that comes only through disobedience, so that God's desire is always to help, whereas when we judge, we gratuitously choose to be unhelpful: our desire is then the reverse of God's, and we justify it in being so, for judging claims its own justification. But that is not all, for to repudiate this particular law of loving one's neighbour as oneself is to repudiate all upon which law rests—the subjection of the self to God—and the whole base of human good, God's goodwill, effective in us only as we recognise it to be equally toward all, and so constraining us to like goodwill.

This is very different from the two senses in which it is right to judge the law. Jesus, in the matter of divorce and of ritual defilement, judged the law to be wrong; and the details of any law may have to be judged wrong and discarded, when the condition of life to which they apply has undergone change. Also, in a very real sense, to recognise the rightness

of a law is to judge it, and without such judgment man could not honour God's will rightly nor give it voluntary response. God creates man in His likeness and, revealing Himself in His law, reveals man to himself, lets him as in a mirror see his face as God means it to be, and this could not be effective without so much judgment in man as is necessary for recognition of the right, which is man's voluntary response to God's initiative, moving him to love his neighbour as himself.

### (2) *The Inborn Word*

Besides references to law, apparently Mosaic, and to a law of liberty, evidently of Jesus, James also writes of an "inborn word," "a word of truth" active in our creation, evidently having something of the nature of law, because he writes "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves." But there is a distinction, for although James regards creation, Mosaic law and the work of Jesus as moments of one process, he does not use the term "law" until, in Moses and Jesus, the word has found expression external to the ordinary human self. Before this it is "the inborn word" or "word of truth," an ability to recognise the good. And if man is to make voluntary response to a divine command that comes to him, he must be able to recognise it as right and good, so that this power to recognise good, this "word of truth" or "inborn word" is a necessary preliminary to all moral law, and especially to a "law of liberty."

A figure James uses here is very significant. The "inborn word" is a mirror in which the man recognises "the face of his genesis," of his birth, or becoming, of his making or creation, which, since James is always thinking of God as Creator and Father, suggests that he had in mind here, what he expresses later, that man is made after the likeness of God. Man, being essentially a will, does not know himself until he knows his direction, nor does he know himself truly until he recognises his right direction, which is that for which God made him and in which God calls for his co-operation by giving in his making "a word of truth" "an inborn word."

"The inborn word" is the truth of the inward man, hence

James's call to leave the chattering and angry moods (I. 19) that make us superficial, to get rid of adherent dirt, excremental badness and unreceptive arrogance (I. 21), so that we may make the inborn our conscious possession. "Which is able to save your souls," is so expressed as to mean which is necessary to the saving of your souls: there is no external help except as it calls speech from the inmost and gives God's patent to its persuasions. This is Jesus' parable of man's inward sight: "The lamp of the body is the eye, if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

James goes on to say that to one man "the inborn word" is a soon-forgotten recognition of the truth of himself, but another, giving his whole attention, finds "a perfect law, the law of liberty," in which, living and acting, his activity shares the happiness of God,  $\mu\kappa\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma \xi\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ . It is clear that only by recognition of its rightness and desirability can a law become a law of liberty. But it is also clear that here James is speaking of something more than "the inborn word," for, as we have seen, in "the law of liberty" he must be speaking of Jesus: the power of recognising here finds the greatest of all to be recognised.

We have seen that "Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" implies our recognition of their origin in our recognition of their goodness: and this intent is confirmed by the end of God's creation of men being given as "that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creation," the offering of the firstfruits being man's recognition of God's goodness in giving the harvest. As we have also seen, the words  $\delta\acute{\omicron}\sigma\iota\varsigma$  and  $\delta\acute{\omega}\rho\eta\mu\alpha$  do not tell of two sorts of giving so much as two differences in recognition.

The only passage in which James writes explicitly of the influence of Jesus upon conduct (II. 1 ff.) does not speak of a specific command of Jesus, but of the recognition of incongruity between "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "respect of persons." He looks to the inner response to bring new moral determination to a situation in which Jesus is now a factor.

Without taking into account this power of recognising the good and divine, there is no incongruity in blessing God and cursing men. But if God made men after His own likeness, it is His desire that they should grow up in this likeness, which cannot be without their recognising it and accepting its direction. To bless Him for having made us after His likeness is to adopt His will as ours, and, in ourselves and others, to do all we can to make good His likeness in humanity, which is not done by cursing.

### (3) *The Law of Liberty*

Twice James writes of a "law of liberty." The first time it is another term for "a perfect law" (I. 25), and, as we have seen, though he does not here name Jesus, his qualifications, "perfect" and "of liberty," would tell that he was not meaning the Mosaic law, which was simply "the law," while his initial confession of Jesus as the Christ would give his source for the better law. Then, shortly, he goes on to show how "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" affects conduct, and at the end of his paragraph on this he writes, after referring to the Mosaic law, "So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty."

A "perfect law" must mean perfect in its injunctions, and even more, wholesome and effective in its sanctions, a law that does not aggravate inner disunity. To tell men to act and speak as about to be judged by a law of liberty, suggests that to act and speak as about to be judged by any other law would not be good. The only other law in mind would be the Mosaic of which he has just spoken, the expressed sanction of which was that God would give prosperity to the obedient and adversity to the disobedient. A law with such sanction was not compatible with faith in a crucified Messiah, and we have seen how often James suggests its inadequacy. We can see that to act with a view to being judged by such a law would induce just that inward division that James condemned. A law of rewards and punishments is a law of slaves, not even of hirelings, for none may resign from the law. It does not bring any true harmony between Com-

mander and commanded, for the Commander wants the thing done and the commanded wants the reward; therefore it cannot produce fellowship, which a good Commander is bound to desire. It appeals to self-concern, and to apply a self-concerned motive to the duty of loving our neighbour as ourselves is to prescribe the incongruous and to cultivate doublemindedness.

Another thing of which we may be sure is, that to James, with his continual stress on human freedom, "a law of liberty" must be a law that increases freedom and makes it effective. It can hardly be otherwise and have any meaning, for to suggest, as has been done, that it means a law that men are free to obey, is to nullify its distinction, for a law that men could not obey would be no law at all. But when, in human action, we speak of freedom, we speak of initiative from the inmost: there is no true freedom in mere consent to external pressure, or else every spiritless slave would be free. So that in the fullest sense we are free only in doing that which, in knowledge of our permanent interests and fundamental needs, we above all desire to do. The history of man's evil is that he gives way to desires which he afterwards, in the more inclusive view of quiet moments, recognises as not the desires most important to his whole, permanent self: he remembers that in the doing of them he was "not himself," was excited, superficial, driven by convention, passion, habit, was "moved" rather than self-determined.

Yet the law of liberty is a law: it comes to man, not merely as the deepest desire of his being, but as the demand of God. It is the recognition that here lies the way to his true self as his Creator intends him to be. It is God's will for our free and complete personality, our Father commanding us to be truly ourselves.

Such sanctions invigorate our freedom and knit our inward wholeness, for the penalty of disobedience is that we compromise our freedom and betray our selfhood. The reward, that which comes from its not being merely our own desire, is that obedience is fellowship with God. If the greatness of our selfhood is to have fellowship with God (and it must be so, if we are His children), then to be actively ourselves needs

the command of God, the external is needed for the truly internal. If we are truly to desire the fellowship of God, we need to know that God wants ours.

We see here how James connects the "word of truth" "the inborn word" with our making. This "word," becoming law, and then "the law of liberty," is our recognition of the impact on our wills of the Will that "brought us forth." To be made in the likeness of God would be meaningless without some power to distinguish the Godlike, a power which ultimately finds itself in a law of liberty coming in Christ, in whom it recognises One entirely in the likeness of God. The first, dimly apprehended ideal of his creation becomes in Christ "a mark of everlasting light," a faith that makes him whole, a service that is perfect freedom.

This gives greater point to James's figure of the mirror. Man is not merely or chiefly a memory and a regret. Memory is the handmaid of activity: functionally, biologically, we remember so that our choices may be wise; and man, being essentially an activity, looks before rather than after. We are not so much what we have been as what we are convinced we may be. Hence the inborn word, the index of man's creation after the likeness of God, is the mirror that shows him what he is by showing what he may, and is meant to, become.

Another matter worth noting is that James, in I. 21-25, passes from the enlightenment at creation, the "word of truth" and "inborn word," to Jesus' "law of liberty," without reference to the Mosaic law. This reminds of the way in which Jesus goes behind the Mosaic law to creation. He attributes the Mosaic law of divorce to "your hardness of heart" and repudiates it because "From the beginning of the creation, male and female made He them." And, going beyond the Mosaic law, in bidding men love their enemies, He bids them be true to their origin, "that ye may be sons of your Father in heaven."

It may seem that in stressing the relation of Jesus to the law, James ignores the revelation of God in Him. But to the Jew law was revelation. Every law (other than scientific laws) contains two things, what to do and why to do it, and

both these tell the character of the lawgiver. Ultimately it is only in what comes to man as convincingly and commandingly good that he can know God, and, so known, the character of God brings desire for fellowship with Him, which clarifies, emboldens and effectively reinforces the conclusion that the good thing is worth doing. It is the sanction and sanctification of human good. It gives direction and power to conduct. "The faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory," probably "the Shekinah," the manifestation of God in the world, by making God supremely lovable (as is hinted in "to them that love God"), makes "respect of persons" absurd and enables man to love his neighbour as himself. The believer wants to do God's will, because, knowing God in Jesus, he loves God. "The law of liberty" came from Jesus, who "gave His life a ransom for many," whose life given was "the blood of the new covenant," that which effectively bound man to God with a law written in the heart (Jer. XXXI. 33).

James closes this section with, "For judgment is without mercy to him that shewed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment," which is given as the reason why men should act as about to be judged by a law of liberty. It reads like a reference to a particular instance which expresses a general rule, and may refer to the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. XVIII. 23-35), where the pardon of the big debtor had to be cancelled, for he had used it to make his king an accomplice to mercilessness. His pardon was used by the big debtor, not, as the king designed, to be a new start in life for him, but, because he would not take the king's act in the king's spirit, it became the beginning of new misery and greater loss of liberty. "The law of liberty" is thus closely related to one of the fundamental truths of Jesus—that what God can be to us is measured by what we would be to our fellows—"So shall my heavenly Father do to you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." The law is that goodwill to our fellows is our fellowship with God, our outgoing to them is His incoming to us, and to live in this law is vast increment of life. "So speak, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty" tells not merely of fore-

cast, but of the profoundest condition of present abundance of life. "Mercy glories against judgment," which is the bringing forth of death by sin, whereas mercy is goodness intensified into life-giving.

## CHAPTER XIV

### ST. PAUL AND THE LAW

**I**N considering the law, we cannot do justice to St. James without comparison with St. Paul.

It is commonly taken that if there is any serious difference between them it is about faith and works. But, as we have seen, the difference here is not great. Paul would have agreed with James that faith without works is dead: James would have agreed with Paul that without faith a man cannot be saved. Paul's insistence on salvation by faith and not by works was aimed at the Jew's glorying in his own fulfilment of the law: James's insistence on works was aimed at the Jew who gloried in his creed at the expense of his conduct.

About the law itself there was between James and Paul a deeper difference of thought, which affected all their theology. The Rabbinic conception of the law, to which Paul was brought up, was of a complete, miraculously imparted code of divine requirements, in which the nation gloried as a unique divine favour. One result of this was Jewish reluctance to recognise a present and living apprehension of God, so that the Jew was slow to believe in a prophet of his own day, especially in one whose utterances differed in any way from the law, as we have abundant evidence in the story of Jesus. It was difficult for Paul to bring such a conception of the law into relation with his experience of Christ.

What he thought about the law is made clear in his letters. It was given in all its completeness by a special act of God at a certain point of history. "It was . . . ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator" (apparently Moses) "four hundred and thirty years after" Abraham (Gal. III, 19, 17). As he makes clear in Romans, he sees the Mosaic law as essentially different from the religious elements of man's moral consciousness experienced by other races or by his own race before its coming, and for him its relation to the gospel of Christ is connected with this difference.

He holds that God's intent in giving the law was not that men, knowing His will, might do it, and so find fellowship with Him: rather "the law came in beside, that the trespass might abound" (Rom. V. 20). "I had not known sin, except through the law" (Rom. VII. 7). "The law worketh wrath" (Rom. IV. 15). "The law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. I. 9). God's object in the law was, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under judgement of God" (Rom. III. 19). "As many as are under the law are under a curse" (Gal. III. 10). "The letter killeth" (2 Cor. III. 6). He writes of the Mosaic law as a bondage (Gal. IV. 24, V. 1). He regards the law not as revealing the goodness of the lawgiver, but as a code of impossible demands designed to complete and intensify man's sense of guilt, so as to drive him to fling himself on the divine mercy manifested in Jesus, and thus be "justified by faith."

It is certain that such a conception of the law is quite foreign to the mind of those to and through whom it came: it is entirely incompatible with the whole development of Hebrew religion. We find no sign in the Old Testament that the law was felt as a burden, much less a curse. The psalmists found great joy and peace in it. It is not too much to say that the view of the law on which Paul shaped his presentation of the gospel makes nonsense of much of the best of the Old Testament.

But we can see that he was driven to this thought by the endeavour to make logical connection between the Rabbinic doctrine of the law and his experience of the divine power of Jesus, for Paul had found the truth of God in Christ effective in him for good as the law had not been. But if the truth of God was in Jesus, then was not something lacking in the law, not only in what, but in why it commanded? But how could that which was given by God verbatim miss its aim, as it had done, if that aim was to make men know Him and His will that they might do it? So Paul was constrained to deny this ostensible aim, and to declare that God gave the law in order that men might become conscious of their estrangement from Him, and be "shut up" to the way which

God had shown in Christ. This view of the law also enabled Paul to explain to the Jewish Christians that there was no need for the Gentile Christians to observe Mosaic law, though here there is a shifting of incidence, for it was in the moral injunctions of the law that Paul found what he claimed to have been enjoined that man might become conscious of his sin, while it was only from the ceremonial injunctions that he declared the Gentile Christians free.

Another feature of the Rabbinic view of the Old Testament must be noted here, though it will be of more importance in later considerations. To them the most sacred parts of the Old Testament were the books of the law, for they came by dictation from heaven. Now, though there is much in these books morally and religiously fine, very much of them is concerned with such ceremonial details as are to be found in all religions at a certain stage, while, from the point of view of modern research and of the spirit of Jesus, the greater part of all that is best in the Old Testament is found outside the books of the law, especially in the Psalms and in the prophets, and in these there is frequent depreciation of the sacrifices that formed so prominent a part of the law.

It may be said that the Rabbinic views of the law and other scriptures were universal among the Jews of the time, and there is little evidence to the contrary. In any case, we know that Jesus did not share these views, nor did James. Jesus, as we have seen, said that in the matters of defilement and of divorce the law was wrong, and much of the Sermon on the Mount deals with its inadequacies. But He regarded His own work as in line with the direction of the law: He came "not to destroy the law but to fulfil," a declaration shared by James, but quite incompatible with Paul's view of the law.

Such difference of view about the law could not but be reflected in the presentation of the gospel. In Galatians we can sense Paul's recognition of such difference. It was agreed that Paul and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles, and James, Cephas and John to the circumcision; and Paul sets "the gospel of the uncircumcision" over against "the gospel of the circumcision" (Gal. II. 7-9); all of which implies a

difference of message, as otherwise there would be no need so to demarcate the difference of audience.

James views the Mosaic law as an integral part of one process that began with man's creation and culminated in Jesus. To him Jesus is the fulfiller of the law, making it a law of liberty. It is noticeable that when Paul wants to go back before the Mosaic law he goes back to God's covenant with Abraham, conceived analogously to the law as a special intervention of God, whereas James goes back before the law to man's moral and religious nature as given by God in his creation.

There is no doubt that in their thought of the law James was nearer to history and nearer to Jesus than was Paul. Here certainly James carries on the thought of Jesus in its own spirit and direction; especially is this so in his view of the law, not as a code of injunctions, but as a personal relationship between God and man, and of Jesus' own effect in bringing a law of liberty, in which mercy glories against judgment.

It is easy to see that a gospel that started from James's view of the law would be much more acceptable to the Jews than one like Paul's which, however attractive it might be to Gentiles, grounded itself on a view of the law which must have been highly offensive to the serious Jew who thought he knew something of what it was to delight in the law of the Lord.

It must be remembered, however, that the expressions in which Paul differs most from James were those uttered in meeting his fellow Jews' opposition to the Messiahship of Jesus, an opposition which sprang from his own Rabbinic view of the law. Under other needs, the experience of Paul finds other expression, which comes nearer to James, such as, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Also, James, as we have seen, often hints at the inadequacy of the Mosaic law, especially in its sanctions, while, according to Rom. VII. 7-25, it was Paul's bitter experience of this inadequacy that lay behind his peculiar interpretation of the law's function.

## CHAPTER XV

### THEOLOGY

#### (1) *The Kingdom*

A MOST notable thing in this Epistle is the absence of reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus, to the doctrines of incarnation and atonement as usually presented, to the future life and to the Holy Spirit. The common suggestion that this is due to lack of spiritual and mental ability to appreciate the theological achievements of the early Church is amply disproved by the sensitive and acute thinking obvious everywhere in the letter. Another suggestion is that the letter originated in some place remote from the main current of Christian thought. But neither suggestion even touches the most striking omissions—the death and resurrection of Jesus and the future life.

Part of James's omissions may be due to the reticence necessitated by his aim and method—to entice Jews to consider Jesus—which would lead him to avoid those affirmations that would rouse objection before a position had been reached at which they could be fairly considered.

In connection with the things that James does not speak of at all, we may consider his one mention of "the kingdom," which is strange because he has so many references to the utterances of Jesus, and Jesus spoke more of the kingdom of God than of any other matter. There may be a partial explanation in that what Jesus said about the kingdom belonged especially to His public ministry, while James's knowledge of His thought must have been gained mainly in the private years which preceded, but it is unlikely that James knew nothing of it. The explanation rather lies in James's avoidance of the inflammable, somewhat akin to Jesus' own secrecy about His Messiahship. Eschatological excitement helped to precipitate war with Rome in A.D. 66, and the unwholesome trend of this interest would be observable long before. "The kingdom of God" or "of heaven" was one of the most inflammable terms of Jewish eschatology, and when

James does speak of the eschatology of Jesus (V. 7-9) it is in terms that would mean little except to the Christians among his readers, "the coming of the Lord is at hand." Where he speaks of "the kingdom," the eschatological element is not stressed: it is of the poor who are "rich in faith" and "heirs of the kingdom which He promised to them that love Him," reminding us of the earlier "crown of life, which He promised to them that love Him." The national implication, which made the kingdom of God a watchword of revolt, is ignored.

### (2) *The Holy Spirit*

Some students take "the spirit" of IV. 5 to be intended to mean "the Holy Spirit." James there writes of "the spirit which He made to dwell in us," "us" being the writer and those to whom he is writing, which here are "adulteresses" at enmity with God. He therefore cannot be speaking of the Holy Spirit as understood in the rest of the New Testament. As we have seen, we should probably translate to say that it is God that yearns unto envying over the spirit that He made to dwell in us, even in these "adulteresses," for James is arguing from this to the evil of their position. So that we must understand "the spirit that He made to dwell in us" to be the original divine element in the making of man, the divine breath of life which the Creator breathed into his nostrils (Gen. II. 7).

As we have seen, it is a matter of common observation that in what James writes about "the wisdom from above" in III. 13-18, he comes near to what is written by Paul about the Holy Spirit. And not here only, but in other places, he says what involves the fellowship with God which elsewhere in the New Testament is spoken of as the characteristic of the Holy Spirit's activity.

The reticence of James in this matter may be due to several causes. In the Old Testament, which would give most of his readers, especially the non-Christian ones, all they knew of the activity of the Spirit, these activities are mostly those that superseded the man's conscious control of himself and became a divine "possession." In the early Church the

most notable of all activities attributed to the Spirit was of this sort, "the speaking in a tongue," glossolalia, an utterance of unintelligible vocables under pressure of intense religious emotion, the advertisement of which James may not have considered to his purpose. It was likely to give a bad impression to outsiders, the very men James was trying to influence: men so speaking might be thought drunk (Acts II. 13) or mad (1 Cor. XIV. 23). Peter, in rebutting the calumny, does not appeal to the content of the utterance, but to the hour of the day, and Paul, though he looked upon the "speaking in a tongue" as the operation of the Spirit, insisted that its activities must be subjected to the dictates of common sense (1 Cor. XIV. 26 ff.). The supersession of self-consciousness in glossolalia would be of questionable value to one like James, who is so jealous of the autonomy and inward wholeness of personality that he excludes the tempter from his account of temptation (I. 14 f.).

We have also to bear in mind that the Pauline treatment of the Spirit as peculiarly the effect of faith in Jesus is very hard to reconcile with the part of the Spirit in the Old Testament. Paul's question to the Galatians, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" would have been hardly intelligible to one with James's understanding of law.

### (3) *The Resurrection.*

As we have seen, James may have felt no great need to write of the future life, because he was writing to Jews, who already believed in it. But even so, such entire omission of what is so important elsewhere in the New Testament marks a very independent mind. We cannot avoid connecting it with the absence of all reference to the resurrection of Jesus, with which in other New Testament writings it is nearly always connected.

In the early Church the resurrection of Jesus was doctrinally interpreted as a miracle whose primary import was to attest that Jesus, despite His crucifixion, was the Messiah (Acts II. 23-31, XVII. 31; Rom. I. 4, etc.), and only later

and secondarily as assurance of our own resurrection. The latter became of first importance among the Gentiles, who found great value in news of the resurrection of the dead.

As we have seen, the whole Epistle is full of statements showing the inadequacy of the Mosaic doctrine that suffering indicated God's displeasure with the sufferer. James therefore needed no miracle to remove the difficulty of a crucified Messiah. Nor could he have been as well acquainted as he was with the thought of Jesus without knowing something of Jesus' repudiation of the spiritual worth of signs, "Why doth this generation seek a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation" (Mark VIII. 12). He may also have known that Jesus gave the gist of a parable in the declaration, "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead." And one cannot help feeling that the whole of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus would have been singularly acceptable to the mind of James.

James would see no need of miracle to assure him that Jesus knew God supremely. "The inborn word" of man, "made after the image of God," had power to recognise what was of God, and recognised God's Christ in Jesus and set Him beside God, as completing and giving effect to the God-given law. James's whole trend of thought thus gives us to think that to him Jesus' commands were to be accepted as the commands of God and Jesus Himself as revelation of God's character, not because miraculously attested, but by the attestation of the God-given power of apprehension, native to man's creation, the "word of truth" by which man became man.

#### (4) *Christology*

Some of James's theological omissions are explicable by the circumstances and aim of his writing. But, as we have just seen, his letter gives evidence of a strong and distinct direction of thought, peculiar to him among New Testament writers, so that some of his omissions may be because he did not need the doctrines concerned, being adequately supplied in his own line of thinking. And his theology, though unique

among New Testament writers, was probably not unique in the early Church. For, apart from his, the thought of the New Testament is almost entirely either Pauline or Johannine. We have seen that Paul's thought is grounded in the Rabbinic conception of the entire divinity of the Mosaic legislation, both moral and ceremonial, a conception from which the highest factors in Hebrew religion, the prophets, were free, as was Jesus. The Fourth Gospel shows influence of Greek thought in taking to its logical conclusion another trend of later Jewish thought, the antithesis of the human and divine, with its concomitant predeterminism. So that there is no record of the way in which Christian doctrine was developed by the Jewish thought most akin to the thought of Jesus, unless we have it in this Epistle.

Christology concerns itself with thinking justly about Jesus in view of the Christian experience of His power to convince of such goodness and love of God as gives them effect in human life, Jesus also being the means by which God is thus effective.

To James, man, made after the likeness of God, and therefore with an inborn word, a word of truth by which he knows himself brought forth by the Father of lights, and therefore with power to recognise what belongs to the likeness of God, recognises that likeness complete in Jesus, and therefore acknowledges Him Lord and Christ and sets Him beside God as God's one adequate revealer and agent.

If man were not in and by his creation a child of God, with God-given power to recognise good with its inference Godward, it is questionable whether he could ever come to know or think of a good God. The foundation of James's Christology is God as Creator and Father of men, the Infinite Spirit from whose outgoings in the universe man is born, born inhabited by spirit (made to dwell in us), which brings intimations of its origin, and therefore power to recognise the yearning goodness of the Creator and Father.

The recognition of what is good is independent of any attestation other than that of its own quality, and this independence is its direct Godward reference. In the supremely good we recognise the supreme revelation and activity of

God. The goodness of God can no more be attested by miracle than love can be bought by money. The Christology of James is the answer of "the inborn word" to Jesus.

Is anything more needed? If we compare the later controversies on Christology with James's description of "the wisdom that is from above" as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated," we shall hardly recognise the latter as the method and spirit of the former.

What, then, was Jesus to James? In terms that remind us of Paul's confession, "There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him," James confesses himself servant, slave, of God and the Lord Jesus Christ; without even such qualifications as Paul uses, he sets Jesus beside God. "Servant" or "slave" was a common term for worshipper, which, with the Jew, was especially connected with the doing of God's will as known in the law. Jesus is Lord, of authentically divine command, is the Christ, anointed agent of God to do for God what was yet lacking, to complete the expression of God's will and to make it effective. To set Jesus beside God as James does, means that there is for him truest and completest knowledge of God with Jesus and not without Him, and that the authority of God so known is for him effective as it is not without Jesus.

That Jesus was Lord and Christ was the earliest preaching (Acts II. 36, IV. 33, X. 36, XI. 17, etc.). The word *κύριος* (lord) had three main uses—as equivalent to Yahweh, which is commonly so translated in the Septuagint, as meaning little more than "Sir" in form of address, and in its proper meaning by derivation for one with power or authority. James uses the term sometimes for God, sometimes for Jesus: the same is true of other New Testament writers. The significance of this is not clear: probably the Greek used by Greek-speaking Jews determined the use of the word for "God," almost as a proper name, whereas applied to Jesus it stressed His supreme authority; but that the same word, though with difference of suggestion, was used for Jesus and God, implies, for the Jew at least, something of the same ineffable awe for both: it sets Jesus with God as does James in his first words.

James's reliance upon an original gift of ability to recognise goes with his making no appeal to prophecy or to miracle to prove the Messiahship, and this, despite his readers' knowledge that Jesus was crucified, which was the first thing any Jew would know about Him. We have seen reason why James should not make the common appeal to the miracle of the resurrection. It is often stated by preachers to-day as an incontrovertible fact proving conclusively the Church's doctrine of the person of Jesus. If this is a correct account of the event, it is difficult to see how any, let alone the great majority, could remain unconvinced, especially in the time of eye-witnesses. It is in better accord with the facts to think of belief in Jesus rather as moral conclusion than as consent to miraculous evidence. So James seems to have thought. With regard to prophecy, there were two methods. It was possible from the great mass of Hebrew literature embodied in the Scriptures to pick coincidences with the life and death of Jesus, as, "A bone of him shall not be broken" and "They shall look on him whom they pierced," but the evidential value of this depends upon the type of mind to which it is presented: it was consonant with the Rabbinic view of the Scripture as verbally inspired and therefore capable of the minute forecast attributed to omniscience. As we have seen, this view was common, but neither Jesus nor James held it. Theirs was the broader view that the work of Jesus was attested by being in vital, selective and completing continuity with the past of Hebrew religion. And in this sense it was moral and spiritual recognition that saw in Jesus the full answer to the agelong seeking.

In II. 1 James writes of "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" and adds what, literally translated, is "of the glory," which grammatically may be either in apposition to "our Lord Jesus Christ" or in qualification of it, in the latter case referring especially to the last word "Christ." It is commonly translated by additions either as "the Lord of glory" or as "our glory." Against both of these is the the objection that had the writer meant either, he would not have written as he did. Had he meant "the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory," he would have used the form of words he had just

used in "a perfect law, the law of liberty," and had he meant "our glory," he ought not to have omitted the pronoun, especially needed with a word like "glory." Taking it as it stands, it must be either an adjectival addition, meaning merely "glorious," and therefore adding nothing to "Lord" and "Christ," both highly glorious terms, or it must be in apposition to "the Lord Jesus Christ," in which case it is awkward and inexplicably abrupt unless we take it in its not uncommon Jewish use as meaning "the Shekinah," the epiphany of God's presence on earth. This interpretation has the consent of many scholars—Knowling, Mayor, Moffatt, Oesterley, Rendall and others. But it should be remembered that the "Shekinah" was God's glory manifest on earth, so that its reference to Jesus is not to the glorified, heavenly Christ, but to Jesus of Nazareth. Even if we are reluctant, as are some scholars, to consent that "the glory" must have been meant by James for "the Shekinah," the result is much the same, for, taken in apposition, "the glory" must mean the glory of God, and glory in this connection always has the sense of manifestation or expression. Just as James's self-description as servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ is a confession of faith, so here "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory" is implicitly equal to "the faith that Jesus is Lord and Christ, and supreme instance of God's presence on earth" revealing God, whose greatest glory, it is suggested, is in what Jesus made manifest concerning Him.

It is sometimes said that James has no doctrine of the incarnation of God in Jesus: it would be truer to say that for him the beginning of incarnation was in creation of man, whom God, man's Father, "brought forth" from Himself, after His own likeness, and that it found its completeness in Jesus in whom that likeness became the glory of God on earth. Granted James's premise of "the inborn word" and man's making after the likeness of God, it is not easy to find room for any other doctrine of incarnation, especially if it involved a break in continuity and a divine intrusion, such as was consonant with Paul's belief that God gave the law in order to bring man to an impasse. Incarnation must mean differently to Paul, who writes of "God sending His own son

in the likeness of sinful flesh," and James, to whom men "are made after the likeness of God."

One difference in this respect may be due to James's far closer acquaintance with Jesus and consequent deeper impression of His goodness. In the doctrine of incarnation by intrusion, the revelation of God's goodness is not especially in the goodness of Jesus, but in God's sending of His son to die, which we are left to interpret by the way in which we imagine an earthly father would feel in like case, a comparison not easy to make with respect to events in a supernal world quite beyond the scope of experience and imagination. One who had so long and intimate experience of Jesus' goodness would find it an expression so glorious and a fact so powerfully interpretative, that it would be a loss to him to have to find the chief revelation of God's goodness elsewhere, in an event theologically presented and measured by imagination and finding its colour not on the love of Jesus for men, but in the ordinary instinctive affection of fatherhood.

The Christology of James is the Christology of Jesus, as we have it in the first three Gospels. Jesus accepted, as not inadequate, the belief that He was the Christ: He speaks of Himself as being called Lord; and He claimed uniqueness in both knowing God and making Him known (Matt. XI. 27; Luke X. 22), which would make Him the Shekinah; but He always takes man's attitude to His God and Father.

#### (5) *Atonement*

It has also been laid against James that he has no doctrine of atonement. If by atonement is meant the bringing together of man and God in and through Jesus, this is not true, but it is true that there is in his letter nothing like the Pauline doctrine of atonement, and there are parts of it that seem incompatible with such a doctrine, which would hardly commend itself to one who took the teaching of Jesus so seriously and was so acquainted with His life. For we cannot ignore difficulties here with the Pauline doctrine.

The Pauline doctrine of atonement has no place for Jesus' doctrine of forgiveness, which was that if we forgave others

God would forgive us, itself a particular of the larger condition that we must repent. Paul also entirely ignores the teaching of Psalmists and Prophets on forgiveness, which they promised on repentance. In this matter he confines himself to Mosaic law, which made provision for the remission only of ritual sins.

The Christian Church came to speak of the death of Jesus as atonement for sin, and to declare that it was for this that He died. God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin," i.e. as an offering for sin. If James was the Lord's brother, he was well acquainted with both the internal and external factors that resulted in His death, and would not be likely to find them well expressed in this doctrine. He knew that Jesus went to His death in pursuance of fulfilling the law understood as God's will for mankind and His revelation to mankind, modifying its demands, purifying its spirit, making it more effective by an adequate conception of God's love and of His worthiness to be loved. James knew that whatever part, and from whatever motive, the High Priests had in Jesus' death, the balance was in the hands of the most influential section of the nation, the Pharisees, and that they condemned Him because of His attitude to the law.

James probably knew that Jesus said that "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many," an utterance that may have led James to speak of "the law of liberty," for it was in the figure of slavery that Jesus was speaking. He knew that Jesus spoke of His "blood of the covenant," but the covenant sacrifice was not a sin-offering.<sup>1</sup> And had Jesus gone to His death knowing that He was providing the necessary condition for man's forgiveness, how could He have cried to God, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?"

A powerful factor in regarding the death of Jesus as a sin-offering was that it gave pretext for bringing it within the Mosaic law, which regarded adversity as evidence of God's displeasure, especially when the adversity was final and

<sup>1</sup> Matthew (XXVI. 28), here otherwise following Mark, is alone in adding "unto remission of sins," evidently an editorial addition, for he omits this phrase from Mark's account of John's baptism of repentance "unto remission of sins" (see Acts II. 38).

extreme, as in "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The answer was that the death of Jesus was evidence of God's displeasure with sin, but with the sin not of Jesus but of others, borne by Him that they might be forgiven. But we have seen that in many places of his letter James gives evidence of having abandoned this Deuteronomic idea that prosperity and adversity were respectively God's reward and His punishment.

The doctrine of the death of Jesus as a sin-offering bridged the distance between the Jewish sacrificial system and the thought of Christianity. Jerusalem was the heart of Israel, the Temple the heart of Jerusalem, and the altar the heart of the Temple, so that it was natural that the Christian Jew who, in the death of Jesus as the consummation of His life, experienced "the power of God unto salvation" should help himself to an understanding of it by using the terms of sacrifice, though the truth of it was that it was the very opposite of the sacrificial system. Jesus accepted Hosea's declaration that God desired mercy and not sacrifice, and when the scribe agreed that to love God entirely and to love one's neighbour as oneself was "much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices," Jesus said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." So that it may have seemed to James not fit to explain the culmination of Jesus' endeavour for God and man, in the terms of what Jesus Himself taught to be the inferior part of that law which He came to fulfil. That James took seriously this side of Jesus' teaching is seen when he defined pure religion, *θρησκεία*, properly "cult," the very word that the Jew would take to concern especially the rites of sacrifice, and did not make even figurative reference to sacrifice.

James writes of forgiveness of sins without any reference to atonement, at least of Pauline definition, "The prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him" (V. 15). In IV. 10, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you" speaks of what must include forgiveness, yet neither here nor in what leads up to it is there any reference to a connection with the death of Jesus as

atonement. James's readers are exhorted, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded," and whether they are non-Christian Jews, as the terms imply, or sinning Christians, there is not, as we should probably have found in either Pauline or Johannine literature, a reference to cleansing by the blood of Christ. Forgiveness in James is, as in the Old Testament and in the teaching of Jesus, through repentance.

In this connection two passages are significant: "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." "To cover sins" is a ritual term: the sin that bars from God is "covered" by sacrifice, so that God no longer sees it, and so receives the man. Both this and "to save a soul from death" are achievements which elsewhere in the New Testament (except in 1 Pet. IV. 8, which quotes Prov. X. 12) are both regarded as the redemptive work of Jesus. Here they speak of the work of the Epistle's readers. The soul saved from death is, of course, that of the retrieved strayer, but whose are the sins that are covered? Probably not his also: for, in this sense, to be saved from death is in itself to find repentance and forgiveness. It seems to be an application of Jesus' teaching, that, as he who forgives is forgiven, so he who helps another to forgiveness shall find it himself.

God, writes James in I. 5, "giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not." Why this "upbraideth not," a word meaning strong blame, calculated to pain the blamed? James must have had in mind some wrong thought on the matter which needed correction. He is writing about the prayer for wisdom, which he thinks of as effective knowledge of God, giving fellowship with God. Now it is a common thought that when a man comes to God, God must show His disapproval of all sin past and present in a way that will be very painful to the man; James says, No, you come to One who gives "to all liberally and upbraideth not." Theories of the atonement have been built on the supposition that James rebuts—that God cannot take man to His fellowship without doing something to signalise His wrath against sin. In the parable, the prodigal intends to propitiate his father by humiliating him-

self in his father's presence and saying, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son," which, so far as the story goes, is his last misunderstanding of his father.

James's own doctrine of atonement is found in II. 1-13, where "Mercy glorieth against judgement" crowns the passage beginning with "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the whole Bible sin has no sterner denouncer than James: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all" comes, as we have seen, from James's view of the law as a personal relationship between God and man, and sets the problem of that relationship as uncompromisingly as does Paul. The problem demands a solution, and James finds it in the law of liberty instituted by Jesus, in which "Mercy glories against judgement"; and we have seen that "the law of liberty" finds its enactment in the Son of man's giving His life a ransom for many.

Acting as about to be judged by a law of liberty involves, as we have seen, a fellowship of desire between God and man, who recognises that what he wants most, when he knows himself and God truly, is what God wants of him. This is to be at one with God, an atonement effected by Jesus, author of the law of liberty. And it is in this that "Mercy glories against judgement."

The articulation of this atonement is discovered in the reason given for speaking and acting as men that are "to be judged by a law of liberty," after which James goes on, "For judgement is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy." We have seen here a reference to one of the most reiterated principles of Jesus, probably as illustrated by the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. By not responding with mercy upon his fellow-servant to his king's great and free mercy upon him, the Unmerciful Servant forced the level of relationship between his king and himself down from the high one of mercy to the lower one of judgement. The king's mercy uncanceled would have consented to the Servant's meanness.

There is judgement without mercy only to the unmerciful, which is to say, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall

obtain mercy," given here as the reason why we should act as about to be judged by a law of liberty. It may at first seem as though "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" is a *quid pro quo*, but it is not, for *quid pro quo* is bare retributive justice, not mercy. The law that what we are trying to be to our fellows is what God can be to us, is retributive justice only on the side of our ill will: on the other side, it is the bounty of God's costly fellowship. God's generosity moves man to be generous, and appropriating that movement, man opens his heart to an ever-increasing incoming of God: refusing to follow God's lead in generosity, man parts company with the best of what God would be to him. To reject a command is to frustrate a revelation and defeat a fellowship: mercy can act for the best only where it is allowed to be infective.

It seems as though James did not need any mechanism to explain how God could show mercy to the repentant: what to him needed to be explained was how man could ever be without God's mercy; and that he does by "Judgement is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy," for here the man refuses the entry of God's mercy into his heart, and would make of it merely an opportunity of attack upon his fellows. God's judgement of man is man's refusal to admit God's goodness into the initiative centre of his being.

To incur judgement is thus to minimise God's action. To James God is essentially Creator, Father, Giver of all good: mercy, which is life-giving, restorative, redemptive, creative of fellowship, is therefore a more godlike activity than judgement: "Mercy glorieth against judgement," is a triumph over it.

The difference here between the thought of Paul and that of James seems to lie in their different view of the law. Paul took the Rabbinic conception of the law, as given directly by God, and as being complete so far as law was concerned, and his problem was to think how God could "justify" those whom the law condemned. Paul's answer was that men were "justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood . . . that He Himself might be

just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Rom. III. 24 *ff.*). To James the law did not create this problem, because "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" revealed and instituted a law of liberty as regnant between God and man, the only thing needing to be explained being that men might defeat the beneficent intent of God by refusing to live in the mercy He tenders them, a position to which James was bound by his belief in human freedom. The likeness of outcome in the case of both thinkers is seen if we compare, "So speak ye, and so act, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty" given as in "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" with Paul's "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and of death," the Mosaic law, which, to James, Jesus had "fulfilled," making it the law of liberty. James says nothing here or elsewhere about the death of Jesus, a silence which may be in part imposed upon him by his method, but we must reckon that he could be sure that, writing to Jews, everything he said would be read as qualified by his acknowledgment of a crucified Messiah. We must also note that when Paul says "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" makes "free from the law of sin and of death," he adds a reference to Jesus' death to explain how by His becoming a sin-offering, "the ordinance of the law" was, so far as we were concerned, "fulfilled," i.e. the ordinance of this very law of sin and of death, which shows the very close connection between his interpretation of Jesus' death as "propitiation" and his view of the law.

#### (6) *Conclusion*

The paucity of explicit theology in the letter seems to be due to several causes. James's attack on faith apart from works might be described as an attack on theology without faith. And his advice, "Be not many teachers, my brethren," would lead us to expect a minimum of theological teaching in his letter. His paragraph on the two sorts of Wisdom (III. 13-18) is addressed to the "wise and understanding," i.e. teachers, and deals with the danger of "bitter jealousy and faction" in theological difference.

The aim and method of his letter would tend to make his theology implicit rather than explicit. His main aim was to persuade his readers to consider Jesus, which would be more effectively done by suggestion than by dogmatic elaboration.

But, because we do not find the theology of the Epistle developed along the lines found elsewhere in the New Testament, we have no right to regard it as either undeveloped or retrogressive. The writer is clearly a penetrative thinker, and if he was the brother of Jesus, his thought would have taken shape on a background very different from the Pauline and Johannine, which so occupy the New Testament. His explicit theology is that of the earliest preaching: Jesus is Lord and Christ, but, as we have seen, there is evidence of very considerable development of thought, as, for example, with the "inborn word" and the "law of liberty." And, considering the purpose of his letter, we may conclude that, though not all made explicit, the main matters of his faith are consciously implied. Dr. Ropes (p. 31) finds that it reveals "with surprising fullness his positive religious conceptions and beliefs."

The theology of James is not the theology of a Judaiser: his free attitude towards the law, his definition of "pure religion" in purely ethical terms, are the antithesis of the Judaisers' position. Josephus tells us (*Ant.* XX. ix. 1) that he was stoned under accusation of being a breaker of the law. If he was the brother of Jesus, it was he who gave authoritative decision against the Judaisers' assertion that Gentile believers ought to be circumcised and to keep the whole law of Moses. The theology of James the brother of Jesus was thus orthodox for the mother Church of Jerusalem, and Paul's several mentionings of him accept him as such, and speak of him as one of the very highest authorities in the faith of the Church.

Both his Christology and soteriology are those of Jesus, as given in the Synoptic Gospels. The background from which his thought started and the spirit in which it went was not Rabbinic, but a less sophisticated strand of Jewish religious development. With this went a more special factor. We have seen that Paul, in dealing with the ways of God and man, considered little of the Old Testament outside the Mosaic

law, ignoring, for instance, the prophetic doctrine of forgiveness. In the synoptic record of Jesus' utterances the proportion is reversed: it is the prophetic Scriptures that preponderate in the mind of Jesus, and the Mosaic stands under correction of the prophetic, as in "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." James had the same early environment as Jesus, and his assimilation of it cannot but have been affected by his long intimacy with Jesus, which would itself shape his thinking. So that the thought of James may be taken to represent the thought of Jesus, or the development of thought about Jesus in the spirit of the highest of Hebrew religion as enhanced by Jesus. And that such theological simplicity could command high place in the regard of the early Church appears in the widely disseminated Church manual, the *Didache*.

Dr. Ropes (p. 27) remarks that the Epistle of St. James has a "curiously modern sound." The same may be said about the synoptic records of the utterances of Jesus, as compared with the New Testament epistles except that of James. It is because they deal simply and penetratively with what is abiding in human nature, especially on its religious side, and are free from speculative thought forms that become obsolete with the passing age. For non-dogmatic ages the thought of St. James is likely to be more helpful than the Pauline or Johannine theology.

## INDEX OF PASSAGES

### I...7

- I. 1...10 *f.*, 17, 25 *ff.*, 32, 40 *ff.*, 44 *f.*,  
 88 *ff.*, 100  
 2-27...17  
 2-4...15, 20, 40 *f.*, 47, 55, 64  
 5-8...8, 45, 47, 54 *f.*, 59, 64 *ff.*, 68  
 5...68, 96 *f.*  
 8...15, 54 *f.*, 59  
 9-11...8, 11, 15, 30, 33, 40, 48  
 12...15, 40, 46, 55, 59, 62, 64, 68  
 13-18...8, 21 *ff.*, 47, 59, 61, 63,  
 67 *f.*, 87  
 14...55, 61, 64, 87  
 15...65  
 17...21 *f.*, 63 *f.*, 75, 89  
 18...17, 19, 21 *ff.*, 42, 63 *ff.*, 74 *f.*, 78,  
 89, 92  
 19-27...20  
 19...47, 49 *f.*, 75  
 20...70  
 21-27...42, 45, 56, 78  
 21...17, 19 *ff.*, 39 *f.*, 56, 70, 74 *f.*, 78,  
 88, 90, 92, 100  
 22...21, 33, 40, 56, 59, 65, 74  
 23 *f.*...20, 31, 56, 74 *f.*, 78  
 25...21, 23, 70, 75 *ff.*, 94, 100  
 26 *f.*...8, 11, 26, 34, 40, 46, 49, 67,  
 95, 100

### II...7, 58

- I-13...40, 58, 75, 97 *f.*  
 I...8, 11, 17 *f.*, 27, 40, 45 *f.*, 48, 66,  
 75, 79, 91 *f.*, 97  
 2-4...27, 30, 34, 46, 48, 58 *f.*  
 5...33, 45, 72, 86  
 6 *f.*...17 *f.*, 33  
 8-13...11, 17, 45, 72, 97  
 8...11, 46, 58, 72 *f.*  
 12...11, 16, 45, 76 *ff.*, 94, 97 *ff.*  
 13...33, 79 *f.*, 84, 97 *ff.*  
 14-26...18, 27 *ff.*, 49 *f.*, 56 *f.*, 81  
 15-17...12, 49 *f.*, 62  
 18 *f.*...12, 18, 44, 57 *f.*  
 21-24...12, 27 *f.*, 57, 62  
 25...57  
 26...57 *f.*, 62, 66

### III...7, 16, 46

- I-12...7, 40, 46, 49 *ff.*  
 I...33, 99  
 2...50, 56

### 3-6...50 *ff.*

- 7 *f.*...51 *f.*  
 9 *f.*...12, 19, 52, 54, 59, 62, 64, 74,  
 76, 78, 88 *f.*, 93  
 11 *f.*...33, 52, 59, 62, 66, 68  
 13-18...8, 27, 33, 40, 46, 56, 59 *f.*,  
 62, 66, 68 *ff.*, 86, 99  
 14-16...19  
 15...30  
 17...55, 62, 69 *f.*, 90  
 18...31, 33, 70 *f.*  
 IV. I-V. 6...13 *ff.*, 31, 34

### IV...6, 7, 59 *f.*, 62

### IV. I...7, 40, 56, 71

- I-10...13 *f.*  
 I-3...7 *f.*, 13 *f.*, 16, 27, 31, 60, 69,  
 71  
 4-6...14, 40, 58 *f.*, 60, 64, 66 *f.*, 89  
 4...14, 33, 50, 60, 69  
 5...61 *f.*, 65, 86, 89  
 6-10...40  
 6...62, 67  
 7 *f.*...12, 40, 55, 60, 65, 67, 96  
 9...33  
 10...95  
 11 *f.*...14 *ff.*, 33 *f.*, 46, 60, 62, 65,  
 72 *f.*  
 13-17...30, 46, 48, 60 *f.*  
 14...48  
 17...53, 55 *f.*, 61

### V...7

- I-6...7 *f.*, 13, 15, 27, 30 *f.*, 45, 48  
 2 *f.*...30, 34, 37  
 5...12, 37  
 6...7, 14, 45  
 7-20...13 *ff.*, 16  
 7-11...8, 15, 27, 40, 86  
 7...30, 34  
 8...15  
 9...15 *f.*  
 10...35, 41, 45  
 11...15  
 12...12, 15 *f.*, 34, 40, 53  
 13-18...13, 15 *f.*, 27, 39, 42, 46  
 14-16...27, 42, 46, 95  
 15...95  
 17 *f.*...12, 37, 46  
 19 *f.*...7, 12, 15 *f.*, 27, 41, 46, 96