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Sabbath-School Lessons

ON THE

# BOOK OF JAMES

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**SABBATH-SCHOOL LESSONS**  
ON THE  
**BOOK of JAMES,**  
FOR SENIOR CLASSES.

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**LESSON I.**

JANUARY 3, 1891.

**JAMES 1:1-8.**

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NOTE.—There are several persons brought to view in the New Testament who bear the name of James, as, “James the son of Zebedee” (Mark 1:19), “James the son of Alphæus” (Mark 3:18), and “James the brother of the Lord” (Matt. 13:55). Which one of these wrote the book called the epistle of James, is a question on which there is great diversity of opinion; but it is the general view (see Smith’s Bible Dictionary, art. “James, Epistle of”) that the writer of this book was not the apostle James, the son of Zebedee, but James the Lord’s brother, who, though not one of the twelve, was an elder of the church at Jerusalem, and one of the “pillars” (Gal. 2:9) of the new Christian faith. Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; 1 Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19 (from which we may infer that he was also an apostle); Gal. 2:9, 12. It was written from Jerusalem, where James seems always to have resided, and sometime after the apostolic council at Jerusalem, A. D. 51 (Acts 15:6), the latest date assigned it being A. D. 62, the epistle itself (according to marginal note inserted by translators) bearing date “*Anno Domini cir* [about] 60.”

1. What does James style himself?
2. How does James designate those to whom he dedicates his epistle? Verse 1, last part; chap. 2:1.
3. Were these Jews, as such, or Christians? Verse 2, first clause.
4. At what time does the epistle especially apply? See chap. 5:3, 7-9. Note 1.
5. What does this prove in reference to Christians? Note 2.
6. What experiences are we to welcome, or count "all joy"? James 1:2.
7. What kind of temptations are here referred to? *Ans.*—Not impulses to personal sin, but circumstances which are calculated to try one's faith.
8. What does the trying of faith, if endured, work? Verse 3.
9. What scope should be given to patience? and what will result to him who gives it full exercise? Verse 4. Note 3.
10. What kind of wisdom is mentioned in verse 5? Chap. 3:17.
11. What encouragement have we to seek for this? —*Ib.*
12. How are we to ask for this? Verse 6.
13. What is meant by the expression, "upbraideth not"? *Ans.*—He will not reproach us for past sinfulness, or present unworthiness, but will forgive our past lack and shortcomings. Though we have long neglected our duty, he is glad to have us come even then, and seek his help.
14. What are we to understand by the word "wavering"? Verse 6.

15. To what is a wavering man compared? *Ans.*—“But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting; for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed.” Verse 6, Revised Version.

16. What is the most striking symbol of instability? *Ans.*—A restless, ever-changing and shifting wave of the sea.

17. What causes a man to be like a wave of the sea, or unstable?

18. What illustration have we of double-mindedness? and how does it affect character? Gen. 49:44; 1 Kings 18:21; Isa. 57:20, 21.

19. What can a double-minded man hope to receive in answer to his prayers?

#### NOTES.

1. The epistle of James is addressed to Christians, and while its lessons of patience, obedience, stability, faith, and devotion to the cause of God, are applicable to members of the Christian church in every age, there are some expressions which show that it was designed to be particularly applicable to the church in the last days, and hence may be taken to apply specifically at that time.

2. If the epistle has a particular application to the last days, and Christians here addressed are designated as “the twelve tribes scattered abroad,” it shows that no Israel is now recognized but Christian or spiritual Israel, all tribal distinctions between the natural descendants of Abraham having been lost. It would be necessary for this distinction to be preserved, if the natural seed is still to be regarded as Israel; but it is evident that no such distinction with reference to the spiritual seed is possible among men,

though it may be preserved in those books above in which are enrolled the names of the members of the church of the First-born. See Heb. 12:23. This fact with reference to the Bible view of Israel, so plainly brought out in James, explains how the work of Rev. 7:1-8, gathering out twelve thousand from each tribe of the children of Israel, can be fulfilled in the last generation that lives before the second coming of Christ.

3. The word "patience" here has the significance of endurance, or the quality of not being moved or overthrown on account of the burdens, difficulties, or afflictions attending the profession of a Christian. The verb from which this noun is derived, signifies, "to remain or stay behind when others have departed; to bear up under, endure, suffer patiently; to continue firm, hold out, remain constant, persevere." In the expression, "Let patience have her perfect work," the word "perfect" means "brought to completion; fully accomplished; fully developed;" but endurance cannot be "brought to completion" until the period of our trial and conflict is over. The passage is therefore equivalent to the exhortation to "endure unto the end" (Matt. 24:13), or to "be patient [endure] unto the coming of the Lord." Jas. 5:7.

## LESSON II.

JANUARY 10, 1891.

JAMES 1:9-18.

WITH James 1:9 a new line of thought is introduced.

1. What condition in life is referred to in the expression, "the brother of low degree"? See note 1.
2. What is the privilege of such an one in the gospel?

3. In what respect is he exalted?
4. On the plane of Christianity, what are the rich to do? Verse 10.
5. In what sense is he made low? See note 1.
6. Can riches prolong life? Verse 10, last clause.
7. By what does the apostle illustrate this? Verse 11.
8. Of what use then is wealth? Luke 16:9-12.
9. Upon whom is a blessing pronounced in James 1:12?
10. What is the force of the word "endureth"?  
*Ans.*—The same as patience in verse 4,—to continue firm, to bear up under. This may apply to all kinds of temptations.
11. How are the words "for when he is tried" to be understood? *Ans.*—Literally, when he is proved; when his period of trial is completed, and he has stood the test, then he will receive the crown of life.
12. Does God ever tempt men to sin? See note 2.
13. Why not?—*Ib.*
14. In what sense is the word "tempt" used in Gen: 22:1, 2, Revised Version. See note 2.
15. By what are we tempted to sin? James 1:14.
16. What is the offspring of lust? Verse 15, first part.
17. What does sin, finished, bring forth?—*Ib.*, last part; Rom. 6:23.
18. What death does sin bring forth? Eze. 18:26; Rev. 20:14.
19. To what does the exhortation of verse 16 relate?  
*Ans.*—We are not to err in our own views of God's relation to sin; as, for instance, to suppose that he

tempts us to sin, and so to make him responsible, and excuse ourselves therein.

20. From whom does every good and perfect gift come? James 1: 17.

21. With what are these gifts contrasted? Verse 13. *Ans.*—All good, but no evil, comes from God.

22. Does he ever deviate from this rule? Verse 17, last part.

23. What has he done for us? Verse 18.

24. Through what instrumentality does God bring us to a new life?—*Ib.*

25. What text does the use of the word "first-fruits" in this passage explain? Rev. 14:4. See note 3.

#### NOTES.

1. Distinctions are built up among men, based upon differences of circumstances or condition in life. But in the light of Christianity all such distinctions are shown to be fictitious. The true value of a man is shown to consist in his moral worth, and the possibilities of eternal life which are set before him. It is for what man may become in these respects that Christ died for him. But these advantages are open to the low as well as the high, to the poor as well as the rich. Christ did not die simply for the great, the talented, the wealthy of this world; but he died equally for those who are in the humblest and most destitute circumstances. Thus the "brother of low degree" need not sink down, crushed in spirit, under his circumstances, esteeming himself of no value, and harboring no high and noble aspirations; but he may read the great interest Heaven takes in him, in the infinite sacrifice made by Christ in his behalf; and thus he is "exalted" to the true plane of life, and enabled to take correct views of his privileges, both for



the present and for the future; and in this he may rejoice. The rich man may also rejoice that he is brought to see himself and his life in the true light, and no longer to pride himself on circumstances which are of no value. Thus he is "brought low" in being enabled to discard the false exaltation of wealth, and estimate human worth by the true and Bible standard. The rich is brought low only as judged by the world's standard; but it is really an exaltation to him to become free from the world's low and false standard, and see himself in that light which cometh from above. It is sometimes said that "Christianity brings all down on the same level." This is just the opposite of the truth; it brings all *up* on the same level.

2. On verses 13-16 J. P. Thompson, D. D., has the following excellent remarks: "The philosophy of sin is given in verses 13-16 in terms that answer exactly to our own experience. God is not the author of sin. God does not subject us to temptation, that, through sinning, we may illustrate his grace. Trials as tests of our choice of good or evil, of our faith in himself, of our love and devotion, he does appoint for our moral discipline and culture; but temptations that look toward sin, and lead to sin, are the promptings of our own desires when these are loosed from the control of reason and conscience. The sin does not lie in the fact of temptation, nor in the susceptibility to temptation; but when we suffer our susceptibilities to natural good to be wrought upon to such a degree that they entice us to forget reason, conscience, duty to God, when these overstimulated desires come to a head in the decision of the will to gratify them—then do they bring forth sin. The counteractive to such temptation is a just conception of our highest good as in God, and from him; a patient, prayerful, unwavering trust in him, and the keeping his word in our hearts as our law and guide."

3. In 1 Cor. 15: 20, 23 Christ is declared to be the "first-fruits;" and he alone is the first-fruits so far as his being the antitype of the wave-sheaf (Lev. 23: 10, 11) is concerned, and also as related to "them that sleep." But Rev. 14: 4 says that the 144,000 (of whom that passage speaks) are the first-fruits; and this at first sight appears like a contradiction. But now the passage before us in James comes in to explain, by showing that the word "first-fruits" is also used in another sense,—we are a kind of, or in a certain sense, first-fruits unto God. The 144,000 are those who are redeemed from among the living at the coming of Christ; and if James, as we have seen, also speaks particularly of the last generation, when the Lord is at the door, the relation between the two passages very strikingly appears.

### LESSON III.

JANUARY 17, 1891.

JAMES 1: 19-27.

1. How should we govern ourselves in hearing and speaking? James 1: 19.
2. To what else should we be slow besides speaking?—*Ib.*
3. What similar injunction is given by the apostle Paul? Col. 3: 8.
4. Why are we to be slow to wrath? Verse 20.
5. What are we exhorted to lay aside? Verse 21.
6. What are meant by these terms?
7. What are we to receive? See Revised Version.
8. What is this implanted word able to do?
9. Upon what condition only can we be benefited by the word? Verse 22.
10. To whom is the man who hears but does not, compared? Verses 23, 24.

11. How can one be benefited by a mirror? Indicated in verse 24, last part. See note 1.

12. What constitutes the great Christian mirror? Verse 25, first part.

13. How long should we look into the law? Note 2.

14. While looking into the law, what should we do? Verse 25, next to last clause.

15. What is the promise to such?—*Ib.*, last clause.

16. How may a person show that his profession of religion is vain? Verse 26.

17. From what should a person bridle his tongue? 1 Peter 3:10.

18. What kind of a religion must a person have to be benefited by it? James 1:27, first part.

19. What are some of the marks of this kind of religion? Verse 27, last part. See note 2.

20. How much is embraced in the expression, "unspotted from the world"? 1 John 2:15, 16.

## NOTES.

1. Looking only occasionally into the great mirror of God's law, to note how our course of conduct varies from its holy requirements, is not enough. For, like the man who turns away from the mirror, and soon loses from his mind a sense of the defects which it revealed, so we, when we fail to keep the law before us, soon lose a sense of our duty. But we should "continue therein," that is, continue looking into the perfect law of liberty, and then as fast as we thereby discover defects in our characters, take hold, by the grace of Christ, to remedy them. There are many who do not like the law, because it exposes their sins; and so they try to persuade themselves that it has been abolished, as if that would remove their defects of

character. This is as wise as it would be for a man to dash a mirror into fragments because it revealed defects in person or clothing, and then imagine that that removed the defects.

2. "Religion" is from *religare*, which signifies "to bind anew or back, to bind fast."—*Webster*. It denotes that bond by which a man is attached to the service of the deity he worships. Hence there may be false religions as well as true, vile and degrading religions as well as pure and undefiled. One may seem to be very religious, and yet his religion be vain, or worthless. But he who has true religion will bridle the tongue that he speak no evil, visit the fatherless and widows in the performance of deeds of sympathy and charity, and keep himself free from the works of the flesh (Gal. 5: 19-21) and the follies of the world.

## LESSON IV.

JANUARY 24, 1891.

JAMES 2:1-7.

1. WITH what statement does this chapter open?  
James 2: 1.
2. How does James speak of Christ?
3. What is meant by "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ"?
4. What is meant by not having this faith with respect of persons? See note 1.
5. What conditions commonly lead to respect of persons?
6. How is the gospel calculated to change our estimate of a rich man? Acts 10: 34.
7. How will it change our estimate of a poor man?
8. What kind of clothing usually distinguishes a rich man? Verse 2.

9. What kind of clothing usually characterizes a poor man?

10. What is meant by "vile raiment" in this verse?

11. What way of showing respect does James mention in verse 3?

12. In the case James supposes, on what ground is honor shown to the rich man? See note 2.

13. What rebuke does this call out? Verse 4.

14. In what respect does he say such ones are partial? See note 3.

15. What is meant by becoming judges of evil thoughts? See note 3.

16. What is indicated by the opening word of verse 5? *Ans.*—The emphatic nature of the statement James is now about to make?

17. What does he say of the poor, calculated to place them in the true light?

18. In what respect were the persons he speaks of, poor?

19. In what respect were they rich?

20. How does faith make rich?

21. How may we show that we put a wrong estimate on the poor? Verse 6, first clause.

22. Who usually oppress the poor? See note 4.

23. What foolish course toward the rich ought this to correct?

24. Ought brethren ever to go to law before unbelievers? 1 Cor. 6:1.

25. What does James say the rich blaspheme? James 2:7.

26. How do they blaspheme it? See note 4,

## NOTES.

1. In this chapter James proceeds to speak more particularly of the false distinctions built up among men and by men, and the respect to different ones wrongly manifested on account of these distinctions. This he sets forth by an illustration, in which he takes occasion to state more fully the grand truth that all these barriers are swept away by the gospel, and all men stand alike before God. And none who profess the faith, or religion, of Jesus Christ should countenance any such distinctions, nor manifest any partiality to the different members of the church.

2. The word "assembly" in verse 2 is translated "synagogue" in the margin. In a general sense it is not to be confined to Jewish synagogues but would denote any place of meeting.

3. Verse 4 reads, "Are ye not then partial in yourselves?" or, Do ye not make a difference among yourselves? that is, calling one better than another because one is rich and another is poor, whereas no such distinction should be recognized, but every question should be decided on its merits, and not on the condition or circumstances of the individual. Then, says the apostle, if you act thus are ye not "become judges of evil thoughts," or, in other words, judges having evil thoughts, or judging according to an incorrect or evil principle. This again would be wrong.

4. The reference to the "judgment-seat," in verse 6, would seem to strengthen the idea that James, in the first part of this chapter, has reference to the settlement of difficulties by law. The rich are the very ones who are apt to oppress in this way those whom they dislike on account of their religion, or for other reasons. And they are the ones who, if unbelievers, most generally make light of Christianity and blas-

pheme the name of Christ. And even if they profess to be believers, they might even then blaspheme his name by going contrary to his instructions in their treatment of the brethren. Matt. 18:15-17. The Christian is the last person in the world to fawn upon a rich man on account of his riches, considering what they are liable to lead him to do. But while there is no sin in riches, in themselves, if properly acquired, and no virtue in poverty, from the same point of view, yet the fact remains that the rich are more apt to be worldly, and the poor in this world's goods more ready generally to look forward to the promised kingdom and acquire by faith an interest in the everlasting riches.

## LESSON V.

JANUARY 31, 1891.

JAMES 2:8-16.

1. To what law does James now call attention? James 2:8, first clause.
2. How do we know that this is the ten-commandment law? *Ans.*—By verse 11, which quotes from that law.
3. Why is it called the “royal” law? See note 1.
4. What is meant by “fulfilling” it? Rom. 13:10; 1 John 5:3.
5. According to what scripture are we to fulfill it? Lev. 19:18.
6. Is this scripture any part of the royal law? See note 2.
7. Of what are they convinced, who have respect of persons? James 2:9.
8. How does the law then convince us of sin? Rom. 3:20; 7:7.

9. Of what does James say one is guilty if he offends in one point? Verse 10.

10. How can this be so? See note 3.

11. How does he illustrate this in verse 11?

12. To what does the word "he" refer in verse 11, first clause? See margin.

13. What does this prove respecting the perpetuity of the ten commandments?

14. What is the law called in verse 12, and why? Ps. 119: 45.

15. What connection has this law with the judgment? James 2: 12, 13.

16. What should we have in view in all that we speak and do?

17. What threatening is made against the unmerciful? Verse 13; Matt. 5: 7; 6: 14, 15.

18. What is the meaning of James 2: 13, last clause? See note 4.

19. What does James say of faith and works in verse 14?

20. Are words alone a sufficient proof of faith?—*Ib.*

21. What kind of faith is it, therefore, which cannot save a man?—*Ib.*, last clause.

22. How is this illustrated in verses 15-17?

#### NOTES.

1. In verse 8 James calls those to whom he writes into the presence of a higher, a supreme law, before which all stand as equal. In its sight there are no rich or poor, high or low. Its inquiries respect only right and wrong, innocence and guilt. It is the "royal" law, because it is the law of the great King. Before this all must bow. In accordance with this, all petty difficulties must be settled, and our conduct



one toward another be regulated. Thus the apostle fittingly reaches the climax of his argument.

2. The commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is not taken from the decalogue, but is found in Lev. 19:18. Yet Christ sets this down as the second of the two great commandments in the law." Matt. 22:36-40. In answer to this question by a lawyer, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." What is here called "the first and great commandment," is likewise not found in the decalogue, but in Deut. 6:5. From these facts some are disposed to argue that the ten commandments do not occupy the supreme position of "the law of God;" for if they did, they say, the Lord would have quoted them in answer to the lawyer's question; but as, instead, he quoted from the books of Moses, therefore they claim there is no distinction between the ten commandments and the law of Moses; and quotations from other parts of the Mosaic code are put before the ten commandments. But all such false reasoning is overturned by the way in which James here presents the subject. He says that we are to fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Then he shows what he means by the "royal law" by quoting two of the ten commandments. Thus he demonstrates the connection between that scripture and the decalogue by showing that that part of the decalogue which relates to our duties to our fellow-men, which contains the commandments, "Thou shalt not kill," and, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is *summed up* in the command to love our neighbors as ourselves;

and consequently the first table of the decalogue, that part which relates to our duty to God, is *summed up* in the command to love God with all the heart. What Christ said, therefore, to the lawyer was equivalent to quoting the whole decalogue, since he gave an *epitome* of both tables.

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3. On James 2: 10, J. P. Thompson, D. D., has the following pertinent note: "The law of God is not a string of precepts; it is a principle, a spirit, a unity. It encircles one like a ring of gold. If he steps over it at any point, he goes outside of it, and is a transgressor as really as though he should break it in pieces at every point. Indeed, one breaks this law by the spirit of pride, of envy, of jealousy; by any feeling which, if carried out into action, would do injury to a neighbor. Only the spirit of love pervading all our conduct can preserve intact the pure and holy law."—*The Bible in the Home*, p. 119

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4. "Mercy rejoiceth [margin, "glorieth"] against judgment." James 2: 10. Various constructions are put upon this passage; but that which seems to be the most obvious design of the declaration is to show how exceedingly precious a quality mercy is in the sight of heaven. He that shows no mercy will receive none. He who shows mercy will receive it. Matt. 5: 7. And mercy rejoiceth against judgment, that is, it is a matter of rejoicing, one in which we may glory, and which redounds to the glory of God, that a plan has been devised whereby mercy can be consistently extended to those who are under condemnation and justly exposed to judgment. No principle of God's government has been sacrificed, no lowering of God's authority has been suffered, no indignity has been cast upon the law; and yet the sinner can be saved. Thus mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

## LESSON VI.

FEBRUARY 7, 1891.

JAMES 2: 17-25.

1. WHAT is said of that which claims to be faith, if it has no accompanying works? James 2:17.
2. What is the only kind of faith that avails anything? Gal. 5:6.
3. If it were possible to conceive of real faith apart from action, what would be the condition of that faith? James 2:17.
4. What does James represent that some may say? Verse 18, first part.
5. What challenge does he give to such? Next clause.
6. How does James say that he will show his faith? Verse 18, last clause.
7. What is the first great fact for faith to grasp? Verse 19; Heb. 11:6.
8. Is belief to this degree commendable? James 2:19, second clause.
9. What other class besides men does James mention as believing in one God?—*Ib.*, last part.
10. Does this belief benefit the devils? Why?
11. In order for it to be a benefit, what must be coupled with it? Verse 20.
12. What are the works necessary to make this faith of benefit to men? Heb. 11:6, last clause.
13. In what way are we diligently to seek him? Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 3:19; Matt. 3:8, etc.
14. What case is taken to illustrate the doctrine James is presenting? James 2:21.

15. What works on Abraham's part are referred to?—*Ib.*

16. What did Abraham's faith on this occasion embrace? Rom. 4: 16-22; Heb. 11: 17-19.

17. What connection had his faith with his works? James 2: 22, first part.

18. What did his works do for his faith?—*Ib.*, last part.

19. What would his faith have been without his works?

20. What scripture was fulfilled in this case? Verse 23.

21. On what account was righteousness imputed to him, on account of his faith or his works? Gen. 15: 6.

22. What two things, therefore, are necessary to justification? Verse 24. See notes.

23. By what works was the harlot Rahab justified? Verse 25.

24. What was her faith which led to her works? Josh. 2: 9.

25. What is the condition of faith without works? and to what is it in that condition compared? James 2: 26.

#### NOTES.

1. A great deal of unnecessary discussion has taken place over the question whether or not James contradicts Paul on the subject of justification by faith, or faith and works. But there is no contradiction between them; they simply treat the subject from different standpoints. Paul presents a *faith* that *produces works*. James presents *works* that are *produced by faith*. The following remarks by J. P.

Thompson, D. D., are to the point: "Faith and works are like the two poles of the galvanic battery: they must be brought together in order that the current of life may flow and give out sparks of love. Either is powerless without the other. They are the two *foci* of an ellipse, in which the Christian life moves on in its heavenly course—now nearing one, and now the other—but held by both in constant equilibrium. To remove either would be to make that life erratic, or cause it suddenly to collapse and come to a stand. James represents one pole, one focus; Paul, the other. Their teachings are not opposed, and should not be divorced. James puts faith into concrete forms. He holds, as strongly as does Paul, to the necessity of faith; everything must be sought in faith; everything must be done in faith. But it must be a living faith—a faith that shows its sincerity by the sacrifices of self which it makes, by the works of love which it performs. A merely intellectual orthodoxy may be held by demons. A mere profession of faith may be worth no more than the body of a man without the breath of life. A true faith loves, works, lives. It regulates the conscience, the speech, and the life, by the conviction of God's constant presence; it shows its appreciation of spiritual realities by separation from the world; it takes the law of God as a reality, and, bringing its grand truths and inspiring motives to bear directly upon the conduct of every day, works by love."—*Bible in the Home*, p. 115.

2. "It is impossible to separate works from faith, yea, as impossible as it is to separate burning and shining from fire."—*Luther*.

"James by no means affirms that works give life to, produce, or create, faith; for faith comes by the power of the word, entering into and received by us, and by nothing else. But faith grows complete in works. That is the same as Paul's saying, or, rather,

the Lord's saying to Paul, that the strength of God may be completed in weakness. 2 Cor. 12:9. The strength of faith, indwelling from the beginning, and already received along with the first seizing of grace, becomes fully proved, verified, and its operation completed. Thus our calling and election are made sure in the diligence of living and doing. 2 Peter 1:10. Thus Abraham's first call was made sure in his last works, and the word concerning justification by (out of) faith, already before accorded to him, was lawfully and actually confirmed as a truth."—*Stier*.

## LESSON VII.

FEBRUARY 14, 1891.

JAMES 3:1-9.

1. WHAT exhortation is given in James 3:1?
2. What is the force of this exhortation? *Ans.*—That none should assume to be master, or dictator, in the church.
3. Why should no one assume such a position? *Matt.* 23:8; *1 Peter* 5:3.
4. Why will those who do this have greater condemnation? See note 1.
5. How many offend in many things? *James* 3:2.
6. What is a test of one's power to bridle the whole body?—*Ib.*
7. What is meant by the expression "to bridle the whole body"?
8. What illustration is used in verse 3?
9. What more forcible illustration in verse 4?
10. In these illustrations with what is the bit and helm compared? Verse 5.

11. What is said of the tongue in this verse? See note 2.

12. What is often the principal cause of alienation among brethren, and trouble in the church? Verse 6. See note 3.

13. From what does the tongue draw its supply of material for mischief? Verse 6; Matt. 12:34.

14. What then is the only sure safeguard against mischief from the tongue? Luke 6:44, 45.

15. Why is the tongue called a fire? Prov 16:27, 28.

16. By what is it set on fire, when scattering its evil? James 3:6, last clause.

17. What skill have men shown in subduing animal natures? Verse 7.

18. How have they succeeded with the tongue? Verse 8. . .

19. Why is it so difficult to control the tongue? —*Ib.*

20. Of whose tongues does the apostle speak, of those of Christians, or those of unconverted persons? See note 4.

21. What inconsistent use of the tongue is further described? Verse 9.

22. Whom does the apostle mean by "we" in this verse? See note 5.

#### NOTES.

1. The word rendered "master" in verse 1 is by some here rendered "teacher"—be not many teachers—and thought to refer to an aggressive and offensive propagandism of religious views. One of the definitions of the word, to be sure, is "teacher;" but the lexicons make it, in the New Testament, the equivalent of "rabbi," so that Matt. 23:8 would apply to it;

and if we give it the sense of "teacher," the subject and context would oblige us to understand it as meaning to dictate, or set up one's views as the standard, and try to oblige everyone else to conform to them. Such expose themselves to greater condemnation; for all are fallible and liable to mistakes. This is true even of prophets and apostles. See the cases of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jonah, Paul, Peter, and Barnabas. Acts 21:26-28; Gal. 2:11-13. And when one enters upon a calling for which he is not fitted, and claims more than he is justly entitled to, he is the more censurable.

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2. No work is more difficult than the proper government of the tongue. Useless, frivolous, idle, or injurious conversation is the bane of many lives. The danger of abuses of the tongue enters even into the domain of religion; and religious controversy is too apt to be characterized by sharp, bitter, and contentious words.

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3. How large a proportion of unhappiness in the family, of trouble in society, and alienation and discord in the church, comes from a wrong use of the tongue! And how apt many are, even if they do not originate a slanderous report, to take it up and repeat it to others! So if we have not a slanderous tongue, we may have an ear for scandal; and this is a twin evil, for without this the occupation of the tattler and busybody in other men's matters would soon be gone.

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4. In verses 6-8, James evidently has reference to the unregenerate tongue; for the grace of God can bring it into subjection. The grace of God can purify the heart, which is the great fountain out of which come thoughts, that blossom into words. But when the fountain is made right, that which comes from it will be right. So it is said that "a good man out of the



good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good." Luke 6:45. The true remedy then against the evils which flow from the tongue is to have the heart subdued and made right in the sight of God:

5. Verse 9 would seem rather to apply to those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof, who have a form of lip service toward God, and while professing to honor God, the Creator or Father of all, yet denounce or curse their fellow-men, the creature, either for their lack of religion, or because they fancy they have the wrong religion. By the word "we," the apostle doubtless refers to a general condition among men, not including himself personally as guilty of the inconsistency of which he speaks. Just as it is often said that "we" do this or that, and take this or that course, when all that is meant is that people generally do so.

## LESSON VIII.

FEBRUARY 21, 1891.

JAMES 3:10-18.

1. WHAT inconsistency is mentioned in James 3:10, first clause?
2. What does James say of this?—*Ib.*, last clause. See note 1.
3. What does Solomon say is in the power of the tongue?—Prov. 18:21.
4. What question is asked in James 3:11?
5. What is the force of this question? See note 2.
6. What figures does James now introduce, drawn from the productions of nature? Verse 12.
7. Are these stronger or weaker than the preceding one respecting the fountain? See note 3.

8. What conclusion does James then draw concerning salt water and fresh? Verse 12.

9. If salt water is mingled with fresh, how does it affect it for ordinary use?

10. If a person shows by his words an evil character, and yet claims that his character is good, what is his real character?

11. What turn is given to the subject in verse 13?  
*Ans.*—Conditions are introduced by which all pretensions can be tested.

12. Does the language refer to one who is really wise, or only claims to be so? See note 4.

13. How is a man to prove his claims to wisdom and knowledge? Verse 13.

14. What is the meaning of the word here rendered "conversation"? *Ans.*—The whole course of life—deportment.

15. To what words of Christ's is this portion of James' epistle parallel? Matt. 7:15-20.

16. What is the meaning of the exhortation in James 3:14? *Ans.*—If a person has bitter envying and strife in his heart, it matters not how much scientific knowledge he may possess, or how skillful he may be in debate, he has nothing over which to glory. He has no religion nor true wisdom, and to pretend that he has, is to lie against the truth.

17. What is the source and nature of this wisdom? Verse 15.

18. Is such really wisdom, or only a sham?

19. What always accompanies envying and strife? Verse 16.

20. What are the seven characteristics of true wisdom? Verse 17.

21. Will the true fruits of righteousness appear in peace or strife? Verse 18. See note 5.

22. In what class will these fruits appear?—*Ib.*, last clause.

23. How does Christ speak of this class? Matt. 5:9.

## NOTES.

1. James 3:10.—“These things ought not so to be.” The force of the word translated “ought,” is stronger than is expressed by the English word. It means that it *must not* be so. It is so inconsistent that it is utterly intolerable; it is monstrous.

2. Verse 11.—“Sweet water and bitter.” The sweet water corresponds to the “blessing,” and the bitter water to the “cursing” spoken of in the verse before. And as a fountain does not send out both sweet and bitter water from the same place at the same time, so from the fountain of the heart should not come forth both blessing and cursing. But, as in a fountain, if bitter water should perchance be mingled with the sweet, the whole would be spoiled, so all the blessings which the heart utters toward God are utterly vitiated and spoiled by the cursings which the same heart utters toward men. Hence it brings forth no good fruit at all.

3. Verse 12.—James’ statement concerning the fig-tree and the vine is much stronger than that in reference to the fountain, for two veins of water, a good and a poor, might possibly meet and pour forth their mingled streams from the same orifice; but in nature it is impossible for the fig-tree to bear olives; or a vine, figs. Such a monstrosity in nature is unknown. It remains for human nature alone to make so depraved an exhibition. But the fruit determines the nature of the tree. If olive berries are produced, however

much the tree may bear an outward semblance to the fig, it is not a fig-tree, but an olive-tree. So if the traits of a man's character are evil, if that is the fruit hé bears, however much he may profess to be a Christian, he is not such, but a sinner. A soul that is depraved must act within the bounds of that depravity. Hypocrisy, the counterfeit, can be manifested only on the side of the good. A soul really good cannot manifest sham traits of evil, for it would thereby become evil; but a soul really evil can manifest sham traits of goodness, and not thereby become good.

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4. Verse 13.—Heavenly wisdom has an inseparable attendant, which is love; and love produces fruits by which its presence is ever manifested, and by which a person's condition can be tested. If anyone claims to be endowed with true wisdom, let us note what effect it has on his temper and conduct. Is his whole course of conduct characterized by meekness? Does he seek to avoid sin, and follow the things which make for peace? Is he in behavior modest and moderate, patient and harmless? Is he ready to yield to claims which are just and proper? Is he kind and compassionate, and ready to forgive? Is he careful and diligent in the performance of his duties toward God and toward men? Is he sincere and upright in all his decisions? Such traits are characteristic of true wisdom, that which is from above, as specified in verse 17.

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5. Verse 18.—Righteousness as manifested in the manner set forth in the verses embraced in this lesson, is sure to produce its good results, as seed that is sown is to produce a harvest. It is men of peace who sow the seeds of truth. Men of turmoil and strife cannot recommend any course, nor properly advocate any truth. But the peace-makers are continually recommending the wisdom by which they are governed, to

others; and their course of conduct is represented as the sowing of heavenly seed, which is sure to bring forth divine fruit. "To enjoy the peace of God in the conscience, and to live to promote peace among men, is to answer the end of our creation, and to enjoy as much happiness ourselves as the present state of things can afford."—*Clarke*.

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## LESSON IX.

FEBRUARY 28, 1897.

JAMES 4:1-8.

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1. WHAT evils does James now speak of as existing in the church? James 4:1, first clause.

2. From whence does he say that these wars and brawlings (margin) spring? See note 1.

3. Where do these worldly and carnal desires or impulses work? Verse 1, last clause. Rom. 7:23; 1 Peter 2:11.

4. What is referred to in James 4:2, first clause?  
*Ans.*—Evidently those ambitions and desires which take possession of one who backslides from God, and becomes worldly. Then he seeks his happiness from the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and the gratification of bodily appetites, and the desires of the flesh. But true happiness is not to be had from this source. See note 2.

5. To what does such a false course of life lead?  
 —*Ib.*, last part.

6. What exercise is referred to by the words, "Ye ask"? Verse 3. See note 3.

7. Why are not such prayers as are referred to answered?—*Ib.*

8. What is it to ask amiss?—*Ib.*, last clause.

9. What does James call professed Christians who thus unite with the world? Verse 4.

10. In what sense are these terms used? Rom. 7: 3, 4.

11. How is the friendship of the world related to God? James 4:4.

12. How is everyone who is a friend of the world related to God?—*Ib.*, last clause.

13. What is it to be a friend of the world? 1 John 2:15, 16.

14. With what spirit will every worldly professing Christian be troubled? *Ans.*—Envy. James 4:5.

15. To what scripture does James refer in this verse? See note 4.

16. To whom does God give more grace? Verse 6.

17. In what different ways does God treat the proud and the humble? Matt. 23:12.

18. What is the meaning of the word translated "resisteth"? *Ans.*—To stand against in battle array, ready to fight against. See note 5.

19. How are we counseled to relate ourselves to God? Verse 7, first clause.

20. What attitude should we maintain toward the devil?

21. What will be the result?—*Ib.*, last clause.

22. How many are so weak that they cannot resist? John 15:5; 2 Cor. 12:9, 10.

23. What are we further exhorted to do in reference to God? Verse 8, first clause.

24. What will he then do?

25. Why are sinners exhorted to cleanse their hands? Ps. 26:6.

26. Why must a double-minded man purify his heart? See James 1 : 6-8.

## NOTES.

1. James 4 : 1.—The apostle passes by a sharp and painful transition from the ideal as brought to view in the close of the preceding chapter, where he speaks of the fruits of righteousness being sown in peace of them that make peace, to a state of things which is too often a reality in the church, when there is contention and brawling and strife. He then points out the source from which these things spring. They are the opposite of that wisdom which comes from above, of which he spoke in the preceding chapter, and come from the motions of sin in our members. Lange says: "Every sensual and selfish lust which is not killed in the heart of the Christian, sooner or later must work disastrously, to the detriment of fraternal communion. Disappointed hopes should not fill us with bitterness and hatred against one another, but rather prompt us to humility and believing, confiding prayer."

2. Verse 2.—"Ye kill, and desire to have." This is to be taken, according to the context, not in a literal but spiritual sense, as in verse 4. It refers to a condition of the mind. In the former dispensation, in the cases of David and Ahab, the envy and desire to obtain, led to actual murder. The same feelings are the springs of the same crimes now. John says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." The marginal reading, therefore, though not in this case a literal translation of the word used, doubtless conveys the true idea by referring to that condition of mind which, if suffered to develop to its full extent, would lead to murder.

3. "Ye ask not." The fact that people will attempt to bring before God in prayer the unhallowed and worldly ends which they seek, is a sad commen-

tary on the condition of self-deception into which one may fall. To ask for improper things in an improper spirit, is, in one sense, not to ask at all; for Heaven does not regard such prayers. From another point of view, it is called asking "amiss." Verse 3. Prayer offered for the right objects, and put up in the right spirit, will alone secure the blessing.

4. Verse 5.—There is no passage to be found in the Scriptures which contains the precise language here given. It is not a direct quotation: This leads to the necessary conclusion that what the Scriptures teach in various passages, and by various forms of phraseology, is spoken of as what the Scriptures say.

5. Verse 8.—The washing or cleansing of the hands was a token of innocence and purity. As sinners we must cleanse our hands from wicked works; and as double-minded, we must put away that fickleness and indecision of mind which counteracts all our efforts for good, and have "faith, nothing wavering." For only those who are clean of hands and sincere and pure of heart can effectually draw near to God.

## LESSON X.

MARCH 7, 1851.

JAMES 4: 9-17.

NOTE.—The apostle continues his exhortation and admonition to those who had so far backslidden in their Christian experience as to be guilty of the irregularities mentioned in the first part of this chapter. Thorough repentance and humiliation of soul are demanded under such circumstances.

1. What kind of mourning and affliction are referred to in James 4: 9? See note 1.



2. What are the laughter and joy that are mentioned? Luke 6:24-26.

3. Into what kind of heaviness is this to be turned?

4. How long is it necessary that this mourning and heaviness continue? 2 Cor. 7:9-11.

5. How is the exhortation of James 4:10, first clause, to be carried out?

6. Why is it said to be "in the sight of the Lord"? See note 2.

7. What was the posture of a person in oriental countries who humbled himself before another?

8. What is the promise? and what does it signify? Verse 10, last clause.

9. What admonition is given in verse 11, first clause? See note 3.

10. How does he who speaks evil of his brother treat the law? Verse 11, second clause.

11. What is the law here referred to?

12. What does this passage show in reference to the nature of the law?

13. What relation must one sustain to the law before he can properly be a judge?

14. How many divine lawgivers are there? Verse 12.

15. Who is this one lawgiver?

16. Who is our advocate? 1 John 2:1.

17. What is the force of the last clause of verse 12?

18. What kind of planning for this life is disapproved? Verse 13.

19. What do we know about the morrow? Verse 14.

20. What is our life?

21. Upon whom is our life dependent? Acts 17: 25.

22. What, therefore, ought we to say in reference to plans for the future? Verse 15.

23. When a man boasts of what he is going to do, and rejoices in it, what is such rejoicing? Verse 16.

24. If a man knows to do good, what is he to do? Verse 17.

25. If he does not do this, what is it to him? See note 4.

#### NOTES.

1. James 4: 9.—The hilarity of the world, the vain and frivolous mirth of sin, is always to be avoided; and those who have always been in it, or who have been seduced into it by backsliding from a Christian life, should turn at once to God with deep contrition of heart. God's mercy cannot be expected without true and genuine repentance. But this condition of sorrow for sin will lead to the peace and joy of believing. Jesus says, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5: 4. The Christian has the truest joy in the world. It is only the deceitful and disappointing exhilarations of sin that the Bible denounces and warns us against. And especially is such an admonition as this timely in the last days, the period to which, as we have seen, the epistle of James especially applies. See Joel 2: 1, 15-17; 1 Peter 4: 7.

2. Verse 10.—"In the sight of the Lord." When a person is convicted of sin in his own heart, he can turn no way but he sees the eyes of the Lord upon him. So when he yields in humility to him, it is emphatically "in his sight." But he does not reproach us, and hold us in the dust with his foot upon our necks, as worldly conquerors were wont to do to their

prostrate enemies; but he reaches forth his pardoning hand and lifts us up.

3. Verse 11.—The sin of evil speaking is set as a violation of that great moral law by which we are to be judged at last. James 2:12. That law in one of its great precepts says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. This precept we violate when we speak evil of a brother, and judge his motives. We thereby speak evil of the law, which forbids such a course of action, and judge the law by virtually condemning such a requirement on its part. Thus we set ourselves above the position of one whose sole duty it is to be a doer of the law, by setting ourselves up to judge whether its requirements are right or not, and then to follow our own judgments instead of what it demands.

4. Verse 17.—Here James virtually says that after the instruction he had set before them, no one could plead ignorance of his duty; and then if, knowing it, he would not do it, he would of course have the greater condemnation. "He that knew not," says Christ, "and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes;" but he "which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Luke 12:47, 48.

## LESSON XI.

MARCH 14, 1891.

JAMES 5:1-6.

1. UPON what feature of the last days does James now enter? See note 1.
2. Is it literal or figurative riches that are spoken of?

3. What are the "miseries" in view of which the rich are called upon to weep and lament?

4. What other scriptures connect together especial sorrow and lamentation in the great day of the Lord with the possession of gold and silver? See Isa. 2:19, 20; Eze. 7:19; Zeph. 1:14, 18; Rev. 6:15; 18:15, 19.

5. What especially distinguishes the present generation with respect to riches, from all preceding generations?

6. In what condition will the treasures of the very rich be found at last? James 5:2.

7. What does this indicate in regard to the use of these riches? *Ans.*—That they have been hoarded up for the gratification of these millionaires, and not kept in circulation for the general good of society.

8. What sin does Paul put second in the list of sins which will characterize the last days? 2 Tim. 3:2.

9. What is said of gold and silver which will witness against them who have hoarded them up?

10. Instead of these riches proving the source of pleasure anticipated, what did they become? Verse 3, next to last clause.

11. Of what is this heaping up of treasure a sign? —*Ib.* last clause.

12. What is the relation of these rich men to the laborer? Verse 4.

13. What present social condition reminds us of this prophecy? See note 2.

14. Into whose ears do the cries of the laborers enter? Verse 4, last clause.

15. How does James say that these rich men have lived? Verse 5.

16. What is the natural tendency of the possession of riches? 1 Tim. 6 : 9.

17. What other dangers do the Scriptures connect with the possession of riches? Deut. 8 : 13, 14 ; Neh. 9 : 25, 26 ; Prov. 18 : 23 ; Micah 6 : 12 ; Matt. 13 : 22 ; 19 : 23, 24 ; 1 Tim. 6 : 10.

18. What is meant by "a day of slaughter" in James 5 : 5, last clause? *Ans.*—A day when animals are slain and provided for a time of feasting ; and it indicates that they give themselves up to indulge in every kind of riot and excess.

19. How do they at the same time treat the just? Verse 6.

20. What attitude do the latter class assume?—*Ib.*

21. In what way only could "the just" properly seek redress from oppression? *Ans.*—Not by violence, but by legal means.

22. What is the primary signification of the word here rendered "resist"? *Ans.*—It means "to set one's self in formal array against." It would, therefore, very properly apply to the attempt to maintain a cause against an antagonist in a court of justice. But in the present day a man who has nothing but justice on his side, does not stand much of a chance, when a large amount of capital is arrayed against him. They are wise, therefore, who do not attempt to "resist" even in this manner.

#### NOTES.

1. Verse 1.—None are more ready to take rose-colored views of the future than the rich. None are more pleased with the "peace and safety" cry of the last days. 1 Thess. 5 : 3. But "sudden destruction"

is then impending. So while they are anticipating good days to come, and are saying in their hearts, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant," this prophecy calls upon them to weep even unto howling for the calamities, judgments, and miseries of the great day of the Lord which are hanging over them, and from which their riches, in which they have so blindly trusted, will not deliver them. It is instructive to notice how often the rich are particularly mentioned in descriptions of the scenes of the day of the Lord.

2. Verse 4.—The hire of the laborers crieth. The condition of things at the present day in respect to the increase of riches, is a strange and startling one. There has never before been a time in the world's history when such fortunes could be accumulated, and in so short a time, as can be to-day. These could not have been accumulated without the great inventions of modern times; and these have appeared as one feature of the prophecy of Daniel that in the time of the end knowledge should be increased. Dan. 12: 4. Thus a few persons acquiring immense fortunes can combine their capital, and hold the mass of the people entirely at their mercy in every commercial point of view. Until this state of things existed, the labor troubles which now so deeply stir society, were unknown. Hence it is what would be expected, that James, in predicting the phenomenal increase of riches, should also throw in some remarks indicating that such a state of things would cause trouble on the part of the laborers. It is certainly an unnatural and unhealthy state of things when a man without capital, but with an aptitude for what is called "business," can start in, and by a shrewd manipulation of circumstances, and in half a score of years, come out with ten or twenty millions, as many do nowadays while the toilers whose labor has created these mill-

ions which these men draw into their coffers, are on the downhill road of poverty, under more exacting conditions; for there is too much of truth in the current aphorism that "the rich are growing richer, and the poor are growing poorer." There is no wonder that the situation breeds trouble, and no doubt that it will continue to do so, till society breaks up in the great time of trouble that ushers in the day of the Lord.

## LESSON XII.

MARCH 21, 1891.

JAMES 5:7-12.

1. **WHAT** should be the bearing of Christians amid the trials of the last days? James 5:7, first clause.

2. To what event are we to have patience?

3. Why is the prospect of the near coming of Christ an incentive to patience? 2 Thess. 1:4-7.

4. What illustration is introduced to help us to the exercise of patience? See note 1.

5. Viewed literally, what were the early and latter rains of the land of Palestine? See note 2.

6. In their spiritual application to the people of God, what do the terms "early and latter rain" refer to?

7. What is the force of the exhortation, "Be ye also patient"? *Ans.*—It is equivalent to a direct promise that the people of God will in the last days receive the latter rain to prepare them for the kingdom of heaven.

8. In what are we to "stablish," or establish, our hearts? See 1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 10:35-37.

9. What great truth is directly asserted in James 5 : 8, last clause?

10. What does this show in reference to the time when the epistle of James has its special application?

11. What evil liable to come into the church is warned against in verse 9?

12. In view of what great fact is this exhortation given?—*Ib.*, last clause.

13. Who is the Judge who will finally pass decision upon all our differences?

14. To what state of mind and course of action should this thought lead us?

15. To what examples are we pointed in verse 10?

16. What have the Lord's prophets in all ages been called to suffer?

17. What will be the experience of anyone who has a message to bear in the name of the Lord to the people? See 2 Tim. 3 : 12, 13 ; 4 : 3, 5 ; Acts 7 : 52 ; 2 Chron. 36 : 15, 16.

18. Viewing the past history of the church, how do we regard those who endured well their labors and trials? James 5 : 11, first clause.

19. What course should this lead us to pursue?

20. What particular example of patience is next referred to?

21. What does this prove in reference to the question whether such a person as Job ever lived or not?

22. What does the word "end" mean in the expression, "the end of the Lord"? See note 3.

23. What has the Lord's dealings with his people, notwithstanding all their trials, proved him to be? Verse 11, last clause.



24. What is the injunction of verse 12?

25. Does this forbid the use of the judicial oath?

See note 4.

26. What habit is rather referred to?

#### NOTES.

1. James 5:7.—A very beautiful illustration in reference to the exercise of patience is drawn from the course and experience of the husbandman. He does not expect the yield of his fields, or the fruit of the earth, in a day. He sows and plants in faith. He carefully tends and cultivates the growing crops, though no fruit is apparent, and he knows that months must elapse before it will be matured. But his patience is at length rewarded, and his bins and barns are stored with plenty. So we are not to expect the Lord to accomplish all his work in a moment of time. Influences must have time to do their work and prepare a harvest for the kingdom of heaven. The promise of God being given is sufficient ground for our faith and patience. And if we faithfully endure, our patience will at length be rewarded by a revelation of the glories of the kingdom of God.

2. "The early and latter rain." For six months in the year, in the agricultural portions of Palestine, no rain falls. During this time "the whole land," it is said, "becomes dry, parched, and brown, the cisterns are empty, the springs and fountains fail, and the autumnal rains are eagerly looked for to prepare the earth for the reception of the seed. These, the early rains, commence about the latter end of October or beginning of November, in Lebanon a month earlier, not suddenly, but by degrees; the husbandman has thus the opportunity of sowing his fields of wheat and barley." From this time on showers fell during the period of the growth and development of the crop till the spring, when copious showers were expected to

ripen the grain for the harvest. This was termed the latter rain. This course of nature is taken to illustrate the work of the Spirit in this dispensation. When, on the day of Pentecost, the great work of the gospel began, the Spirit was poured out marvelously. This, with the wonderful manifestation during the apostolic age, constituted the "early rain." The work of the Spirit has continued more or less from that time to this; but as the work of grace shall draw to a close, a more copious outpouring of the Spirit may be expected to ripen the gospel harvest for the kingdom of God. The second coming of Christ is represented by a reaper coming with a sharp sickle to reap the harvest of the earth. Rev. 14:14. From this expression in James, that the husbandman waits long till he receive the early *and* latter rain, and from Hosea 6:3, where the latter rain is mentioned first, it would appear that the latter rain was so abundant as to be accounted two together—the latter rain and the first added to it. If this is so, we may look for more than the scenes of Pentecost to be re-enacted among the people of God before the end.

3. Verse 11.—"The end of the Lord." The word "end" here means *object* or *purpose*. You "have seen" the "object" or "purpose" of the Lord in afflicting Job. In a similar sense the word is used in 1 Peter 1:9, "Receiving the *end* of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," that is, the object, or aim, of your faith. These instances explain the use of the word in Rom. 10:4, "For Christ is the *end* of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth;" that is, the "object" or "purpose" of the law; or, to express it in other words, the purpose which the law was designed to secure in us, if we had never broken it, is now secured to us by Christ, if we will believe in him.

4. Verse 12.—The variety of oaths mentioned in this verse shows that it cannot be the judicial oath which is referred to, which is simply calling upon God to witness to the truth of what you affirm. Jesus himself under an oath of this kind made answer to the Jewish high priest. Matt. 26:63. Paul made a strong affirmation of this kind in 2 Cor. 1:23: "Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth." Again, Phil. 1:8: "For God is my record," etc. Rom 9:1: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not." 2 Cor. 11:31: "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . knoweth that I lie not." Gal. 1:20: "Behold, before God, I lie not." 1 Tim. 2:7: "I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not." These expressions are all of the nature of, and equivalent to, a judicial oath. James doubtless had reference to a practice which our Lord severely condemned in Matt. 5:33-37, that is, a hasty and rash kind of promise to do something, or an affirmation of some statement, pledging something for the accomplishment or the truthfulness of the thing stated. We have no right to do this, by heaven, nor earth, nor Jerusalem; for these are not ours to dispose of; nor should we swear by our head (or, according to modern phrase, "Bet yer life"), for our head is not at our disposal, and we have not power to make one hair white or black.

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## LESSON XIII.

MARCH 28, 1891.

JAMES 5:13-20.

1. WHAT is the course to pursue under affliction? James 5:13.
2. What is the meaning of the word "merry" in the third clause? *Ans.*—It is not to be affected with

mirthfulness in a frivolous sense, but to be in a buoyant, cheerful, courageous state of mind.

3. How is this state of feeling to be properly manifested? Verse 13, last clause.

4. What are the instructions in case of the sick? Verse 14.

5. Who are the "elders" here referred to? See note 1.

6. What is signified by the act of anointing with oil? See note 2.

7. What promise is given to the prayer of faith? Verse 15.

8. What conditions and limitations must be understood in these cases? See note 3.

9. What precious promise is added respecting our sins?

10. What duty is enjoined in verse 16, first clause?

11. How has this instruction been perverted in a great part of Christendom? See note 4.

12. What is said of the prayer of a righteous man?  
*Ans.*—"Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working." James 5: 16, Revised Version.

13. What must be the nature of prayer to avail? Verse 16, last clause.

14. To what does James refer as a notable instance of the prayer of faith? Verse 17.

15. What encouragement has this reference to Elijah for us? See note 5.

16. For what did he pray?

17. How long was rain withheld in answer to that prayer?

18. Have we anywhere a record of this prayer that it might not rain?

19. Would the rain have been withheld if the prayer had not been offered?

20. Where is the account of Elijah's prayer for rain? 1 Kings 18: 41-46.

21. State the circumstances.

22. When one errs from the truth, what is our duty? Verse 20.

23. If we succeed in turning him from his error, what good work is done?

#### NOTES.

1. Verse 14.—“The elders.” The word rendered “elders” signifies primarily “one advanced in years and experience,” and as from this class the spiritual leaders of the early church were probably chosen, it came to signify that office. In the case before us, the instruction need not refer exclusively to the officers of the church; for the service of offering prayer for the sick can be properly rendered by anyone who has had years of experience in the exercise of faith, and the duties of a Christian life. That those who are elders in years and in Christian service are to be held in special honor in the church, is evident from such passages as 1 Tim. 5: 1.

2. “Anointing with oil.” This is done simply as an act by which to give expression to our faith, as the oil is not applied for any medicinal virtues which it may possess. As directed by James, the oil is applied to a person with a view to his healing. This has been perverted by the Roman Catholic Church to applying oil to a person with a view to his death. They call it “extreme unction,” and make it one of the sacraments of the church. But for such a practice there is not the least warrant in the Scriptures.

3. Verse 15.—The promises in reference to the sick are not absolute and unconditional; if they were, none need ever die from sickness, nor even from old age, which is only a species of sickness. But all are mortal and under sentence of death, and there is a special promise for those who die in the Lord, as Christians, in the last days. Rev. 14: 13. God, who sees as man cannot see, knows that sometimes it would not be best that the prayers we offer in our short-sightedness should be answered. So our prayers should be offered at all times subject to his will. Even the prayers of the apostles for the sick were not always answered; for it is not a supposable case that Paul and his brethren should not have prayed for the recovery of Trophimus; yet we are informed that he, at one time, left him at Miletum *sick*. 2 Tim. 4: 20. Even the “signs” to follow believers (Mark 16: 17, 18) are subject to conditions; for they will not be wrought to meet the challenge of skepticism, nor to gratify curiosity, nor for any idle purpose; but only when the necessities of his servants require that he interpose in their behalf, or when it will be for his glory to do so. Why, then, pray for the sick at all? James lays it down as a general rule that we do so; and such a course always has its advantages. It cultivates in us a spirit of prayer and dependence on God. It begets the habit of turning to him to whom we should turn, in calamities and affliction. It will often create conditions under which God will be pleased to interpose in our behalf, as he could not consistently do without our expressed desires and earnest petitions to this end. And we know not how many blessed answers may be obtained, till the trial is made.

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4. Verse 16.—Confession of faults is directed to be made, not *all* to *one*, as all are required to confess to a priest in the Romish Church, and in some half-

reformed Episcopal Churches, but it is to be made *one to another*; and this is to be done only so far as we have injured one another by some wrong course. Confession should be limited, as to publicity and extent, to the injury done. If an offense has been openly committed, a scandal to the church and to the community, it should be publicly confessed. If only one person is knowing to, or affected by, a wrong committed by another, confession should be made to that one, and the matter be made right with him; and that is as far as the matter need go. And if the sin is a matter between ourselves and God only, to him alone confession should be made. A homely illustration is often used to express the true position on this point, and that is, "Make the plaster no larger than the sore." The Romish Church has perverted James 5:16 to sustain auricular confession to the priest, a custom which is one of the mightiest engines of evil ever devised by Satan. The priests use it for the vilest purposes.

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5. Verse 17.—The enemy would tempt us to a lack of faith by suggesting that Elijah was a person of an order superior to ourselves, and we need not think that we can prevail with God as he did; but, as if for the special purpose of warding off that temptation, the record states that he "was a man subject to like passions as we are." Our temptations and sense of imperfections need not, therefore, disarm or discourage us. We have no account of the particular occasion when he prayed for rain. When first introduced into the Scripture narrative (1 Kings 17:1), he meets King Ahab, and boldly announces to him that there should be neither dew nor rain upon the land of Israel but according to his word. James says that he prayed that it might not rain, and this was in answer to his prayer. He must have prayed and received the assurance from God that he was heard, before he made

this announcement, to Ahab. The king, not looking beyond Elijah, and understanding that the drought was to be according to the word of Elijah, as he had declared, accused him of being the one that was troubling Israel. 1 Kings 18:17. But Elijah told the king that *he* was the one who was troubling Israel, because he had forsaken the commandments of the Lord. This shows the place prayer has in the divine plans.

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6. Verse 20.—God alone can convert a sinner; yet he who co-operates with God in this work, is spoken of as doing the work, and saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins, by helping to the result of having them blotted out of the books at last.

