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The General Epistle of ST. JAMES
Translation by John Wesley

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CHAPTER 1

James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, Knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun arose with a scorching heat, and withered the grass, and the flower fell off, and the beauty of its form perished: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Happy is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man who is tempted say, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desire and enticed. Then desire, having conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, being perfected, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, descending from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Therefore, laying aside all the filthiness and superfluity of wickedness, receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any one be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beheld himself, and went away, and immediately forgot what manner of man he was. But he that looketh diligently into the perfect law,

the law of liberty, and continueth therein, this man being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be happy in his doing. If any one be ever so religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before Go even the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

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CHAPTER 2

My brethren hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there come in also a poor man in dirty raiment, And ye look upon him that weareth the fine apparel, and say to him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or, Sit thou here under my footstool, Ye distinguish not in yourselves, but are become evil-reasoning judges. Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have disgraced the poor. Do not the rich oppress you, and drag you to the judgment seats? Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law, (according to the scripture,) Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all; For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not commit murder. If then thou commit no adultery, yet if thou commit murder, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so act, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment without mercy shall be to him that hath showed no mercy: but mercy glorieth over judgment. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can that faith save him? if a brother or a sister be naked, and want daily food, And one of you say to them, Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled, but give them not the things needful for the body, what doth it profit? So likewise faith, if it hath not works, is dead in itself. But one will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works. Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest there is one God: thou dost well: the devils also believe and tremble. But art thou willing to know, empty man, that the faith which is without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought together with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. In like manner, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, having received the messengers, and sent them out another way? Therefore, as the body without the spirit is dead, so the faith which is without works is dead also.

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CHAPTER 3

My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive greater condemnation. For in many things we all offend. If any one offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, able

also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bridles into the mouths of horses, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, though they are so large, and driven by fierce winds, yet are turned about by a very small helm, whithersoever the steersman listeth. So the tongue also is a little member, yet boasteth great things. Behold how much matter a little fire kindleth! (And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity:) so is the tongue among the members, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell. Every kind, both of wild beasts and of birds, both of reptiles and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind. But the tongue can no man tame: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send out of the same opening sweet water and bitter? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a vine figs? Neither can a fountain yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise and knowing man among you? Let him show by a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter zeal and strife in your hearts, do not glory and lie against the truth. This is not the wisdom which descendeth from above, but is earthly, animal, devilish; For where bitter zeal and strife is, there is unquietness and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without dissimulation. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.

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CHAPTER 4

From whence come wars and fightings among you? Is it not hence, from your pleasures that war in your members? Ye desire and have not, ye kill, and envy, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war; yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may expend it on your pleasures. Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? Whosoever therefore desireth to be a friend of the world, is an enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth against envy? But he giveth greater grace: therefore it saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you: cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into heaviness. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law. But if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver that is able to save and to destroy: Who art thou that judgest another? Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go to such a city, and continue there a year, and traffic, and get gain: Who know not what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life? It is a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away: instead of your saying, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. But now ye glory in your boastings: all such glorying is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin.

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CHAPTER 5

Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are become moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the canker of them will be a testimony against you, and will eat your flesh as fire: ye have laid up treasure in the last days. Behold, the hire of your laborers who have reaped your fields, which is kept back by you, crieth: and the cries of them who have gathered in your harvest are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately and luxuriously on earth; ye have cherished your hearts, as in a day of sacrifice. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the just: he doth not resist you. Be patient, therefore, brethren, till the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath patience for it, till he receives the former and the latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is nigh. Murmur not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; Behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy that endured. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; for the Lord is full of compassion and of tender mercy. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall under condemnation. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing psalms. Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, having anointed him with oil in the name of the Lord; And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, brethren, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elijah was a man of like passions with us; and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on th land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the land brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any one among you err from the truth, and one convert him, Let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

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