James - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Young Christian: Volume 16, 1926, Unspotted From the World

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“What need there is in these last and perilous times, that we should find in a closer walk with Christ, the secret of unspottedness from the spirit of this age, in all its boasted progress. You will recall the parable of the house that was ‘swept and garnished,’ in Luke 11. The conviction as to the last state, which this scripture fastened on my mind, led me to throw down my broom many years ago, and to refuse even a jot of garnishing up to this present day, for I do not like the incoming tenant! ‘And all the world wondered after the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast?’ May the Lord give us, and thousands more, true heartedness to Himself, that may keep us in the true confession of His rights and titles, and of His coming, to make them all good in sovereign power, against ‘the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.’ If the person of Christ were a reality to us, if in fact He were the only living and abiding reality to our souls, how we should make Him the governing and guiding object and motive of our daily life, ‘that Christ may be magnified in me, whether by life or by death.’ May the Lord lead to this devotedness and devotement, by drawing us to His own bosom, that our hearts may beat in true loyalty and attachment to Himself.”

Free Will, Free Will: No. 2

It may be asked, How then is this new will, or new nature, imparted? It is the direct operation of the Spirit of God. How? " The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The word also is the seed imparted by the Spirit in the new birth. Water is a figure of the word. But do not think for a moment that this means a change of the flesh, or an improvement of our old nature. " That which is born of the flesh is flesh," remains the same flesh; " that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Now would it not be absurd to say that the new nature was begotten by the free will of our old evil nature? But what saith the scripture: " Of HIS OWN WILL begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." (Jas. 1:18.) Do you see the difference? Then again, " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1:3.) " Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (Ver. 23.)

But it is time we looked at a few illustrations as to man's will. Take the great supper in Luke 14:16-24 God the giver, the provider of the supper, sends out the invitation to many. " Come; for all things are now ready." On God's part no hindrance—salvation as free as the air we breathe. But what of man's free will—did one accept the invitation? Not one. " And they all with one consent began to make excuse." Not one of those that were bidden came. Grace, free grace, had to go out and fetch the guests, compel them to come in.

Again as to free will, take the great picture of man's condition: Israel, slaves in Egypt. Is a slave a free man to do his own will? Nay, he needs redemption. He cannot redeem himself, this must be the work of another. God came down to redeem Israel. God in the Son has come down to redeem the sinner. If the figure was the work of God, surely the reality is so also. If a man is free, he is not a slave—his state is not so bad as that—then it is also true, must be true, if he is a slave, he is not free. If man is free, he does not need redemption. Free will and the need of redemption cannot go together. A man is taken prisoner, and with a great chain round his leg, he is put in a dark dungeon. Would you talk to him through a hole in the iron door, and tell him he has a free will, and he may come out if he likes? And is not our state by nature far worse than that? We were not only in the dark dungeon with sin as a chain to the leg, but we liked it, the darkness and the chain of sin, rather than the light.

If a man knows his real condition as Satan's captive, and knows that he is so vile, that he prefers the horrid slavery of Satan, to the holy liberty of Christ, he will know that he is as far from free will as light is from darkness. How can he be free and a captive to sin at the same time? He cannot be a slave, or a captive, and free at the same time. His very nature is sinful and prefers darkness to light, sin to holiness. Free, ah, he will prefer anything to Christ. No man can ever talk of free will if he knows and believes in the total ruin of man through sin.

And there is still a deeper thing yet. A slave really desiring to be free, hating slavery, and not delivered from it, is a slave still. Who is this? This is a quickened soul, like Israel when they believed God and longed to escape, but were slaves still. This is the very case described in Rom. 7 Here we have a quickened soul, a new will, an earnest desire to do the will of God—one who can say, " I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Yet I am a slave, and how to perform that which is good " I find not." Could you say that one, even born of God and under law, with the experience described from verses 8 to 23, can do that which he chooses? The law provokes sin in the flesh, and the more he struggles, the more he discovers that he is without power to do what he longs to do, and he is a slave to what he hates. Have you known deliverance from that state? If not, you may be in that very state, and not know it. Years you may have gone on in this state, under law, a complete helpless slave, and not have understood it. Can you say, When I was in the flesh, under law, trying to improve it, I found there was not a bit of good in me, that is in my flesh. You never can say this until you are delivered out of it. Is it not then folly to talk about free will while you are a slave? Now when your eyes are opened by the Spirit, you see how the "1 " has been judged on the cross and set aside. It is no longer " I" but Christ. Then you can say, " I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Mark, you will not say, I thank my free will, I have chosen to be free. No, that will not do. It is all of God, I thank God. Not of him that willeth, but of God that showeth mercy, but all is through Jesus Christ.

Just one further scripture illustration of man's condition as to free will. If you will read carefully with prayer Eph. 1 forty times, you will be surprised how all is of God; and in chapter ii. a still deeper description of our real condition, as God sees us. We may make mistakes, but He never can do so. There both Jews and Gentiles are viewed as dead in trespasses and sins, by nature children of wrath.

Now where is free will? As to all good, man is dead. Have you seen a corpse laid in the coffin, screwed down, laid eight feet deep in the ground? Has that dead body a free will and power to break the coffin-lid and rise out of the grave? If it has, it is very far from being dead. Talk not then of free will.

How then is man to be raised, either from the literal grave at the resurrection, or now, from the grave of sin and death? God—it must be God. It is not the free will of man, " But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace ye are saved.” Read Eph. 2:1-10. Thus man, with his boasted free will, disappears, and God is all, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Objections.

" If all that is true: if man has no free will, and no power to do what is right even if he desires to do so, then there is no such a thing as responsibility."

Let us try two cases. A man has stolen a sheep, and he has no free will, no desire even to restore it; his will is to keep it, and eat it; or he has killed it and eaten one half, and means to eat and enjoy the other half. A policeman raps at the door. The man is eating a leg of the mutton, and half the sheep is in the cellar. The representative of the law is about to apprehend the man. " Oh, dear, no," says the man, " I admit I stole the sheep, and do you not see I have killed it, and eaten one half, and I have no will to give up what is left even; indeed plainly I have no desire to do so." Can you tell me of a policeman who would say, " Oh, I see, then as you have no will and no desire to restore the sheep, of course there is no responsibility?"

Take another case. A man borrows a hundred pounds from the Bank at five per cent. But instead of paying the interest he spends the hundred pounds in bad ways. What bank is that where the directors would say: " You have spent the hundred pounds in drink and evil ways, have you? Very well, the principle of this bank is, that where the money is spent, and there is neither free will nor power to pay what is spent, that man has no responsibility to pay his debts?" Could there then be greater folly than to say, because man, the sinner before God, has spent all in sin, and has neither free will nor power to make good what he has done, that therefore there is no responsibility?

Another objection. A local preacher says:

" If I thought that man had not a free will and power to accept, I never could preach again. I could not say, ' Whosoever will, let him come.' What's the use of doing so?"

As this is a very common objection let us look at it carefully. We have seen that the Lord and His apostles held distinctly, that it was not of him that willeth but of God that showeth mercy, that they that are born again are born of water and of the Spirit; not of man's will in the least. And they were not discouraged. They did not say, if it is not of man's free will but of God, we can never preach again. Now, dear local preacher, if you say so, you miss good company. But you ask, " What is the use of preaching?" Well, just read through the Acts of the Apostles and you will see the truth of that word, " It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. 1:21.) And again, " How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" &c. (Rom. 10:14.) " For by grace [the free favor of God] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8.) God gives you the high privilege 01' proclaiming free forgiveness of sins, and justification from all things, through Jesus. And He gives faith by the Spirit using the water, that is the word, He gives by you. It is by the word of Him who said, " Let there be light.” that light and life is given—this new creation power. What a privilege to be an instrument in His hands.

Consequences.

Ah, this would take a volume to tell. If salvation has its spring and beginning in man's free will; then (as we know is held by such as believe this) salvation all the journey through will depend, not on God, but on man's continued free will. All safety ever depends on himself, not on God: and if so now, why not in eternity? Such a one can never on such ground have true peace here or hereafter. This is a most distressing aspect of free will, and brings many a poor soul to despair. But if the new will and power, and new birth and salvation, be of God from eternity to eternity, then my soul rests on the Rock of ages. He changes not.

And yet remember that on God's part His salvation is as free as the air. Only open the window and the air comes in. The question is, who opens the window? Man will not; but God hath mercy on whom He will have mercy.

As this paper is very condensed, perhaps you will read it again, and especially the scriptures. The Lord use it for help to those for whom I was requested to write it; and I believe the request was of the Lord. C. S.

Patience: October 2021, Patience and Wisdom

James 1:3-5

The Christian is seen by James in trying circumstances, the common lot of faith in this world. The desired effect to be produced by God’s thus dealing with him is patience. But it is to be patience in continuance, otherwise it cannot be said to have its “perfect work” in him. Here Job failed. I learn patience by having my own will broken (brought into submission), and to this end the trials are allowed. I learn that God is for me (in the trials) in order that I should be content with and do His will.

But while patience must be thus learned because it is according to God, and we have to act on earth for Him, and patience is simply waiting on His will, yet it does not suppose indifference or inactivity. When it is a question of His will for me in everything, I know that His way must be

right. Hence, I learn patience in ceasing from doing my own will. And then another thing comes in. I need wisdom in my daily path, for I must avoid slothfulness, so that in all I do I may be wise, that is, just doing as He would have me do in the circumstances of my daily life. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.” It supposes patience first, as a thing already learned, and subjection to His will, to what He is doing. Then, needing instruction, I ask, What am I to do? This is where the need of wisdom comes in, and it is given to me liberally, if I ask with no will of my own in exercise. If I have my own will in exercise, I am a double-minded man: “Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

Finally, as to “patience” and “wisdom,” to be so much desired by and for us all as Christians, I would add that I believe that no “impatient” man will ever be found to be a “wise” man, either in his own things or in the church. These things must not be taken out of their divine order. But, on the other hand, there is every hope and every prospect that a “patient” Christian man, however humble, will be found someday, at some trying moment perhaps, to have become, to the surprise of some, a “wise” man. The divine order is first “patience,” then “wisdom.”

H. Anstey (adapted)

Cuyahoga Falls Conference: 2014, James 1:1-5

Reading

100 and 80 We are but strangers here. Heaven is our home, 180. Uh-huh. We thank the Godfather that we can hear here. Be together.

Yet left in this world. May the Lord Jesus was. And he is now. In his home. We're looking forward to be with him someday. At his choosing. And for the time being that we are here, we would ask you to help us to please thyself, Lord Jesus. Good things which? Are proper according to divert. We are looking forward. To also consider some. That we're living at the time when I was here on this earth. What their testimony was. Exactly that we are. Have a testimony. Whether we say much or less or even nothing. If we are safe, we leave here a testimony for the Lord Jesus, and we thank thee that this is so. It is a great honor to know the Lord Jesus, to thank Him for the salvation that we have. Through him for his great work on the cross, for his care for us. So we would actually do have this afternoon to be occupied with the things. Of heaven, whatever thou would have us to say or do, to pray, all in the precious name of the Lord Jesus, Amen. I understand that this reading meeting. We have to do some travel Saturday. If it is all right. Here I would suggest that that we read the 1St chapter of the Epistle of James. OK. Plus, uh. Young man yet half brother of Lorides. He has a lot of sex today. James chapter one. James, the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, through the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad. Greeting my brethren, counted all joy when you fall into divers temptations. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith, work with patience, but let patience have her perfect work, that she may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that give us to all men liberally and upbraideth not. And it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind, and toss. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice, and that he is exalted but the rich, and that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with the burning heat, but it should, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth. And the grace of the fashion of it perish it. So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of light which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil. Neither tempt to see any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. And when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not earn, my beloved brethren, every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above.

And cometh down from the Father of light, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should 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. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness. And receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the Word, and not hearers, only deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding in his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continue it therein, he being not a forgetful here, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain, pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father. Is this to visit the fatherless and widows. In their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. I'd like to give a short introduction about the person of James. He was, as I said, the half brother of Lord Jesus. There were four of them. Two of them. Rod. Epistles. Jane sent you. There were two more. Joseph Simon. And they all grew up with the Lord Jesus. I often smile, but. How's that? Was going to workout. How does this workout? He calls himself a servant of the Lord. So we understand that at some time we did get saved, and because his half brother, the Lord, he has become his Lord. In full recognition. That the Lord was rejected. And it's it's like no means they would. Also we rejected. He was rejected by the majority of. Paper the juice. And during the temporal life of the Lord Jesus, he was not yet a disciple, which we get from John 75 after the resurrection of the Lord. The Lord met with him and his brothers we gather from. Who is currently in 57 and X 114? Most likely they found by that experience the faith to the crucified, and James was then counted to his disciples. Not only the family connection to the Lord Jesus made him an intellectual courtesy along with Jewish Christians, but because he was honest and righteous. He enjoyed much respect among the pious Jews, which we gather from Acts 1513.

He was at least 20 years at the helm of the Assembly of Jerusalem. Now that the Assembly of Jerusalem was the only one that was not driven out. When the first conditions started. He is a shining example of how to love the law. Without being a jealous fighter for it. How to have authority without setting the fellow elders aside? And how to endure tremendous pressure without injuring love or giving up. What's calling? We gather at 1519. Thousands of Jewish believers. I'm the Lord Jesus had in him. Shepherd. To prove. The Lord, the love. Of the Lord through his Jewish and not Jewish fellow believers. And to resolve people every day. His deep humility. His right diligence and prayer, his hearty brotherliness, His practical way. Make him to this day an excellent example for all believers. Paula Cost, James Theater and John Philosophy Assembly. We gather from Galatians 29. The Book of James is the oldest Pope of the New Testament. Written about 45 AG. James is a material and 6280. And James's intention was to point out the lack of honesty and consistency in the world after the Lord. And he was promising

against it. So we see there was much to be. Commanded. About this. It's. This is not to put the Lord. To painting or anything like this but. It teaches us in many things. What he said and what he did. He starts out James, the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the beginning points that we have to take up each one of us in our lives is. To learn our proper relationship to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ. James had learned that his own relationship to God and Lord Jesus. And it's really a starting point in every one of our lives that we need, if you will, to put God in his place. Right place before us, and then to learn what our place is with respect to Him. And the book of Proverbs. Begins in about verse seven of the book. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. That is, the Lord is being given in Proverbs His right place. With respect to ourselves there is to be a respect. And honor that is due to him. And if God is given his right place, then we will be put in our right place as well, and it will be for our blessing and our good.

And so with the Lord Jesus, we. Come as a starting point to know the Lord Jesus as Savior. And without knowing Him as Savior, no other relationship is going to be meaningful between US and the Lord. But if the Lord is brought into our lives and He is our Savior, then we learn other aspects or other ways in which we have a relationship with the Lord Jesus. We learn Him as a shepherd, most significantly in his title here, the Lord. And so we come to recognize that he is Lord of our lives and he's being in that way, given his right place. And as a consequence, it brings us into our right place with Him and. And so on. And of course, with the Lord Jesus, there are many, many different ways in which we're brought into relationship with him. But we have to get a right starting point, otherwise our lives will not go on in a way that is a benefit to God or to us. And James had learned that. He hadn't progressed, if you will, in his own life. He hadn't been given the revelations that Paul does has been given. His epistle doesn't take us to the same extent that some of the other New Testament epistles do, but he had a good start and uh, as well for us to get make sure that the start is at the right place. Life starts at Calgary in a real sense of the word. Until we come to the cross, life hasn't really started in a Christian sense for us. But I think we can get that from James in this very first verse to benefit to our souls to do so. I understand that in many of the early Greek manuscripts James follows act. Which should be perhaps a more natural order, because you see that here it's addressed to the 12 tribes which were scattered abroad and with chains. A lot of what he is speaking about here is that behavior that would be proper to the outworking of faith and the Christian life. And so it's the expression of what is proper to our faith before man in the world, which is somewhat different in Christianity. In fact, a lot different in Christianity from Judaism and so it would be very important for the Jews to know this early on that Judaism there may be respect given to someone who is is rich. It's at the beginning of the second chapter and maybe a lot of different things having to do with advantage in the world where James talked about persecution. If we've had prominently here in our first Test. That belonged to. What these Christians were going through, who were primarily Jews, the ones that James was among, and so it's helpful for them to know that this was natural to the outworking of their faith in the world. And James takes up that issue. Like you say, it's not really the deep doctrine, is it? That's more brought out through the apostle Paul. Although when you go through this, you find because this is inspired by the Spirit of God here, it's not the slightest conflict with anything brought out later. James talked about the new birth. In verse 18 of His own well begat, yet by the word of truth this is begotten of thought. He talked about many things as he goes through here, just completely consistent without going to the doctrine of them, but. James is, I could say, taking it out with those things that would prove our faith in an outward way and. He takes up quite a few of these. There's at least three of them in the first chapter. First of all, there's the trials that come in from without to prove our faith. Text us to see if we're real and how we, umm, endure into this trial.

Shows in an outward way that we are real. And of course he brings in more than that. He shows that God uses them to to work in our lives as Christians. And then there's the testing from within brought up next. And then there's the way that we handle the word of God at the end of the chapter that shows whether or not our faith is real. So these are all were external things that are work out before God. But before mad as well. And so that would be it, a mark of James, and perhaps one that would show more of where this epistle is coming from. It's not joy. To fall into diverse temptation that we read here. That'd be awesome. I know that God does not tempt anybody. So we know it is the devil who is always will find. Something in US? Where he can get a starting point. He tried to bring us all. But then we also read What is the outworking of that? The trying of your faith work is patient. It tries our faith. And it teaches us patience. And that can only be done. To a time as time goes on, we are always. Put two tests. When things get rough. And only with faith, as we have in the Lord Jesus. You can prevail. Some of you, uh, have a. Like a daily devotional that you read, uh, every day. And, uh, I hope this is right to say this, uh, I have found it very helpful to think of the book of James a little bit like. Uh, in that way, like a, like a devotional, like a daily devotional, I mean that, uh, try to explain myself here. Uh, like, for example, the book of Proverbs, similar to the book of Proverbs, you can pick a chapter out of the book of Proverbs or even just a section of a chapter and read it. And get a lot of benefit from it. Maybe one of the verses doesn't really speak to you that day, but another one that you never noticed before really kind of hits home. Umm. This, the book to me is helpful to think of it not so much like, like for example, Romans or some of the other books that Paul where Paul kind of goes through things methodically and, and, and explain things from different points of view and kind of build the, uh, support for this, this truth that he's trying to explain. It's not so much like that, although there are things that are repeated throughout the book, but it's kind of divided, or I think of it this way. It's divided up into little sections. That are that, uh, can stand on their own. There are certain things that repeat over and over through the book and they sort of build through the book. And I would be glad to hear people kind of connect those together. But, uh, each little section of, you know, 3456 or seven verses. Uh, can be read and it kind of stands on its own. And so you'll find as you read through the book of James, you might be going along and all of a sudden there's a section that. Really kind of hits home maybe based on some current events in your life or, uh, something that you, the Lord through through these verses shows you something that maybe is lacking or in your, in your life. And in that way it, uh, uh, it's in that way that I, I like to think of it as kind of a daily devotional. I find that helpful because sometimes you go through the book and you, uh, or at least I do, I go through the book and I think, well, how does this fit with that?

Uh, and sometimes there are connections, but it's. Uh, it is, I, I find it helpful and I would suggest that if you're reading through it to, to think of each one and say, OK, well, in this little section, what is the Lord trying to tell me? And maybe one time you read through the book, it, it, that particular section, you don't think about it too much, But the next time you read through the book, if the Lord makes it real to you in, in a way, I hope that's been helpful to me. It's, it's a little bit laid out a little bit differently. It sounds a little bit different, uh, as you read through it and some of the other books in the New Testament. And uh, uh, for me, that's been a help thinking of it that way. Have a relationship with God. Requires pay. The foundation? It's, uh, essential. Speaking when we sang to him that we started with. Saying over and over again, Heaven is our home. You know, it's kind of challenging to think thinking about something is yours and you've never seen it. Never been there. In fact, that is in reality, he's saying each other. Seven is our home. We're strangers here. But what we're saying about not one of us has ever seen it. Not one of us could describe it in any detail and say, oh, the home I have. And and then to go describe it in any physical way, we could not. We can say a lot about it this wonderful for us, but at the same time there's a lot that we don't know as well. And yeah. Faith says Heaven is our home. And if faith says heaven is our home, then we live by that. James had been brought up a certain way in his life and he got to a

certain point in life and you might say the Lord Jesus came into the life at that point. And. He found in the Lord Jesus the person that he trusted. And now he's writing at a time when he hadn't couldn't see the Lord Jesus anymore. He wasn't there for his natural eyes. He had walked with him, then with him. And was writing to people who had, like himself, embraced the Lord Jesus Christ. As their life, as the one that they were going to follow. But they're gonna have to do it now. By faith, he wasn't gonna be there. And as a consequence of identification with the Lord Jesus and a life of faith, there were things that were going to test it. There were things that were going to come in and. When there was failure, there was failure to be dealt with, but the life was that life and James is seeking to help and encourage them to go in and live that life and even face the things that were difficult in it with joy, knowing that God had a purpose of love and good in them for their blessing. And so part of the life of faith says, as it were, God is for me. And whatever he brings into my life, he has purpose of good in it. Never evil, never bad. And. What would you have said to Joe? God's the one that said that you considered my servant Joe. And, uh, there were points in which Job said his comments are sort of like, I wish God had left me alone. I wish you hadn't brought this into my life.

Why didn't he leave me, as he said, in my nest? You know, a nice comfortable little spot to be in. Umm, if God had said Job, I'm going to put you through some tests. Umm, face it with joy, I don't think he would have. He, he, he wouldn't have been able to see it in that way, but nonetheless. He went through it and uh, he failed in it. He sinned in the test. But in the end, Lord doubly blessed him, and he received the end, and so a blessing for his soul. And so it is with us. The trial or the testing of the faith is for our good. It has a purpose behind it of God for good, and it's good for us to accept it that way and to embrace it and say whatever God has is for good and He will bring blessing in the end. But He must, we must recognize that it's a relationship of faith that is laying hold of that which we do not see. And that which our natural eyes have not seen, perhaps, but still it's a trust in the God who is and who loves. I could just add a little bit more to what you're saying there. Or they're not that faith is always based upon the word of God. And we in this chapter here we, we find that God is telling us that there's a purpose in our trials. But he is, he is, he is doing something for our blessing and for his glory in the difficult things and the pain and the sorrow that he allows in our lives, that he has a purpose in it. And we, we see here that if, uh, if they're told to count it all joy when they fall into different temptations or trials, the next verse tells them why they should count it all joy. It says knowing this, that the trying of your faith, working patience. Well, God has promised us that there is going to be blessing in the trial that He is calling us to go through. Umm, we might say, well, what's what's so important about patients? Why, why, why do I have to suffer like this? So that the outcome can be that I learned patience. Well, that's one of the. Characteristics of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus became a man. And. He he learned things he learned. To be subject by the things that he suffered. He he took that place as a man and in in that one sense he became a learner. By the things that he suffered. You and I are learning to be. Submissive. Gone through the trials and the difficulties that we go through. Patience is a a wonderful thing because it makes us more like Christ and it reflects the glories of God. Patience is based upon the fact that we are submissive to the will of God, that we're submissive to his timing, that we're willing to let him have control of our lives and do what he sees as best. And it's just some patients is just simply. Waiting upon God because we know. That he's doing something for his own glory and for our blessings and so. The pain and the suffering that we go through, we go through because we believe what God has said. We faith is believing God and God has told us that there's blessing through suffering and the blessing is going to result in that. We learn patience and as we learn patience, we will reflect the glories of the Lord Jesus more and more. We will become more like Him and there will be more for God's glory here on earth.

Because our lives will be created more into his image. I would just like to confirm this by turning to Romans 5. Romans 5 verse three says And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also. Knowing that tribulation worketh patience and patience, experience and experience hope. Word of God tells us that there is a process God is bringing us through to develop us as the children of God. It's in this instance he begins with tribulation. Tribulation works patience. Patience works, experience, you know when we've gone through a trial. And we've learned to submit to the Lord's hand in our lives that that we've, we've, we've allowed him as it were, to say, OK, you've chosen this for me and I accept it. We threw it. Not only do we get gain the patience. But it also works experience. Where we learn God's ways and we trust Him more. Experience. We might be able to be used to pass that along to others. So I just bring this process out, that this is the process of Christian development, making us more into the image of Christ. You take for instance. OK uh, in the scriptures, the prophet Jeremiah, he was the. And he knew how the people where he didn't want to draw that God was going to give him. And on the other hand, we also, uh, notice that he did grow up with the greatest team there ever was for God. In Josiah. With all the idols away and. Who were destroyed, that what was not pleasing to God and he did a great job. So we can understand that, Jeremiah. Must have a wonderful time sometimes watching this godly thing. But he had a long life, and when this king died, when this king passed away. Then his prior wheel started. So God put him to. Very different circumstances. And we can learn from that very much. It can start with a very nice. And and as a great trial, the greatest ever. That Jeremiah has. But yet in all these things, God is in it. It says here, if you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Now he understood that Jesus was God. And that always last resort or the first resort I would say to go to go to God and we don't know what to do. You ran into a a problem. We don't know how to approach it how to. Deal with it. And what to do about things? We need the wisdom that we can ask of God.

Like to turn to Psalm chapter 4. Psalm chapter 4. Support sum. First verse Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness. Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress. Have mercy upon me and hear my prayer. Going to read it again in the new translation. When I call, answer me, oh God, of my righteousness and pressure. Thou has enlarged me. And pressure thou has enlarged me. And spiritual things. Many times in order to grow, it's necessary for us to be put under pressure. Often times when circumstances are easy, faith is not really tested and it doesn't grow. It doesn't develop, it doesn't mature, but in the school of God. Uh, he uses pressure often to. In his ways of helping us to grow. And so we see people who were placed under pressure. Take a young man as an example. Joseph. Joseph when he was. Still quite young, had a dream. And he dreamed that his brothers would bow down before him, and so his parents. And then what happened? He went through years and years of pressure. He's sold as a slave, his brothers hate him, he's faithful in his circumstances and things only get worse and he goes for something like 13 years. Not seeing his family under constant pressure. And it tells us in I think it's Psalm 104 or thereabouts, it says the word of the Lord tried him. In other words, for all those years, what did he have to hang on to? One thing. The Lord had sent. His life wasn't over it, it wasn't going to remain as it was, but as year by year passed, this young man, this teenager goes through and we would say the best, some of the best years of his life from that time until he's 30 years old, the word, the pressure of God was on his life. But what was God doing? He was preparing a vessel to use it for blessing of souls, and so he was a great blessing in his life. We like to read of the tail end of it, but God has His ways to develop in each soul that which is pleasing to himself, and very often the way, the necessary way of God is pressure to bring it about. And James recognized that and he could say be thankful, be happy that God is doing the work. That will satisfy him and. In the end, we'll satisfy the one that he's working in. I think verse four seems to indicate that we can't be perfect and entire and wanting nothing without it. We we need this in our lives or we're going to be very lacking as Christians and that is really the point of recognizing this process of their brother called it tribulation work to patients and patients hope and hope. It's not a shame and so forth In Romans 5 or here as it says that patients have a perfect work. And so it's that work of God in our lives that we need so much and I know for myself when a trial comes into my

life. My first thought is generally, how can I get out of it? But what we have here is that shouldn't be our first thought, or my first thought. It should be.

What does God want me to get out of it? And there's something that God has in it for blessing and and. They're recognizing that. I think it's the the first thing. We get that from these first verses, just to know that whatever other things were involved, it was if it was Satan, they could look and say, well, here, drove it there. I'm sorry. If it was Job, you could say look, thinking it's something to do with my trial, but he didn't do it. He looked beyond it and eventually at least he got to the point of it. It was thought God didn't 'cause it, but God allowed it. And so Job had to do with God and so do we, and we need to go back to God and say what is he doing? In my life. And the first point though, we could recognize that God allowed it. That's where the joy comes in. He cares enough about me to be doing something in my life, even if it's hard. He hasn't left me alone. He cares. And I can see that this is something that a God who loves me is allowing. Then there should be real joy in that. But that doesn't solve the problem. I get to that point and I'm thankful that the Lord is doing something, but what is it? And maybe I still don't know. So that's the reason for the verse five. If any of you lack wisdom, let a master God. And I know for myself, I may often get into a situation of difficulty, and perhaps I do get to the point where I'm thinking the right thought about it, that the Lord allowed it, but I still need to know what it is that He's doing. And so the next thing is I need to be down on my knees before and find out what that is so that I can realize what His point is in the trial and difficulty and gain the blessing. I can make a brief example to Moses. So it's 120 years. 1St 40 years It's often been commented his life was divided into 3 periods of 40 years. And the first 40 years of his life, he had a a really good life by man's standards. Yeah, the ultimate opportunities. To be raised in the palace of the king and so on, and learned the good life. And he spent 40 years in the desert alone, a lot of the time with the pocket sheets or whatever he cared for. And then he served God, having been so prepared of God for the 1St 2/3 of his life. He served God for 40 years. But God is patient. It is perfect work. He's patient in it and actually it appears that it's a year 118. That he misspoke. In his life and as a consequence personally was not allowed into the land. Lived 118 years. Life is almost finished. And yet he still had something that was for his blessing is going to teach him. And he did and. How is this when we meet him will be profoundly thankful that God was patient. Awfully she's work that the end result of Moses life was that which pleased God and will make Moses forever satisfied. So it is in our lives. It's not attract me. It's an endurance race. And uh, you have that in chapter Hebrews, chapter 12. Let us run with patience or endurance, the same word that you have here, endurance. And so it is it, it doesn't stop until the goal line and the goal line is not until we enter glory. We've seen #74. God and Father, we give thanks for this, these thoughts that we've had about the trials of faith. We just give thanks that we know that we're not the only ones who may have our individual struggles and challenges of faith, but there's many others also. Father, we just ask for help and understanding and wisdom as we go through these, and we will learn from these that we might be able to give the Lord his glory and that we may become more likely to give thanks for this time together in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Cuyahoga Falls Conference: 2014, James 1:13-18

Reading

I think that in 32 and the appendix. In weakness and trials thought we may believe. Oh man, no. I can't dance out in the past and now. So good at everything here. But everything is on. Your father's health here. All right, so may be sanctioned in time. Ah, by 10 minutes, right? Ah, I'll be able to play anything and diagnose them. You have a different time and ah. Right. To get. And then I'm just saying. Right, God and their Father was. Thank you that whatever maybe the difficulty that faces us yet we can come to the. And we can bring our request before thee. And we thank you that that would always answer it according to. To what is the very best? Maybe not what we asked for, but. That thing that is needed. And so we just thank you that we could sing this hymn together. And the confidence of what it expresses, according to thy word, to know that thou were to God, who is for us. And that that is not fair, thine own son without us to deliver him up for us all. And therefore, our God and our Father, how shalt thou knock? With him also freely give us all things. So we rejoice in that, and we'd love to be further now to open Thy word and pray that Thou would give us more of that wisdom from its pages. We ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus, Amen. Amen. Maybe we could continue our Bible reading. When he has one reading. More in this conference one a day.

Is this a suggestion? James chapter one. 13. James chapter one will begin at verse 13. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil. Neither tempt to see any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lost hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not earn, my beloved brethren, every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above. And cometh down from the Father of light. With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning of His own, will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, that every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness and engrafted the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man, beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not for forgetful here, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed, if any man among you seem to be religious. And bridaleth not his tone, but deceiveth his own heart. This man's religion is vain, pure religion, and undefiled before God the Father, and before God and the Father. Is this to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world? Back up How was man first tempted? God created man's perfect. And everything he created was very good. But then the tempter came. He certainly was none other but the devil. And he is still at work today. This was just about with everyone. Whenever he can find. A way to get into his. Person, his mind, his heart, his conscience. Whatever he can attack, he will. So we have to be on guard constantly. Some people think because God does everything. He brings about everything. He also is in some somehow in the business have demand. But this is a bad thought. God has nothing to do with it.

It is when men. Whoever it may be gives in to Satan. That's when he is tempted in whatever it may be. Cross between temptation and testing. Because we go to Genesis 22 and the King James it says God did temp. Abraham. It's not a good translation of the verse really. A better is God did test or try Abraham. Uh, station. Draws men away by the lust that of the sinful nature that is in US. And so Satan works to tempt. Or even without them, Satan were tempted by in inward loss in our Adam nature. But God never does that. He never ever. He cannot do that. Because of what He is, is God, and He's perfect in His Holiness and so he has no evil motive possible in him. But God does test. A test profession. In

part, James's epistle was to encourage the Saints to walk in the reality of their faith. But, And at times the word of God is used to speak to us in a way that tests us as to whether we're real or not, as to something. And so God will, according to his perfect wisdom and purpose, if we profess something, to be something. Or believe something God will sometimes put that profession to the test. Is it real or is it not this person pretending? Maybe they're sincere and deceiving themselves. It isn't that there's necessarily an attempt to deceive on their part my part, but there can be with unconscious to us. Not having really laid hold of something and so God puts it to the chest, He does allow in the test that He brings into our lives, He does allow and make use of. Satan or sinful man? Uh, to bring the test about, as in the case of Job. God said God had a purpose in Job's life for to bless him, but he was being hindered from his purpose of blessing Joe because he saw something in Job that needed to be taken care of before God could bring the blessing that he wanted in his life. And so when Satan prepares before him, he says, hast thou considered my servant Joe? And as it were, Job responds yes, but you won't let me touch them. So what can I do? Satan had the desire to bring out make jumps in and God did permit. He said, all right, I will allow you to go this far. And he went that far. And as a consequence of the first step, the result was it says Job sin not with his lips. Doesn't mean he didn't send, but the words didn't come out. He wasn't fully exposed to himself or to others by the 1St measure that God allowed Satan to go, but then God allowed him to go farther, allowed him to touch his body and his health and uh, then he. Went on and had blessing after he judged himself and so God does try or test we had the other day in the case of Joseph, God said to Joseph, your family, your father and mother are going to bow down to you and it says later the word of the Lord tried them. So he passed through years of testing as to did he really believe God.

In spite of all the circumstances through which he was passing and uh, God used him as a great vessel of blessing because you might say pass the test, he was real. And so it is in our lives is it says in this verse, let no man say when he's tempted, I'm tempted to God. That is God never, ever put something before us with the intent that we will disobey. If we profess something. Then He may put something before us that'll see whether we will obey or not, but it's never in the nature of what we call it, or what should be called a temptation, as it says in this verse. We are active blame God in some way in trial, aren't we? We get into trouble and it happened in the very first ten that was mentioned. And the Lord talked to Adam. Adam said the woman this house gave us to me to be with me. She gave me an IED. She blames her. But he also implies that there's some fault on the part of God because God gave her to him. And so we are apartment to turn around and blame God in some way. So this is a very needed expectation. They don't do it. It's just something that God never can do. This earth is also very blessed for defending the deity of our earthy the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is God. And so Satan came to him. He could be tempted in all the ways that we had earlier in our chapter. That is, he went through testing, He went through great testing. They would come there and put things before him. But he couldn't be tested in this way. He couldn't be tested this way because there was nothing from within that would respond to it. So Satan comes and he completely fails. Later on, Satan would come again at the end of the Lord's ministry, and the Lord would say the Prince of this world comes and he has nothing. In me there was nothing inside the Lord that could correspond to that. There is enough, and so we need that. But the Lord didn't have that sin nature. So it says in Hebrews chapter 4 that he was an all points tempted like as we are, and yet without sin or sin apart he couldn't be tempted that way. So it's important to see that. And defend who he was in this person. I say that because a lot of people today, a lot of Christians today say that the Lord Jesus could have been, but he didn't. So he's the great overcomer and we look to him as the one, the great example as to how to overcome that actually is a slur in this person and. From what I understand, perhaps the majority of Christians today would hold that teaching. We need to be aware of it. That's really a very bad teaching with respect to the person of the Lord. Where is that thought? A little step farther as well. Very very important point to learn. Never, ever, ever judge God by what we are. I say that again, it's a tremendously important thing. Never, ever judge God by what we are. What we are is this. If you've lied. Con one of the consequences is you will believe that you could be lied to. You see that in Cain he committed murder. And when he committed murder, he was afraid he would be murdered. If you cheated. You will think people will cheat. In return, if you've ever stolen, you will think you may have someone steal from you. It's the way we are, and it's important to recognize what we are and why we act, if you will, that we do.

But the mistake is so easily made is we try to apply those same things to God. If I deceive. If I haven't been righteous, I may say, well, maybe God doesn't always do things just quite the right way. And so on. And the importance of it is is. That we recognize that our God is what he says he is. I do not lie. Pretty obvious. I do not cheat, I do not steal, I do not deceive, I do not attempt. We tempted somebody. There's a certain something in US and it says right here, God doesn't tempt because he never ever acts inconsistent with himself, which is not like us. And as a consequence. We we must learn to trust. We've been talking about faith in the last day. We've got to learn to trust God and not according to the character of what we are. Or we will, in certain circumstances, not trust him. We will misrepresent him. Because we're judging him according to what we are in ourselves. And that's part of what Joe had to learn. Uh, he had to change his perspective to see things from God's perspective. And always look at it from, well, what is God said of himself and how is he going to act consistent with his own character? He said, I can't deny myself. I promised this to you. I'm going to deliver on my promises regardless in that sense of us. And just one final thought about it. If we look at things from God's perspective, you can find in tremendous encouragement in spite of what we are. In spite of what we are, uh, just a little example out of this chapter, it says. God cannot be tempted with evil either. Tempteth he any man. God says. I've made you my child. I've given you the life of the family, the nature of the family. And when the transition that Phil spoke about is done and it gets to the end of what God has purposed, he says you'll never tempt anybody. You'll never lost. You'll never fail to love. To participate in the essential deity of God. But as his children, we've received the divine nature and we will be morally like the Lord Jesus Christ when God's work is done and so. Even it's not to diminish or to weaken the exhortation here, but at the same time it's a it's a wonderful thing to say. God says I can't tempt anybody. Won't it be nice when his work is done and we never, ever have a desire to tempt anyone. Deceive anyone, lie to anyone, steal from anyone, and so on. It's, uh, it's an encouragement if we stop and allow God to show us what he's doing and his perspective on what he's doing. But again, I say never ever judge God by what we are. It's helpful, On the contrary, to judge ourselves by what God is.

There's, there's all kinds of temptations around us and we're prone to yield to them and to make excuses. And perhaps one of the commonest these days is and the Christians endorse this, My Christians endorse, they say it's all right to lie once in a while if you do it for a good purpose. Does God ever lie? God never lies that it's always wrong. That doesn't mean we always have to tell everything we know. God doesn't tell us everything he knows. But God never lies. It's never right to lie. It's it's a it's a truth, a simple truth that. Is not commonly recognized in society these days. Originally God, uh, made us in his image. After we fell, we made God in our image. And you look around at the Greeks and all their funny gods and uh, they all have these human characteristics. They all have an evil connected with them. Look at other societies in these ugly, angry looking slots, idols and stuff. That's just a representation of what's in my heart. So. We we now make God an art image. But uh, certain settings, not the way it is there. There is that symmetry there. Brother already mentioned about the. The fact that we have enemies, really the just one is mentioned here and that is the flash that's within. And uh. It's really important to see that. That is taken up by itself because we may even try to blame other enemies that we have. The devil made me do it or something like that. But the fact is there's enough

that's wrong right inside of us and we need to be guard on guard again. Satan really doesn't have to do much work. Maybe with regard to me, sometimes I get into plenty enough trouble by not judging myself and keeping my flesh the place of death and so that it's taken off all by itself later on. James goes and takes up the other enemies in order in chapter 4. You'll find there that it's first he takes up the the flesh and the first part of that. The the lost again. He thinks up in verse three and then he goes on to the world. Friendship with the world is enmity with God in verse 4. And uh. And then he goes to the end of verse seven there resist the devil. He will flee from you until he takes up the three enemies as a believer has. And that's all true and important. And the word of God speaks much about all three. But as I understand it, the flesh is the one that is dealt with the most is there we fail the most. And so when we look at this and see that there are these suggestions that come from within. And they're called lots and it doesn't say lost is sent here. I think the word is actually desire. Translated that in other places when it's used in a good way, like the Lord Jesus said with the desire of I desire Jesus Passover with you. It's the same word, but it's a suggestion, a desire that comes from the old nature and that's what's wrong with it. And if we listen to it, if we get place to it. And don't immediately judge that is where it came from and it's rude. Then it says there's a progression to it and it goes on to +10 which then goes on to what is called here death and.

The warning here isn't to explore what happens down that road, but to stop right at the beginning of it. Recognize where the thought is coming from. And be done with it. Judge it. Own that God is good and submit to him and go on. The first part is to do with you all the enough. Versus just described. The verses which follow give the very opposite side of it too. It says do not earn my blood rather than because then it brings out good. Well, as to the evil? We give excuse. As to our sin in doing it. Only three main excuses given in Genesis are God's fault, Satan's fault, or somebody else's fault. Those are the three that are given in the excuse. Alright, equally subtle in US. Is if we see something that we perceive to be good. We want the credit. We we want to think that's me. That was the root of Joe's problem. Gone and made him a righteous man. And the keyword is God had made. But Joe's problem was he was proud of what he was and he wanted the credit for it. And so God had to work with Joe to help him to discover what he thought of himself. And what was wrong with his conclusion about it? Because no flash is going to glory in the presence of God. When we look at things that way, then we judge God again. I've done good. Why am I not receiving from God the just recompense of my goodness? Why isn't God doing this for me? So and so does that and nothing seems to happen to him. But I'm I'm not doing it. I'm doing it right now. Why isn't my life getting good? Our hearts say I deserve. And so, he says, every good and every perfect gift is from a glove. The source of all goodness is in the heart of God. It's not in our doing, it's not in our not doing. It's in the heart of God. Did God want Job to be a righteous man? Yes, He did. Does He want you and I to be righteous people? Yes, He does. But whose? To whose credit is it? It's gone. It's God's credit, but if the natural man is given his chance, if Adam is given his chance, he's going to say I deserve, I'm good. And he's going to judge his fellow for not being so good. Father, I thank thee that I'm not, as other men are. And then he looks at the public and, and as his prayer and uh, so as such is, is the confidence that man has in his own goodness. That we are. We are in that, and so we're taught to say don't hurt that way. Every man, every blood, every perfect gift comes from God. And he is the one that is to receive the credit for it.

And he's unchanging. He's unfailing. It is good. You'll never, ever, ever give us something that is not from His unchanging heart of good. Yes. Why did we begin ourselves? Oh, by his own will. That he us by the word of truth. On his own with. There is less. Bringing up in every man, even children. They are lasting after something, after new toys, after something that the other one might have and they don't have it. They try to get it, maybe take it away. There's many ways. I wish men can be drawn, it says he had drawn. Into some kind of loss. Maybe getting a new car when they are older can't afford it. Lasting after a house after. People are married. It looks very good but they can't afford it. And and no is something happened that they don't? Calculate into their lives. It's robust. It'll go wrong. That's why God says don't. Money. Don't borrow anything. Only. Get that which you can't afford. He has promised us to take care of us. If we live a godly life according to His ways, He has promised to take care of us in whatever circumstances we are. And again, patiently wait for the time where we can have what we need. We've seen Gorbachev that this country down to their knees by doing this. Well, it would have been a good thing if everybody had prayed when it happened. Because with these mortgages so-called. They got people to take high mortgages, big money, and then they couldn't pay it and they went into bankruptcy. Well, that's one way that God, that God would like to have us to watch against. On the other hand, that's one way where how Satan got in. And got a lot of help. Hard things to happen to many, many families and through the whole country. Lasting after something. Question is for someone to answer. Some of them perhaps is in this situation, if my old nature is dead, why do I have this conflict? So could you expand a little on that reckoning? It would be a dead brother.

Well, I'm sure you can, but I'll give it a try. The Word of God teaches us and. We take some time to go through it, but in in Romans 6, it brings out very plainly how we have this, umm, old nature that's within us. That, uh, we are to keep the hold in that place of, of death. Other scriptures as well, and it's always there. The scripture talks about it as being alive. Umm, it speaks about the old man that we have too. We often read about that. I just mentioned it briefly that that, uh, that is actually crucified and seen as dead. But the scripture talks about this old nature. We find that it is there and, and it can work if we allow it to. And so this is one of those places where you find that lost is working. It's it's suggesting and and if we give it place, it will go on and progress now in Galatians Chapter 5. We read something about the the secret of the power over it. So if I could just make the whole discussion short and go there. It says in verse 16 this I say then walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Now, as believers, we were born again. We just read that. And having been born again, we have divine life from God. It's a perfect life, and that life only does what is natural to it. However you go through and you read in the book of Romans, you find that there's a struggle between that life and and the the flash. We may say the new nature and the old nature. And in Romans we see that there's a a complete difficulty to you come to chapter 8. But here we find really the answer of it is the Holy Spirit, which also comes out in Romans 8, so. Just to say that briefer, we've got a new nature and an old nature. The new nature wants to do what is right. The old nature doesn't want to do what is right. That old nature that we have cannot be improved. It's desperately wicked. There's nothing that can be done. It tells us that it's it can be improved, but it lies. The new nature can't be improved either. It's perfect. And we have to live in one of the other and the only chance we have to live according to the new nature is to walk in the Spirit. And we can do that because God has given us his spirit. We're in dwelled by the Holy Spirit. So that is what is taken up in Galatians chapter five. He says in verse 16 this I say then walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. So how do we do that? Well, the flash lost against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are the contrary ones to the others, so that you cannot do the things that you would. But if you're a lad of the Spirit, you're not into the law. Now the worst of the flesh and manifest, which are these and so on it goes through them, and then it brings out the fruit of the Spirit. And it says in verse 24 days that our Christ have crucified the flesh with the affection. And the loss her brother was talking about that a little bit in his meeting, if you remember, said you could have put on the Lord Jesus Christ. And then we've got the putting off these works of the flesh. And here we find that keeping the flesh and the type of in the place of death, it's broken up here is having crucified the flesh with the affections and the loss. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. And that's the secret. We have the Spirit of God. And we take up

with the Spirit of God in our life. We give no place to the flesh, but instead we walk according to the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God will lead us in the ways of God. And that begins with so much of what we've had in this world in in these meetings. The word of God is an integral part of that. He's going to lead us on in his word. We get that later on in James one here. And we walk according to that way. It's called in Romans 8.

Umm, living after the Spirit, we're living in the realm of the Spirit, doing those things that the Spirit of God within us wants us to do and gives us the power to do. And when we do that, there is the power over the old nature that we have and we won't sin. Peter says if you do these things, you won't fail. And so that's the power and there is no secret or shortcut to it, but. Taking up with living that life in the Spirit of God and by the Word of God. I'm sure someone else can better. US. Lost his UMM desiring something to have something that God is not giving us. And umm, it's it's beautiful to see the answer to UMM trying to take something God has not given us. He isn't giving it to us because it's not for our best interest. It's not for our blessing. But what He has to give us is every good gift and every perfect gift. And so, you know, we do umm, you know, just because we do have a new nature and we can put on Christ doesn't mean that we don't have a responsibility to, umm, not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Well, the end of lust. We have here in our chapters death, Death. Why would we want that to be the end result of the activity of our life that God would have to? Just condemn it as something that's not worthy of life. Whereas. God promises us that His every good gift and His every perfect gift is is there waiting for us. Often times He may test us to see whether. Umm, we're we're willing to wait. And to see whether we will give in to temptation. He, he doesn't tempt us with evil, as we've been saying, but oftentimes faith is tested, obedience is tested. And he, he's so good to show us exactly what's going to happen if we give in to lust. The end result. But then it's not very. It's not very far down the chapter that he brings in the positive and the blessing and the good things that he has to to give us if if we take things from his hand instead of taking things that he that aren't from his hand. Without the pace, we haven't really leased the thought of faith still. So we have to look at this and say because of faith, this is what happened. So verse 16 begins by saying do not error. We were to use today's language, let's say don't make any mistake about there's no mistake about this. Don't even think twice about it. Do not error. My beloved president, every Christian and perfect give us from above. Faith tells us that we're not to question any of it. It is the results that we now know that we have the faith from God and then we can see and apply that to every situation that I mentioned here to the end of the after it would tell us even things like in verse 19. It tells us it says every man the swift to hear slow to speak slow draft. Well, what does they have to do with that? Well, almost everything because.

It requires faith to understand this to be able to. Hear. Hearing is to hear what God have to say to us. Do we have to say that belief that God is speaking to us? So here we are told that we be swift to hear our our ears too, to hear what God has. Are we ready to accept the message from God himself? Swift to hear from his word? Well then, what's to do with slow to speak? And I don't think it's speaking in the term of talking past or talking slow, but rather I believe here the speaking is the expressions of how we express God's thoughts. We have to be careful. We have to express it as it is from God himself that it will speak and be an article of God. We have to be slow to swift to hear and then slow to deliver necklace that he may be clear and concise. And not only that, as a service of God, it is true faith that we learn not to strive. We learn not to be, not to, uh, to be slow with rock as well. And you can look through the rest of the examples here. The rest of the example throughout, uh, to the end of the chapter is really because of faith is the result of faith that we're able to follow the word of God. Nice to take these verses and quiet to the 1St Corinthians 7. Uh, and she is a good guest and she is every perfect yes. And if I view my wife as a gift from loving hearing God that I indeed going to be as we communicate. To allow these things practically. To her you don't hear about the Lord Jesus screaming, yelling at his bride. You know, here's the bride screaming and yelling at Christ. Every marriage we go to is a picture of marriage of Christ and his rise. And so often we don't function that way for, you know, take time to listen. We don't hear properly we get. That out of shape we go domestic. There's conflict. I believe it's simply because of these things here. Every good gift, every perfect gift. Proper gift. God has given her to me and. Value her to see her in that light, then we can go out together if you want. That was the Lord's desire, that we would go out together as one. But it was nice to see that with whom there is no variable that neither shadow is turning. There's no Gray areas with God, brother. There's any Gray areas in our life with regards to spiritual things. We've created them. There's no variable that's neither shadow turning with God. It's all black. That takes space.

We all know that the book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. So we see the beginnings of things, but out of Genesis in. How does the book of Genesis end? Joseph died. Joseph died. Uh, Genesis is a great beginning, but it ends in death. And if you continue to trace it on to the end of Malachi? Speaks in the very end of Malachi of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And uh, less I come and smite the earth and the curse doesn't have a very happy ending. Because the Old Testament is what man is. It's the history of man and what he is. But by contrast to that, the New Testament, and it's great intent, is what God is. That's what God is. And uh, so we have in, in the book of John, right? And truth came by Jesus Christ. God brings his fullness to man in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ, and it's what God is and what God brings. It's the great giver bringing his gifts and, uh, demonstrating what he is for man. And so in our chapter. We were begot by the word of truth. It is that truth that came by Jesus Christ that has brought us into the relationship of God, which as children and uh, God is a God of grace. And so the New Testament ends the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And James is helping the brethren, if you will, to get on the same page with God. And the practice of the practical carrying out of that which God has brought. And wants us to live out as we await the final result of what he is doing and so we're the first fruits of his creatures were were those that he has is working with to bring about the end result that everything will be of God and nothing will be of the original creation. Even the physical creation is good to be replaced because it's been spoiled by sin and so it's important for us to be. Ready to listen? Don't bring the old man into it. Don't bring the old man's thoughts into it, don't bring the flesh into it. We do it naturally, but it only hinders us. And the old ends in death, which in its root death means separation. And when a man dies, in a physical sense, he separated from that which characterizes his life. It's the separation of his fallen spirit from his body, and he no longer can function because those there's been that separation. But in Adam all died. And the death is more than the physical death. It is the separation from God that makes it so terribly serious. And when a man is separated from God. His life is totally wrong. It's totally messed up. And yeah, God's work with us is to separate us from that which separated us from God and to bring us into the enjoyment and that of that which connects us with God, which is life. And uh, we, we make God's work pretty hard. God has to work pretty hard on us because we make it difficult for him to accomplish his purpose. But we thank God, he reminds, he remains faithful and he will get to the end of his agenda, his program in the day of grace, which is conformity of creation. And it's in us to that which is purposed by grace and truth. I just want to again state how important the Word is. The Word is terribly important because we're begotten by the word of truth or begotten through the Word. God uses the Spirit, using the Word in us to bring us into life. And having brought us into life, He gives us a word that we might live.

In accordance with the light that he's given that he might make us wise as to his character that we might become, if I could use it carefully, more God like in practice. And, uh, he wants us to be like himself. And so he does that work that it might result in that. And he, in grace and love to us, brings us into that, which would cause us to judge whatever it is that's hindering his work in the positive side of it. Four days will be

a picture of men's 4000 years history. Isn't it 4000 years. It proves that result is that simple. You think it by now and think about this verse we have before us verse 22 Be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving your own selves. Back in Genesis, in the garden name was told one simple commandment is not to eat of the fruit of that tree. And Satan came. Couldn't he? He couldn't remember exactly what was said. What you Satan say? Yeah. Have God said? How often do we leave a conference like this and say that was nice, but nothing changed our lives here. We exalted not to be a hearer of the word only. Not a doer. The word do you find is interesting is in order to God the smallest 'cause you say the shortest word 2 letters. Co. You can look it up. It's in scripture more than once. Do do. And so here it says, so we're not going to deceive ourselves. Knowledge sometimes can be dangerous without a guidance from this period. Uh. Verse 16 We have another exhortation. Do not err, my beloved brethren. It is so easy to erase certain things which we do if we don't do them with the Lord. Then he says every good gift, every perfect gift comes from about 4000. Give us bad gifts. Lord Jesus says she wouldn't give your. Son who asked for an egg? A serpent? So all the gifts that God gives, which we need, are good gifts. And they are also perfect if if they're properly used. He talked in here about marriage. It's a gift of God. It has to be understood how to walk. In marriage with all that belongs to it. And it all comes from the Father of Lights. God is light. He has a flashlight that's right now to shine into everybody's life and brings out what is bad. And exhort us to straighten it out and to confess it. With him is no variableness. He doesn't risk things around. He won't let us twist things away. Uh, we want to see it, or if we did something wrong, to twist it in such a way that it looks good. If it doesn't, uh, stand to test of scripture. Not good. Has been twisted.

And he turns. Things. In the right light. He takes things out of the shadow. And he shines his light on it, neither shadow of turning. If I have shady things done, he brings it up. By shining his light on. So we come back to the same thing again. We have to test everything by scripture. All the guests, I love these clothes. Thou give them all good. Heaven itself enrich your nose. Before they now hear at the end of this meeting and thank you for the word which Provo was provided for us, Thank you for. Knowledge that it is a good gift and a perfect gift. We thank you for each one of these gifts which thou has given to us. And most of all, for that. That's perfect. Yeah. It's a gift of thigh. Well, beloved son, which was given for us, we thank thee for not sparing him, but offering him up for a call. We look forward to that soon coming day. We'll be able to see him and be with him for all eternity. His most precious and Marthy. Namely Price.

Scranton Conference: 2014, James 1:1-6

Reading

Sing #100. Now in a song of grateful praise to our dear Lord, the voice will raise with all his Saints will join to tell our Jesus hath done all things well #100. Our Godfather, we thank thee for a few minutes to be together, to enjoy. Some things. Together of thyself open thy word to learn a little bit from it. Pray the doubt. Plus this time together. Give me thanks for the liberty. And the privilege. Do this in the hearts to gather together like this. Thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen. Amen. I would suggest, brethren, if it's the mind of the Saints. The Epistle of James, chapter one for this reading. You don't need to continue it. I thought there's so much practical instruction in this chapter for us. James, Chapter one, how many young people present with us very valuable teaching here. The mind of the Brethren could we. Take off this chapter for this reading. James chapter one. James, the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the 12 tribes which are a scattered abroad greeting, my brethren, counted all joy when you fall into divers temptations. Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that she may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally.

Upbraideth not, and it shall be given him, but let him let us but let him ask in faith nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice, and that he is exalted, but the rich, and that he is made low. Because as the flower of the grass. He shall pass away, for the Son is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth. So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth thee any man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust. And enticed then, when lust hath conceived it, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should 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. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the Word, and not hearers, only deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he's like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful here, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Well, it certainly is a tremendous amount of practical teaching in this chapter. Which we need. We don't have anything about redemption in the book of James. But you might sum it up by that verse. Show me your faith by your works. As the Lord said, by their fruit she shall know that. And what James is emphasizing is the practical manifestation of your faith. It was written to a mixed company. As we have here in the first first verse to the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad greeting written to believers, Jews who had believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, not only in Judah and Benjamin, but in all the tribes. So it's really has a Jewish character to it. But of course, there's much here for the for the Christian as well. Now James was not an apostle. He was the Lord's brother, probably converted after the resurrection of Christ, and he has particularly a ministry to the Jewish people.

This is one of the epistles that is. Primarily for the Jewish dispersion. First Peter, second Peter, there's Hebrews and there's James. But in this epistle. We do not have the height of Christian calling. We don't have Paul's ministry. I believe that many of these believers were still connected with the synagogue. But James is giving a test here as to who is real and who is not real. By their their works. Now we know that the book of Hebrew is was written later than James, where Paul calls upon the Jewish believers to leave that whole system of Judaism which was going to be. Destroyed and to come on to Christian ground. Well, in James we don't go that far, but he is insisting upon. The faith, if it is genuine, to be manifest by the works of the individual. And so that is the theme of the book. It's very practical and in the first chapter. He's

dealing here with the trials. You might say holy trials and unholy, unholy trials. The first part of the chapter is. In connection with trials in the pathway of faith. That come from the Lord. Not connected with our sinful nature, but as you go on in the chapter, you have trials that are definitely connected with our sinful nature. You might call them unholy trials and how we should deal with them. So I think that the chapter, the book of James is very important for us to to meditate upon because it deals in the practical details of the Christian's life. Important, as you say, to realize who James is writing to. And it's interesting that of all the epistles that are written to Jews, James is the broadest. He's not just writing to those of the dispersion, like Peter, Christians who had been dispersed throughout the known world through persecution and because of circumstances and for their faith. But as it begins here, he's writing to the 12 tribes. And it's interesting to notice in all of the four epistles that are written to Jews, which John has mentioned, it's never assumed that everyone that the writer is writing to is real. And the Jews understood, Jewish believers understood this. And the Jews understood this because when you go back in their history, you find that on the one hand they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea when they came up out of Egypt. But it says there went up out of Egypt a mixed multitude, and there were those who were not real. There were those who came because perhaps they saw the miracles, they saw the Providence of God in connection with His people. They saw the provisions he made for them, but God brought to bear circumstances in the wilderness that brought out whether they were real or not. And that's what we have in the book of James. One of the things that the tests of the wilderness pathway do is they prove the reality of a person and the reality of our faith. And that's what James takes up in these five chapters. There's different subjects, of course, different ways it can be looked at. But in a general way it's the tests and trials of the this life as proving the reality of the persons of the persons faith. Our first of all, are they real believers and God brought to bear circumstances in the wilderness for the children of Israel that showed, as it says with many of them. God was not well pleased and they fell under the governmental hand of God in in the wilderness. Another thing that trials do and we have this brought out in the book of James is they teach us in patience or endurance in the pathway.

As well, And I have no doubt we'll see that as we go on with these, with these verses. But to see that James is writing to these ones who understood these concepts that are brought out here. The other thing that's helpful to realize too is that in writing to these Jews, they were puzzled like they were in Peter when Peter wrote. They were puzzled as to why when there was faithfulness on their part. They were suffering trials and difficulties. Now again, when you realize who he's writing to, you can understand it because under the Jewish order of things in the Old Testament, if a man was faithful to the Lord, the person was faithful to their God. Why, he made even their enemies to be at peace with them. It says he prospered them. He enlarged their coasts, as we had with Jabez prayer this this morning. He gave them lands and cattle and large families and, and good times and so on. That was all part of the blessing under the Jewish order of things. And now there are believers, Jewish believers in Christianity who are seeking to be faithful to the Lord. And like the ones in Peter that Peter writes to, they've lost everything, been driven from their homeland. They've lost their their possessions. They're experiencing what he refers to as fiery trials. These ones here are having to endure things that perhaps many of us have never had to endure before in the past of faith. And they're well wondering what is wrong. We've tried to be faithful to the Lord and now this. But what James and Peter and the writer to the Hebrews, no doubt the apostle Paul, what they seek to bring out is that it's a very different order of things in Christianity. And that while we may suffer trials and be deprived of many things in this life, remember there's something better ahead. There's a heavenly calling. There's a heavenly portion. There's an end in view, and that's why in James at the end, in the 5th chapter, he brings before them the Lord's coming. That's the end of the thing. And Peter does that. Hebrews does that, always brings the end of the thing. We suffer for a little time, but there's something better at the end. So I think it's important to understand the context in which these Jewish, these writers were writing to Jewish believers. We seem to have a mix of faith and works in the book of James that. But someone else supplied a little expression that goes like this, that James is really relating a faith that works. And you can take that little phrase two different directions. 1 The faith actually accomplishes something. It has a positive end. As was just mentioned, there is a result that are obvious from this kind of faith, but it's also a faith that works in that it laborers. And so there are things. That come out positively in our lives as we display that faith in this world and so. In fact, that's evidence in the book of James. Those works are evidence of the faith that prompted those works. Nobody can see your faith, but they can see how you respond to things because you have faith. So there's these, these two points of view about faith. There's a faith that works. It's has a positive end point and it produces positive actions. Someone has also said, and I think it's helpful in that connection, that in Pauls ministry we are not justified by works because we're justified before God in Pauls ministry, and it's not by works of righteousness and it's not by works of the law that we are justified before God. Paul brings before us in Romans that were justified by grace, by the blood, and by faith, those three things, but that's before God. But in James we have to understand we're justified before men. And so it's our works that show, as Bruce has said, that we have faith. Tell me you have faith and you have no works to go with it. I can't see your faith, as Bruce said, but show me your works and I realize. I'm going to know there's going to be a testimony as to your faith. Martin Luther never understood this and that's why he thought that the book of James was not inspired because he never understood the contrast between Paul's ministry and James ministry. Again, I say in in Paul's ministry, we're justified before God and it's not by works in James where justified before men and it is by works.

The Hebrew believers, the Jews were. Or the ones that were addressed by James were passing through some severe persecutions. For their faith in Christ, and as our brother said, they were. At a loss to know why the Kingdom was not established and the Messiah had been crucified and they were suffering for the name of Christ for their testimony. But you know in verse two it says my brethren counted all joy when you fall into divers temptation. Or trials. It almost looks like a paradox joy when we fall into divers trials. Now, it was perhaps primarily persecution with the Jewish believers, but we all have these temptations. We all have these trials in our lives one way or the other. And this is what you may say, holy trials. It's not because of the old nature that comes in later in the chapter, but. There's some very valuable teaching here in connection with trials that come into our lives, and we all have them. Do we manifest cheerful spirit when trials come into our lives, or do we complain and. And. Resist the the trial instead of. Learning what the Lord has for us. In the trial, are we in a proper state of soul, in other words, and it results from faith. Looking beyond the trial to see the purpose of the Lord in the trial. How often we just see the trial and we want to be delivered from the pressure of the trial instead of understanding or seeking to know God's mind in the trial. As we've often been reminded, there's a needs be on God's part. I'm sorry, a purpose of love on God's part, but there's a needs be on our part. For the trials that we experienced we're all in the school of God, we never graduate so the apostle says here well he wasn't an apostle James says here counted all joy when ye fall or be fall various temptations this could be in many areas of our lives financial. Business problems. Et cetera. But he says the Lord is trying you for a purpose of blessing. We took up this chapter recently on the banks of the Red Sea with our Egyptian brethren who have been through circumstances and trials in the last four years and still face circumstances that we perhaps here know nothing about. We're not afraid this morning of someone busting down the doors and shooting us or carting us away because we're having a Bible meeting. We can evangelize freely. We can have the Bible in our home. We can carry it with us. When we go out on the street. But they've been through some real trials and circumstances. And when we took this up, we pointed out that while it's true, we can count it all joy when we pass through difficulties and trials, knowing that the Lord has a purpose of blessing in it. Yet, brethren, we want to be careful in taking up that

line of things that we don't give the impression that we ever become indifferent or callous to trials. The trials that James brings before us were to are to increase our faith, to teach us to endure, to teach us to wake God's time, to break down our own wills and to teach us to rely on his will, and so on. There are lessons to be learned through every trial and circumstance that God allows in our in our life, and if we just grit our teeth and become callous and indifferent to those circumstances, we're never going to learn.

What God has for us and we're never going to get the ultimate blessing that he had that he intends for us in the in this life. And it's interesting at the end of this book, he says, I think it was read to us perhaps this morning or in the prayer meeting last night that in the end of this book, he says is any afflicted prey. Don't be indifferent to it. Are you afflicted? Are you going through some trial? Pray it casts us down. It puts us independence on the Lord. And then he says, is any Mary sing songs. Songs And you know, I think you see a very beautiful balance with Paul and Silas in the prison in Philippi. Now scripture doesn't tell us what time of day they were thrown into the prison, but I suggest it was probably long before midnight or at least sometime before midnight. And I suspect that they felt pretty bad. Their backs were bleeding. They were probably wondering well, I got a message to vision to come over here and help someone and what good am I now? My our backs are bleeding. Our feet are fast in the stocks. They felt what they had just been through. They didn't immediately sing it was until midnight. I often wonder if they didn't all of a sudden remember the verse in the 919th Psalm that says at midnight I will arise and sing songs unto thee because of thy righteous judgments. All of a sudden they realize that what God had allowed, as hard as it was, was right. That there was a purpose in it and a purpose of blessing. And of course, we know the story, and there certainly was. But I say that, you know, we may not always rejoice right away. I've gone through a lot of circumstances and I've been down. I've felt pretty bad. I've shed a lot of tears. I've been wrung in my soul. It took sometimes a long time to come to the point where I could sing. But Paul said sorrowful, that's one thing, yet always rejoicing. The two things go hand in hand in the Christian life. So the trials here that these Saints were feeling. James wasn't telling them to just grit their teeth and get through it, but he said remember, there's a purpose, there's lessons to be learned, and if you can see that and the end of the thing, then you can rejoice even in the trial. Few weeks ago I had the privilege of being in the city of Philippi in Greece. And there is an area there that. The archaeologists have said was the actual prison of the Apostle Paul. Looking at it, it looked very small. Perhaps it was not, but it brought. Quite a sense of. Appreciation as gave me a new sense of appreciation as. On the scene I reread Acts chapter 16. And then an hour or so later, we're able to travel about a kilometer north of the ruins and we were by a Riverside and. Although we don't know the exact location there, it had to be in the vicinity of where the Apostle Paul met Lydia. And also on that same trip, we were able to view the city of Minneapolis. Where the Apostle Paul first set foot in Europe and what what a blessing that was to have the Apostle Paul set foot in Europe and from there he went up to Philippi. We then had an opportunity to pass through part of the Sonica. And then ended our trip in Berea and we thought of those that were more noble. Than those in Thessalonica and that they searched the Scriptures daily and it was quite an experience to just retrace the path of the Apostle Paul just in those few places. But I couldn't help again, as you pointed out there under those circumstances and they were confining circumstances in that prison that at midnight there was a song of praise.

So remember what we've said about James, it's not so much the work of God for us, that's Pauls ministry. It's the work of God in US. And so we find here as we go on, he's allowing these trials to work in us. It's God that works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. That's one of the reasons for trials to bring us to the point where, as I said earlier, we set aside our own will and we submit to the will of God. But it also teaches us to endurance or patience fact seven times in this book, you'll find the word patience often translated endurance. It's really the the thought in the in the book of James. It's to endure and the path of faith is a path of endurance. We're to run with endurance. The race that is set before us. It's not the Sprint. The Christian life is the marathon. The marathon runner, unlike the sprinter, has to learn to endure and go laugh after laugh. And mile after mile, I was in Europe this summer when the Tour de France was on. And those bikers, they have to learn that it's a race of endure, of endurance. And not only are they on flat ground sometimes, but they go through the mountains, they go up and down, they go through all kinds of of weather. And it's mile after mile, day after day after day. And that's the that's the Christian pathway. And I believe, brethren, that the way our faith grows. And our faith should grow. But the way our faith grows is to put it in operation. You know, the disciples came to the Lord on an occasion and they said, Lord, increase our faith. But the Lord really answered the disciples to show them that the way our faith grows is to put it in operation. I suggest it's not really an intelligent prayer for a believer to pray and ask the Lord to increase our faith. It's to take that grain of mustard seed. And to put it in operation, you might have a grain of mustard seed, which the Lord likened faith to. And if you just hold it in your hand, you're never going to get anything out of it. But if you have the faith to go and plant it and to water it and to fertilize it in the proper way, it's going to spring up and you're going to get something very wonderful. And the Lord said to the disciples, basically, put your faith in operation and you'll be able to move mountains. And brethren, why is it that so often we don't see the answers to prayer? And to faith that we ought to in our lives, we don't put it in operation. Used to read as a young person and I still do, but as a young person, I used to read the stories of men and women of faith from past eras and men and women of faith in the era in which we find ourselves. Used to marvel, shake my head and say, wow, be tremendous to to see answers to prayer and experiences of faith like that. But you read and examine their lives more closely. You find they were willing to put their faith in operation. They were willing to prove. Their God to prove their Lord and where they disappointed not for one moment. Now God doesn't always give great deliverance and so on. We read the 11Th chapter of Hebrews. There was great deliverances and then it says and others and they didn't accept deliverance. They had trials of cruel mocking. They were scourge, they were killed, they were sawn asunder. And so you say, did they all did they have less faith? These all died in faith. God had a better purpose for them, but nevertheless. Why is it that so often we don't see remarkable things in our lives the way perhaps God intends? I say again, it's because we don't put our faith in operation. And when we put our faith in operation and God, until our faith is tested and God proves himself, what's going to happen? Why our faith is going to grow. And if you've put your faith in operation for 20 years, you've got more faith today than you did 20 years ago, not because you prayed for more faith. But because you've walked the practical Christian life of faith, which is what James is bringing out. Especially verse 35. And of course, recently we've heard of a number of Christians. Whose lives have been taken and. You just stop and wonder how God allows this. But I think if we read the 35th verse of Hebrews 11, we'll have a better understanding of that says women receive their dead, raised to life again and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection.

Yes, there is a better resurrection. And I think that this can give. Those that are passing through these deep trials, comfort. God may not deliver. We think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They realized that God could deliver, but they also realized that they might not be delivered. And they had the same amount of confidence in both situations and how encouraging it is to see that. I think we should be exercised to to know why the Lord has allowed these circumstances in our lives. We are know. We know the verses in Hebrews. Chapter 12. There where the apostle says. No chastening for the present. Verse 11 seemeth to be joyous, but grievous nevertheless. Afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Notice unto them which are exercised thereby. As our brother Jim said, we don't want to be stoical and laugh it off and say, Well, this happens to everyone. We just have to live with it and. Try to get through it as best we can. No, we should be

exercised. Why? The Lord has allowed these circumstances. He has a purpose of love in it. That comes out here understanding. Why God has allowed these things? We don't get a perfect. A perfect resolution of everything but. We are. We learn dependence upon the Lord, and we learn His heart, and we learn submission to His will. All of these things come through exercise. We've often been reminded. Take your circumstances from the Lord and your difficulties to the Lord. Let's not allow the circumstances to come between US and the Lord. That's what happened to Peter when he looked upon the waves. Boisterous. And angry there he got his eyes on the waves, and instead of on the Lord, he allowed those circumstances to come between him and the Lord, and he began to sink. How often that is the case with us. What Jim says is very true. Our faith should grow. But isn't it strange that when a new trial comes in, our lives, though we've had deliverance again and again? We manifest the same spirit of unbelief. Where unbelieving believers? I think we have to acknowledge. You say it's good to be exercised as to why these trials are allowed in our lives and we when we have the trials, we may not know what to do, we know may not know where to turn. And so we get in verse five. If any of you lack wisdom, let a mask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. Sometimes we use this verse just for just general wisdom, for general purposes. But I believe in the context here, this is asking for wisdom as to how we are going to respond to the trial that we're experiencing. There's so many different types of trials that we go through and we may not know how to act in different trials, but it's a good to be exercised as to why the Lord has allowed this in our lives and also how we are to respond to the trial that's been allowed. I think that's very important because so often when we see a trial in another in the life of another child of God, we tend to quickly jump, jump to some conclusion as to why God has allowed that trial in that persons life. But I believe the lessons are learned in our own lives when we look within and ask why the trials were allowed in our lives and to realize too that trials as John and Tim have said.

Are allowed for different reasons. So often our conclusion is especially in looking at others, Oh there it must be the government of God, or there's some secret sin in that persons life, or that's the chastening hand of God upon that person. Well, God often does allow trials in his chastening, but there are many other reasons why God allows trials in our lives. One is as we've been saying, so that we'll learn to trust him more. So that we'll know his heart. Sometimes it's be cut to prepare us, maybe so we can be a help to another who goes through a similar circumstance. He brings that out in the book of Corinthians. We can comfort others with the same comfort wherewith we are comforted of God. And sometimes, brethren, it's simply so there will be more fruit in our lives and glory brought to God into the Lord. Jesus has often been mentioned, but I'll repeat it. That in the 9th chapter of John they brought a blind man to the Lord Jesus, and the conclusion of those that had brought him was there was some sin in the family. They said to the Lord, Who hath sinned this man or his parents, that he was born blind. The Lord said neither this man nor his parents, but that the works of God may be glorified in him. There was going to be glory and fruit and testimony brought in that man's life and into to the lives of those that witnessed his, his healing. Because because of this circumstance, it didn't have to do with any family sin or sin in his personal life. And so we want to be careful not to judge in another, but has been brought out to look at our own lives. Why has God allowed this in my life. But on the by the same token, in asking for wisdom, brethren, we never want to question the ways of God with us. You know, it's not getting all the answers that gives us peace or increases our faith. Remember one time taking the funeral of a young man and it was a very, very tragic and difficult circumstance. And I looked into a sea of hundreds of faces of young people who had come from all over the continent expecting answers. And I said at the beginning of that funeral, I said, I don't have the answers as to why God has allowed this tragedy to touch our lives the way it has today. But I said, even if we never get the answers this side of heaven without submission to God's will. And a recognition that He has allowed this and for a purpose. Even if we got all the answers as to why, we still wouldn't have peace in our souls. That's not what gives us peace, brethren. And you notice here, it's not wisdom as to why all this happened. It's asking wisdom to get through the circumstance to deal with the situation, not even asking wisdom to get out of the circumstance. These brethren were in these circumstances, they weren't going to get out of them. But they could ask wisdom as to how to get through it and to deal with the situation day by day. And we may not see the removal of all the trials and difficulties this side of heaven, or even get all the answers as to why God has allowed this. But we can get wisdom, daily wisdom. You lack wisdom. All you have to do is ask. Ask in faith. He'll give. He'll give it just a little bit. And all He gives to all men liberally, it's just for some to all men liberally. And He doesn't upbraid us when we ask. I might go and ask you for wisdom and you say, now come on Jim, you should know how to act in that situation. Our God never does that. We go to him for wisdom. He doesn't upbraid us for coming, and we can come again and again and again. Verse in Job chapter 37 that perhaps. Someone could comment on verse 13 where it says he causes it to come, whether for correction or for his land or for mercy. Perhaps someone can comment on that verse? Where was that verse? Bill 37 and 13?

Well, again, this was something that Jobs friends didn't understand, did they? They thought it was all for correction in Jobs life and there was some sins in Jobs life that he hadn't confessed and he needed to get it all out in the open and so on. But we know from the book of Job that's not why God allowed it. He was a righteous man, astute, evil, he was upright and so on. But it was really for it was really in God's schooling. He had lessons to teach him. So sometimes it is for correction as we've been saying. Sometimes it's for the land. In other words, if we can apply it, I know this is Old Testament, but if we can apply it, it's like Jabez, he prayed that his coast would be increased. And we don't pray that our coast will be increased as far as temporal goods, but we can pray that in the spirit of the New Testament that we we would have a greater spiritual understanding and enjoyment of our blessings and that vast panorama of all that he has for us. And then he says, sometimes it's for mercy. You know, sometimes God allows circumstances in our lives to keep us from certain things, maybe to stop us from going in a course. Why did the Mariners come down and wake Jonah up in the ship to stop him from going on the course that he was going, going on to turn him around. God allowed them to speak to him was an unusual source that God allowed, but it was in his mercy. But if you notice, Brother Bruce, the next verse in that chapter, I think you get a nice context. Then it says, hearken unto this O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. This is very personal. What was allowed in Jobs life may have been judged by his friends, but what was Job to do? He was to stand still and consider what God was doing in his life. Job was going to get the blessing not by getting advice from all his friends. Not that sometimes our brother and I aren't helpful in their direction, but that wasn't where Job's blessing was going to come from. That's where, well, not how he was going to learn what God was Pat the reason God was passing him through. These very severe trials, No, you stand still Job, you listen to what I have to say. You consider what I've allowed. And when Job did that, then we go on in the book and we find he got the the purpose of blessing. And remember this, brethren, we sometimes say God allows things for a purpose, but that statement falls very short of what God, the reason God allows things. God allows things for a purpose. That's true, but it's more than that. It's a purpose of blessing. You know, sometimes as fathers we might have a certain purpose or plan for our family, but sometimes in the end, it's just a selfish motive. But even in his correction, it's he chastens us for our profit, that we might be partakers of His Holiness. So it's not just that the difficulties and trials and tests are for a purpose, but they are for a purpose of blessing. And when we get a hold of that in our souls, then and only then can we thank God for the trials and rejoice in them. There is a verse in Deuteronomy on. Can't put my finger on it there but. It speaks of God's dealings with the nation. In order to do them good at their latter end. And that is the purpose of the Lord in the trials that come into our lives. We're going to see that trial in a different light, in the glory of the judgment seat of Christ. But we need to be careful that we don't get bitter

under the trial. We turn to Ephesians 4/6. I think we are familiar with this verse, but. It speaks, the apostle speaks of the shield. Of faith in the armor there in the chapter 6. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, but coming down in verse 16, above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, Now the fiery darts of the wicket, that Satan, of course. The trials here in Ephesians 6 are not connected with our old nature. It is the trials, the the conflict that is occasioned by Satans attacks and one of his most effective weapons is discouragement. And if he can.

Cause us to doubt the goodness that is in the heart of God. He has achieved His purpose and that's why the shield of faith is mentioned. He tried it in the Garden of Eden, and he's still trying it. To put a doubt in the mind as to the wisdom of God's ways with us. Especially this comes in in in discouraging times. It may be with health, it may be with losses. Disappointments in rebel and relationships and so on. Satan is right there to insinuate that God doesn't love you. Why does he allow this to happen? You're going on for the Lord, so those fiery darts. He will hurl with all his ferocity to break down our confidence in the Lord. And. The. The danger is that we become bitter in the trial. How many people have succumbed to that? And any one of us can, because there's things in your life and mine that we cannot understand. Brethren, we don't know why this has happened in our lives. There's things in my life I'm, I'm sure in every one of our lives that we would not have chosen if we had our way. We would like to get out of this pressure, but. Satan is always there ready behind us there to to introduce a doubt in our minds. Well, another verse I just wanted to draw your attention to in Hebrews chapter. I think it's chapter 10. It's remarkable there that the apostle says. I've enjoyed it. Verse 35 cast not away there for your confidence, which have great recompense of reward. Now we think of reward in connection with some work for the Lord in the gospel, in the ministry. We usually connect reward with that, and that is true, But here the reward, the judgment seat of Christ, I believe will be, will be our confidence that the Lord is doing the best for us every day of our lives according to our state of soul. That confidence in the Lord's perfect wisdom is what God values. And as it says in this verse, there will be a reward for that. Well, may the Lord keep us because the enemy is very active. And I believe that discouragement is one of his most effective weapons. All discouragement comes from Satan. And you need to be on our guard. Is that right, Jim? Yes. And we want to be clear too, that faith doesn't act foolishly either. Faith is reasonable. You can't reason faith, but faith is reasonable. There's a verse I've enjoyed in Proverbs. I'll just read it. It's the last verse of the 21St chapter of Proverbs. There's two parts to this verse that I believe go necessarily together. Says in verse 31, the horse is prepared against the day of battle. That's one side and safety is of the Lord. And I've sometimes said you can't go out on the highway and trust the Lord, your vehicle to the Lord, if you haven't kept up the maintenance. The horse has to be prepared unto battle. Faith is reasonable, and we don't want to give the impression that faith does foolish things. Faith counts on God. It's true. It asks for wisdom, but faith also always has light for what it does. There's no such thing as blind faith. Faith is not a leap in the dark as some would say. Sometimes I've heard an expression someone has more faith than brains and it's not a scriptural expression, but I think there's some some truth to it. Faith acts on the word of God and the light that it is given for for the time. And when it has the word of God and light for the for the moment, then faith can act in the utmost confidence. It can rest on God because what God says, what God gives is sure.

And that's why he goes on in these verses to show that sometimes we ask for wisdom in the situation and we don't get it. You say, well, I thought he gives to all men liberally and he doesn't reproach her up braid when we ask and we can come again and again. That's true. But the next verse, verse six of our chapter qualifies it. Brother, it says, but let him ask in faith. Nothing wavering. Now to ask in faith is to ask with complete confidence on God, to rest on the light that he has given. But I also believe it includes something else. It concludes setting aside our own thoughts and agendas. You know, sometimes we come and we ask the Lord for wisdom, but we've already got a preconceived notion of what we should do and how we should deal with it. We're not going to get God's wisdom like that. We're not going to get wisdom liberally like that. We have to set our side, our own will, our own agenda. Because a man that waivers like the wave of the sea is a man that's driven back and forth by popular opinion or by whoever he asks. And you know yourself, you ask several people about a situation. Ask five people, you might get 5 different opinions about how you should act and you vacillate back and forth. You waffle back and forth. Should I, shouldn't I, should I do this? And then you have your own agenda on top of it. That's a person that's driven like the wave of the sea back and forth. But a person who comes and asks in faith is going to get the wisdom of God when they have set aside, I say their own will, their own agenda and others opinions. And in the beginning of verse five, we have any of you asked Wisdom, let him ask of God. That's another very basic point for us as believers. James. Chapter 4 says the beginning of it. You have not because you asked not. And very often we don't start out in a trial to even see that God is involved in it at all. It's a failing of faith, and we need to start right there to take up with whatever comes into our lives, whatever circumstances they are. And see whoever may be involved, even if it was Satan as in the case of Job. Yet God was the one who allowed it. And having gotten to that point, then he takes up the whole point of faith here. And then there's the question about how we ask. The rest of the chapter, as I understand it, is challenges to this point. That whatever God is allowed in our life is something that He's bringing in for a purpose of blessing, whether we understand it or not. And if there's one thing that we could get from Him in wisdom, that would be to really get that point. We may not understand until we get to eternity, to heaven, and have it finally showed to us. But at least to see that He loves us and He does have a point of blessing right now. In some way through that trial, that's a grand point to get a hold of. And so looking through it and seeing what's brought out after this, we find that. There's all this instruction that we have in the verses they're coming to about not asking with a double mind, but then it has an example of two different kinds of believers, one who's rich and one who's poor. And it seems that they got the point. They understood that God had put them into circumstances whereby they could rejoice because their circumstance. Their future had nothing to do with that circumstance. And so after having given these examples, he goes on and talks about something else that can come in. As we go through a trial, if we don't see the hand of God in it, it's easy to get taken up with the fact that this one or that one is wrong. Me. And I'm tempted now to actually sin. It's no longer the trial, but now it's sin that comes from within. Which I believe is what he's talking about next and verses 13. 14 and 15 and he says no, that kind of thought comes some doubt in the goodness of God, what we've been talking about. The goodness of God is not challenged by faith, and yet we can doubt it. And that comes from inside. That's some lust. God didn't put that thought there. He says, Don't err, my beloved brother. And every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above. He immediately brings in the goodness of God, something that can't be challenged. And then having done that, he gives out an example of two gifts that God gives by which we may understand.

That wisdom that he has for us, first of all, we have. In verse 16 of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. That we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. And so there's the divine life that He's given to us, by which we can even understand the wisdom that he's going to give. We need that that we have by faith. But there's another thing brought in as well, and that's a little further on, and that is in verse, the end of verse 21 That you received with meekness and grafted word, which is able to save your souls and then be doers of the Word, not hearers only. And so His wisdom comes to us through the Word. Every provision we have is given in an orderly way in this chapter comes from God. His goodness provides it all for us. We aren't to doubt, but the first thing we have to do is go to Him and ask, and He will give it. Odd is in everything and he knows what he's doing. We really don't need to question these ways, because As for God, His way is perfect. But I think a

secret to not being discouraged in circumstances is to. Keep ourselves in the love of God. Now, Eric Smith, I recall often he would say we can't always trace the Lord in our circumstances, but we can trust it. How is it that we can trust it? It's because his love. Has occasioned that even the difficulties in life are an expression of the Lorde love for us. You know, when we contemplate what the Lord Jesus has done for you and me at the cross of Calvary, how can we question that He is for us? He has our best interests at heart. All the time, in every place. And of course, perfect love is that which casts out fear. So I think it was Mr. Darby, he said. If we could only have. A deeper, fuller appreciation of the love of God for us, the circumstances of life wouldn't have as great an impact upon us. Because I speak to myself, we can become discouraged. You know, because of what's happening in our lives. But let's not be discouraged, Lord loves you and me. How much? Look at the cross. And the Lord Jesus said as the Father. Has loved me. Even so, have I loved you. That's the love of Jesus. Think about it. It's wonderful. But he could also say, in speaking with his father, Thou hast loved them. Who's the 10? You and me, How much thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Now that's the Father's love for you and for me. So we don't understand all of God's ways. Let's face it, as high as the heavens are above the earth, the Lord said So higher my thoughts above your thoughts, my ways above your ways. But let's realize that He loves us. He cares for us, desires the very best for us and God. He does. He makes all things work together for good to those who love him, who are the called according to his purpose. Faith. It's just taking God at this word, and I believe that's the greatest favor that we can do. The Lord is to take him at His Word. In simple faith, God appreciates that. So when they came to Mara, they couldn't drink of the waters. The only thing that would make the water sweet was the was the tree a picture of the cross? And maybe we can't, as you say, see all, we see God's love in our circumstances, but we can always see it at the cross. And when we look to the cross, can we doubt his love and his his wisdom? But I just want to say in closing, this meeting is almost over. Maybe there's someone sitting here and you say it's OK to talk about trials and rejoicing in trials, but you don't know what I'm passing through. And it's just hard to give thanks.

In the trial, you know, Ephesians, I'm sorry, 1St Thessalonians 5 tells us in everything, give thanks. That's tough, isn't it? And I don't have to admit I'll be the first one to confess. I don't always give thanks in everything. But just in closing, go to a verse in Ephesians 5 that I believe gives us the key to being able to give thanks and rejoice in the trial. Ephesians 5 and verse 20. Giving thanks always. Now notice this not in all things, but for all things. And until we come to this point where we give thanks for the trial, recognizing that it comes from the good hand of God, not until we come to that point can we give thanks in the trial. We must first of all realize, as our brethren have been telling us this morning, that this trial has come, this test has come from the loving good hand of our God and Father. And when we realize that and give thanks for it. Then we can give thanks in it. So if you're struggling in a trial and you just find it hard to give thanks and rejoice in the trial, just look to the one who has given you the trial, realize his heart, give thanks for it, and you'll find it'll make a great difference in your being able to rejoice in it. I make one little comment on that question and job. For correction seems plain. The storm of waters comes that might bring a flood. For correction, for mercy, a storm of water comes, and it makes the crops grow, and we have food to eat. But what is for his land? All things were created by Him, and for his pleasure they were created. And so the rain comes, and this world produces, and it grows, and maybe in places that no one but God sees it, it's for his pleasure. And so he may send a storm of rain for correction in my life, for mercy in my life. But there is that which is just for His pleasure in my life, that which he desires to see and he takes delight in, and he longs for that communion of soul. And if there's that which is going to hinder what he can take pleasure in, and what's for His delight, He may send a storm of rain, too, for his land. 32 in the appendix. No.

Yeah. Prayer, our God and our Father, we thank thee for. This portion of Thy word, that Holy Spirit is brought before us, and we find it searches us deeply, conscience and heart. May Thy truth find its dwelling place in our hearts by faith. And we do pray that it might be so with us that our wills. And every circumstance that thou dost allow in our lives, be yielded to thine own, that there might be peace in our hearts, and all that Thou does allow in our path. To desire thy will alone, and depending upon thee to accomplish thy will. Thy goodwill begin it all in our lives, for we were born in the purpose of Thy will, begotten by that precious word that feeds us and nourishes us, and wherein Thy will is so plainly given to us for our pathway. Help us not to be double minded, not to be seeking our own well with our lips, asking Thee. For wisdom, but just wholly cast upon Thee in every circumstance. All these things search us, may it be so. And we do thank Thee for Thy goodness towards us, to give us that which is needful. And we give Thee thanks, our God and our Father, and the precious and worthy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Scranton Conference: 2014, James 1:7-27

Reading

267. House for his help. Our God and Father, we come before thee now and thank you for what we've had before us so far in this conference. These things that have been brought before us would speak to us about how our walk ought to be in ways that would be pleasing to thyself and to thy Son. We just ask for help for this meeting. That there would be food convenient for each one of us here we would have ready years to listen to. What has to minister to us and we thank thee most of all. What I saw our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, it's in his name we cry. I don't know that the mind of the brethren to proceed with the James one. So much more teaching there that it's valuable for us. What is the mind of the assembly? What verse do you think we should start at? Well. Probably. Verse 8 to the end. OK, James, chapter one. We'll start at verse 8. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice, and that he is exalted, but the rich, and that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth. So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.

For when he is tried, he shall receive of the the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, 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 of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not hurt, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should 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. Wherefore lay apart all filling filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers, only deceiving your own selves. For if any, be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, He is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and

straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he he being not a forgetful here, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. We didn't comment on verse 4 this morning. Let Patience have her perfect work, that she may be perfect and entire. Wanting nothing? Well. Perfection here is not a question of having no sin in our lives, but there are moral qualities. That are formed in our character. When we take these trials. From the Lord we learn endurance, we learn God's patience with us. There's there's things that we cannot learn in the glory. You can never learn that God is a God of comfort in heaven because you won't need it. Or that God is a God of compassion in heaven because you won't need it. But in the trials of life, we we learn the heart of God. We learn our own hearts too. How how untrustworthy they are. But that patience, it's, it's a gradual process. It's not accomplished. In even a few years, let patience have her perfect work. God has something in view in our lives. Conformity to Christ, it doesn't happen all of a sudden. It is something that goes on those moral qualities. Perfect more the sense of mature or full growth, not sinless perfection. And then we come down to our chat, the passage that we started with here. The apostle or he wasn't an apostle, as I said, James tells us that. The brother of low degree. He may feel himself left out. But in God's sight he has the same standing as the brother who is rich in this world's goods. He has to learn humiliation. He has to learn that those material things that he has doesn't give him any special place in the in the presence of the Lord, he is brought down.

That these material things that he may trust in are not really. The divine things that really count in his life. The person of low degree the poor man before God, He is exalted because he is before God in Christ. Is not partiality there special place for the poor man of the rich man? No, no, a special advantage there. But then when we come down to verse 12, blessed is the man that endureth temptation or trial. There's a present reward in taking those trials from the Lord. It says when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life. That's. Could be looked upon in two ways. There is a present blessing when we take a trial from the Lord we have. We have the joy of the Lord in our souls. We grow in the understanding of the character of God. If we take those trials from the Lord, we learn something. We get that crown of life, of course, crown of life is looking on to the judgment seat of Christ, and it's amazing that James uses the word crown of life in connection with enduring those trials in this life. It's mentioned in Samurai. I think it is in Revelation 2. That was a assembly that was suffering much persecution. Many had lost their lives in Smyrna. Because of their faithfulness to the Lord. And God promised them the crown of life. I was looking on to eternity, and the crown of life looks on to eternity here too. But the same crown is promised to the one who endures temptation. There may be a loss in your life and mine. If we walk with God, we may lose a promotion at work. We may lose something of a temporal. Blessing down here, but the crown of life is promised. It will be given at the judgment seat of Christ to those that endure that trial that the Lord allows. We might say that in the case of the Lord Jesus. He had temptations or trials from without, but never from within. Never from within the Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me. There was no response within the Lord to those presentation of of evil. There was no response in His soul. So the trial from was from without. And He has suffered everything that a righteous man could suffer. He endured these holy trials that we are Speaking of here. But he and he endured, and he was an overcomer. Of course, the apostle goes on to speak of other types of trials here in the latter part of our chapter. We Smoke spoke this morning at great length about faith and how faith ought to grow. Our faith ought to grow, and there ought to be that maturity, and John has spoken of that maturity and so on. And I'd just like to say for our encouragement as we pass on that, what has been a great comfort to me in taking up this subject of tests and trials and the trial of our faith and so on, is to realize that first of all, faith is a gift of God. It comes from God himself, and He never tests us in the pathway above the measure of faith that has already been developed and given to us by God as a result of previous tests and trials in our life. So that when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ, if there's been failure in my life, I will have no excuse. I won't be able to say to the Lord Jesus, well, I didn't have the proper faith of the proper amount of faith. I hadn't grown.

That to that certain level of maturity, I was tested above what my what I was able to bear and so on. No, we're going to realize that every test in our life was measured very carefully according to where we already were in our Christian growth. We spoke, as I say this morning, of faith growing, and I've appreciated it in connection with the circumstances that God allowed in the life of Abraham, that man of faith referred to as the father of faith. Now sometimes thought of it this way. Suppose when Abraham had first been called out of ur the Chaldees, and answered that call by in obedience and by faith. Suppose he had been given immediately a great test. Like going up to offer up his son Isaac on the mountain. I dare say he would have failed in that test because his level of faith hadn't grown to the to the point where it was up to that kind of a test. But Abraham experienced day by day the faithfulness of his God. He proved by practical experience in his life the faithfulness of his God. So that what that his faith had grown to such a point. That when the test came, take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, and offer him up on one of the mountains, that I will show thee of why He was able then by grace, by faith, to take up that challenge, so to speak, and to in obedience and faith go. And we know by what he did in and what he thought that he had complete faith and confidence in God. I say that because we know by what he did. That he had faith. He rose up early in the morning and James takes it up, mentions what he did. But in Hebrews I believe it is. It tells us he had faith by what he thought. Accounting that God was able even to raise him from the dead. You know, I believe that Abraham had every thought that he was going to have to kill his son, but he didn't stagger at the promise. Why? Because he was sure that this was of God, and that if he had to kill his son, God was able to raise him up even from the dead. Well, that that's just a little aside. We don't wouldn't know by what he thought that he had faith unless Scripture told us. But we know by what he did that he had faith. And as we were saying this morning, it's our works that justify us before man. Just to get back to this where we started here too, I believe again, it's important to understand the context of James and who he's writing to and why he speaks in this way of the brother of low degree and the brother who's rich. Because again, everything in the Old Testament in Judaism was measured in this way. The man had wealth. He was it was a sign of spirituality and faithfulness. But what we learned from the New Testament and what these Jewish believers had to learn in the early church was that. Temporal things were no measure as to spirituality or spiritual gift. I again appreciated in having traveled to many countries and again, just having been in Egypt. You know, in Egypt there are the very wealthy and there are the other in the assembly. There's no buffer zone over here. We might have the rich and poor that meet together as Proverbs says, but there's the middle class and the average guys like some of us who are the buffer zone in between. In the assembly over there, there's not. There's the very wealthy and there's the other. But it is so beautiful, it is so touching to see money doesn't talk in the assembly over there. Money has nothing to do with who has responsibility in the in the in the assembly. And it's been very precious to my own soul to see it practically carried out. So these Jewish believers, they had to learn that it was very different in Christianity, that all are equal now in that way, we all have the unsearchable riches of Christ. We may have nothing of this world, we may have everything of this world, but that is not a measure of spirituality. That doesn't mean that the poor man is spiritual and the rich man isn't. That's not what it's saying either. I've known those who are very poor who are not spiritual. I've known those who are very poor who are very spiritual. I've known those who are very rich who are not spiritual, but I've also known those who are very rich in this world's goods, who are very spiritual. And so it's not the standard in Christianity. We cannot govern

it, govern on persons, spirituality or the place God gives them in the assembly by what they have, whether they have a nice suit or a nice house or a poor, poor closer or a Hut. That is not a measure. And I say that's what he was seeking.

At least one of the things that James is seeking to teach the brethren here and for our encouragement and learning as well. Apostle or James had spoken about asking. Nothing wavering, not having mixed motives, not asking of God, and yet going about figuring out how I'm going to answer this problem myself, but just completely dependent upon God. And these two things brought in poverty and wealth are both circumstances that. Can lead us to a place of out of dependence upon God if I'm poor. I might say, what's the use of trusting God? Why ask? Look at my situation. I'm miserably poor. I don't have anything. Everybody else has something, I don't have anything. Why trust God? Go out there and get it myself. The wealthy says, why do I need to trust God? I've got it all. I don't need to ask God for anything. And so those are two extremes, but it's really circumstances that would bring us into a place. Where we're not dependent upon God, not having a single eye, not completely trusting or wanting His will, but our own will gets at work. So I suppose that's why Solomon said give me neither poverty nor riches. But I think too, you get a similar thought when Peter writes to the Saints as well, because they were in a similar situation. Again, as we mentioned this morning, they were used to the old order of things where prosperity was a result of following the Lord and faithfulness to the Word. And now they were concerned they were questioning things because. They were going through what is termed as fiery trials. They'd lost everything. But what Peter brings before them is that while that which was earthly had been taken away from them, that which they had in a temporal way they had lost. They had an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, that fade did not away reserved in heaven for them. And so he could encourage them to go on to trust the Lord. No matter what the circumstances were, no matter how deep the trial, they had something in Christ that could not be touched. And brethren, you and I have something in Christ that cannot be touched. If we trust in certain riches, we're going to Pierce ourselves through with many arrows, as I think it, Paul said to Timothy, we we can have wealth today and we can have poverty tomorrow, but if we are really in the enjoyment of what is ours. And realize that we things are not measured by the substance, our substance, the substance of what a man has in a temporal way. Then I believe it's going to give us the grace and the energy of faith to run with endurance, the path that set before us to endure temptation. If we only look at material things, we're going to get discouraged. And there is a great movement today in Christian circles to measure spirituality. By temporal things, brethren, that is false. And those that do that often end up very, very depressed, sometimes, sad to say, on the psychiatric wards of the hospitals of this world, because they may have a lot today and nothing tomorrow. And sometimes they're told that if they didn't get what they wanted in a material way, it's because they didn't have the faith, brethren. There are those who are poor in this world but rich in faith and it's sometimes a joy to be with them. But I want to again qualify our remarks by saying that doesn't have to be so. You know, when the when the truth was revived in England and Europe in the early days, God raised up those who were ultra, ultra wealthy. Some of the nobility of Britain and Europe were raised up a faithful, godly men and women.

And not just men, but women. Lady Powers Court opened her castle for the prophetic conferences. Many wealthy opened their wallets for the printing of the ministry that is still in print today. And that we can read and and enjoy. And so it doesn't have to. Wealth does not have to stand in the way of spirituality. But but again, it is not a measure of whether a man is spiritual, because, as he says here, the grass Withers and the flower fades. It's an it's a quote from Isaiah 40. Peter uses it as well in a little different context in his epistle. But what it really shows is when he talks about the grass and the flower in Scripture, it puts on a display for a while, but there's really nothing abiding. And the things of this world they can put on a display for a while. But if that's what we're trusting in brethren, if that's what we're looking for, if that's what we're measuring spirituality by, we're going to be disappointed. We're going to see an end of all perfection, as the psalmist said. Because those things can spring up like the grass and the flower for a little while they look beautiful, but you run the mower over them, or there's a bit of a drought and they're gone. They they wither. But again, we have something like these brethren. That is, that it, that is for eternity, and that no matter what the circumstance, it will never fade away. And there's also the thought that we. Should be reminded of that. The resources that we have. Can be used for the furtherance of God's interests here below. So if those resources are put into His hands, and whatever the measure of them, they can be used for God's glory. And there will be a reward in that coming day. The crown of life here is not in connection with martyrdom, although it's the same crown that is mentioned in Revelation 2. But it's a reward. Crown brings before us the thought of reward, and that will be at the judgment seat of Christ. So if there's loss down here because of faithfulness to the Lord, that crown of life is promised to the believer. When we come down to the succeeding verses here, I think it's very important to see. That the trials mentioned here, the temptations are of a different character. They come from within, they are unholy trials and we all have this temptation. We Satan says that we can. Find satisfaction and joy. By allowing that old sinful nature to manifest itself. And. Sometimes we do this and we know that it only brings a sorrow and trouble into our lives when we allow that old nature which we all have to display itself. We can't blame God about it because our brother has said we are the ones that are responsible. We don't keep that old nature in the place of death. There's a little poem, so a thought reap an action. So an action reap a habit, sow a habit reap a character, so a character reap a destiny. So what we think about and pursue after? Will form our character in the end, as it says here, Lust. When it hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. That's the end of the pathway. However, it does bring a moral death into our lives too, because if we allow the those sinful desires to to gratify those sinful desires. We're going to have a moral death in our lives. There's not going to be any fruit for God in our in our pathway.

We sang in the opening hymn. About how that when we are faint and ready to fail. You'll give that which is wanting and make us to prevail. Well, I believe this involves endurance. And. You know I believe the Lord. He never asked us to do anything. What he gives us the ability to do it. And I think of how David. In the Psalms in Psalm 40. He says I waited patiently for the Lord. And he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also on horrible pit. Well, I think there was endurance with. David. The circumstances were very difficult. But he didn't throw up his hands in despair and turn against the Lord. He simply cried to the Lord. And he knew there would be deliverance and there was. And David was delivered from the horrible pit. Well, sometimes we're brought to that point, you know, where we're just about ready to give up. We're faint and we think we're going to fail, but you know, at that point the Lord comes in and he does. He gives what is wanting and makes us to prevail. But if we do give in to the flesh, you know the flesh wants to take easy. Street doesn't appreciate this idea of endurance. And sometimes we do give in and there's failure come in. Well, I think that's really what it's telling us here in verse. 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. God cannot be tempted with evil either. Tempted he any man. God never tempts us to do evil or to give in to the flesh. He give us victory over the flesh. And it speaks in first Peter, I believe it's. Well, just let me turn back to that in first, Peter. I should say turn ahead to it first. Peter chapter 4. And verse one first, Peter four and one. For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh. That a loss of men, but to the will of God. So we know the flesh desires to be pampered and gratified. And yet we find here in First Peter that. If we're willing to say no to the flesh. He ceased from sin. And their suffering involved with respect to the flesh, but. To

cease from sin brings joy and happiness into our lives. I just thought of that connection there with first Peter. Respect what we have here. It may seem like as James is going along, that it's a little disjointed. At first he's talking about this thing and then he's talking about that thing, but really there is a flow in the inspiration of the Spirit of God and what James is penning. And he takes up in the beginning our own will and God's will. And are we willing to be subject to His will to receive all from His hand and complete dependence upon Him? Asking in faith because we want His will. Well, he accomplishes Will. First, He will. So if I just want His will and I'm asking for His will, He's going to accomplish it, no two ways about it. And then we get into situations where I just want His will, but I'm in a place where I'm in a trial and I've got to take a step and I don't know what to do. I'll ask God, He'll show you.

And then He takes up the things that might take us out of a place of dependence upon his will. Rich or poor? And then he says now rather than. Rejoicing and riches. Rejoicing that God makes nothing of wealth or the things that this world thinks much of. Don't get down under the things that this world looks down on. Rejoice in the place you have in Christ and both of you, whether rich or poor. Rejoice in the work of God in your soul and what He is desiring to produce and all that He's passing you through. Rejoice in that because He does have a purpose for blessing. He's working in your soul. He's interested in what He's doing and. Your heart and my heart, and to bring it to its happy end. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. He says there's the place to rejoice. There's a place for us to rejoice as in what he is doing and the like. And then he takes up and continues the subject, really contrasting our will, what comes from self and his will and what comes from him and what do we want? What do we really want? What does our will produce? What does His will bring? And that goes on then and the rest of the chapter in that way. That's the very point that he makes here, Steve. He says, do not air, beloved brethren, how often we think that by yielding to that. Wicked old nature that we're going to find happiness. These are the verse in Romans chapter 8. We could just look at there. Verse 13 or verse 12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors. Not to the flesh to live after the flesh, for if we live after the flesh, he shall die. They're there. That's again the moral death. But if He through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. You know, the apostle is saying here, we're not debtors to the flesh. Whenever we've allowed the flesh to act, it's always brought sorrow, trouble. Affliction. Government of God in our lives, we all have had the experience of that. We're no debtors to the flesh. It has never brought any good in our lives. Might note in passing that it doesn't say we are debtors to the Spirit because the Christian life is a life of liberty not to. Not legality. But the apostle or the James is saying this in our chapter here. He's saying don't make a mistake, that you think you can get happiness by allowing your will to act as our brother mentioned here, every good and perfect gift. It comes from above. The good gifts, we might say, are those. Temporal blessings that we enjoy. We've had a good meal here. Today we have. 100 material blessings showered upon us, which we sometimes take for granted and are unthankful for. But all those good gifts, food and raiment, and 100 mercies that we experience day by day are from the Lord. Do we thank Him for it? Those are the good gifts. But there's this the perfect gifts too. Those are the those of a spiritual character. Which we're enjoying today and which we have in the the word of God, the wonderful spiritual blessings that we can enjoy, which go on into eternity. So they all come from above, certainly don't come from any other source and from the Father of lights, that is, he knows perfectly all about us. He knows our. Weaknesses. He knows our background. He knows everything about us and he's perfect in all his dealings with us. No father here could say that he acts in a perfect way, but.

The Lord has a special. Love for every one of his children. We're all different, thank God for that. We're all different and the Lord has a special love for each one of us. Plate of the high priest. There were 12 Stones. There were two stones on the on the shoulders. You remember the Onyx stones? The six of the tribes of Israel engraved on 1/6 on the other. That's eternal security. What the The stones on the breastplate were all different, Every one of them. You read that in Exodus 2829. God is a special love for every one of us. He knows our weaknesses. He knows our personalities. He knows our special needs. We speak in education today of special needs. Well, the Lord knows all that. He's a Father of light. He knows us better than we know ourselves, and He is doing the best for us with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. He's not fickle, not of one day and down the decks like some of us. But it's wonderful to have that confidence, Father. That's the relationship we have now with God, not even known in the Old Testament. How wonderful to know His care. His his watchfulness, His mercy, his love and his perfect knowledge. Of his children, that right, yeah, yes. And as we've been saying, and it's always good to go back to the context of a portion we're taking up. This is practical Christianity. This is our walk with God in the path of faith through this world. And I believe that's why he brings out the flesh here, because Satan seeks to hinder our walk with God through this world by bringing before us temptations connected with the flesh. You see it illustrated with the children of Israel in the Old Testament. You know, the real conflict for Israel never started till they got into the land, but there was a conflict they had during their passage through the wilderness and that was a conflict with Amalek. And Amalek is a picture to us of Satan Satan's working on the flesh to hinder our walk with God through this wilderness world. The reason I say that is because Amalek was the grandson of Esau, and Esau was one who sold his birthright for momentary gratification, as we might say for a bowl of porridge, just to satisfy his natural appetite for the moment. And when you trace the history of Amalek through the Old Testament, you find that this is the thought that carries through. I say again, it's Satan's working on the flesh to hinder our walk with God through this world. And that's what he's seeking to do with each one of us. He puts before us temptations, just like he put before Eve certain things. She saw the fruit, He spoke to her, and Eve was tempted. And we know the sad, the sad result. But remember this too, in connection with Satan. You know, Satan is not all knowing and he's not omnipresent. That's reserved for deity. Satan puts certain things in our pathway, certain things before us to seek to corrupt our minds and to tempt us. So that we act in the flesh and the result is sin and, and and so on. But Satan doesn't know what we're thinking. He can put things in front of me to corrupt my mind, but only God and the Lord Jesus know what I'm thinking. And so that's why so often in Scripture we're taught we're exhorted as to our our minds and what we fill our minds with. Are they filled with Christ? Are they filled with that which is good and lovely and pure and so on if they are. Then Satan, when he puts things in front of us, whether it's through the eye or through the ear or any other Ave. then we're not going to be so vulnerable to those things that he puts in front of us. If our minds are filled with that which is a, it is of Christ. So I believe that's why he brings this out in James in connection with our practical walk of faith. It's Satan working on the flesh to trip us up, to spoil our testimony, to spoil our joy. And Satan wants to turn every test that God puts in front of us into a temptation. And if we're not careful, brethren, he'll do that very, very thing. You know, Abraham had a test from God. He was tempted by God was a holy test, as John has worded it. He was tested if Abraham.

Hasn't focused on God and what was before him from God and counted on God by faith. It could have been disastrous. It could have been disastrous and no doubt the enemy was right there to seek to corrupt his Abraham's thinking and to get him to waver in his faith. Thank God. Abraham trusted God explicitly. He rose up early in the morning with one object before him, and that was obedience to the word of the Lord and so on. But when a test comes in our lives from God, let's be careful because if we don't turn to him in faith, in obedience, and for that wisdom that we spoke of this morning, that test from God, then can the the enemy can come and use as a temptation to lead into a very bad path. I suggest for a moment our brother Wally read that verse in First Peter chapter 4, and there's an interesting expression used in that

second verse, and that's the expression the rest of his time. Sometimes you hear the expression today. Today is the first day of the rest of your life. And I'd like to connect this with a verse that we have in Second Corinthians chapter. 5. And verse 15. And that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. There's an object, isn't there? And. There is that crucifixion, so to speak, of self there. I was thinking of an illustration that we have also in Second Kings chapter 20. And it's a very solemn portion that we have here, we have recorded here. Hezekiah's illness or affliction and he goes before the Lord in this connection and he pleads with the Lord and the Lord answers Hezekiah here and in verse six it says, and I will add onto thy days. 15 years. 15 years. OK, what took place during those 15 years? And that's that's the solemn point in this passage. And 2nd Kings Chapter 20. Well, we see that. He imprudently exposes his treasures and the treasures of the Lord's house to the men of Babylon, and this displeased the Lord, and this took place during those 15 years that were added to Hezekiah's life. The rest of his time, that's a solemn. 1St is a portion of the verse. And so the Lord was displeased with Hezekiah. In connection with what Hezekiah did during those 15 extra years that he had given Hezekiah, let's just look at another verse very briefly in Joel. The Lord is gracious sometimes, and I believe that we see a measure of grace expressed in the second chapter of Joel and verse 25. Says And I will restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten. The tanker worm and the Caterpillar and the Palmer worm. Well, there's a measure of restoration, but I don't think it's full restoration. So there should be an exercise as to what we do with the time that we have remaining from this time forth. But as you say, there is restoration, and there might be someone here today who's discouraged because you say, well, I've failed in the path of faith. I've allowed sin in my life. I've allowed the flesh to raise its ugly head.

But there is restoration. There may be, as you say, consequences. Sometimes the government of God comes in, but thank God, there can be in the soul at least full restoration. David sinned and there was full restoration in his soul, even though there was a governmental consequence for David and for future generations. But I think they're too. There's another point we don't want to miss in these verses in James. It doesn't say here, brethren, that when we're tempted, we're tempted of the devil. That's not what it says. We're tempted of our own lusts. Isn't that interesting? You know, my mother used to have an expression she said used to tell me, Jim, the devil gets blamed for a lot of things he's not responsible for. Now, it is true sometimes the devil is right there like he was with Eve and with with others and sometimes in our lives. But when we sin, it's because we have a sinful, fallen nature and we allow the flesh to be fed and to raise its ugly head. We can't always blame the devil. We have to blame our ourselves. And I believe this is is punctuated by the fact that there's a day coming on earth when the devil is going to be bound for 1000 years and Christ is going to reign and it's going to be a wonderful time unlike that this world has ever seen. But there is still going to be sin in the Millennium. Just read the last couple of chapters of Isaiah and other places and you'll find. That sin will raise its ugly head and be judged morning by morning. And in the Millennium when people openly sin, they will not be able to say the devil made me do it. People say that now while the devil made me do it. But they won't be able to bring up that excuse to the judge when they're brought up morning by morning. Man will sin because he has a fallen nature, and the flesh in a believer is no different than the flesh in an unbeliever. We find with Judas. Judas was an unregenerate man, and I believe remained so until the end. Satan entered into Judas to carry out the awful deed of betraying the betraying the Lord. But was the flesh any different in Peter a believer than it was in Judas? The Lord said Satan hath desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat, and we know that. Peter acted in the flesh in a way that caused him to deny the Lord three times with those and curses. Now we know the devil was directly responsible there. But again, I say that's not what it says in our verse in verse 14. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed. So let's remember we sin even as believers. We sin because we still have the flesh, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh. It has not improved in any way. Mr. Darby said we sin because we like to sing, and that is true. I was thinking along this line that. You know what we think about. Forms our character and. There is everything in this world to minister to the old nature and. Just the look of the news stands and what comes through the door and so on. And. We know that our thoughts sometimes. Are unholy. And we indulge them, we savor them, we turn them over. Beware, they couldn't lead to an action. But I always was helped by. What Mr. Darby said, because we all are assailed by these evil thoughts. If you haven't had that problem, I'd like to meet you, because I've never met anyone that didn't. We are all assailed by these evil thoughts. Vile intruders, as Macintosh says, they come into our unto our minds. Unbidden, perhaps, but. They do, they do sometimes find a lodging in our souls. But Mr. Darby said, and it was always helpful to me, How do we overcome that? You say it's a continual battle all day long. We get into ******* about it. If I have to stop and judge every evil thought that goes through my mind, it's it would be all day long. But he said by turning away from it.

We judge it by occupying ourselves with that which is good, precious word of God, the person of Christ, the hymn that we know. In that way we become overcomers. We. The that thought does not find a lodging place in our souls. And you know if when sin breaks out, we'll say publicly something has gone on before. That has been unjudged for perhaps. Months or even years. And if we judge the thoughts which our brethren don't see, we won't have to judge the actions that they do see. And perhaps it will lead to something more serious. So I just dropped that remark because it has been a help to me. We're, we're, we all have this conflict, I'm sure. But isn't it wonderful to be able to turn to the word of God? Occupied with those things which well, as Philippians 4 brings before us, maybe we should just look at those verses Philippians 4. Eight finally, finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are are just what's over. Things are pure, what's over, things are lovely, whatsoever things are a good report. We all have all of this in the word of God, in the person of Christ. If there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things. There's something even worse here than blaming it on the devil. Blaming it on God. It's in verse 13. Let no man say when he is tempted. I'm tempted of God, but God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted thee any man. And so we're have to do that too, aren't we sadly just say that this thing. Upon me because God led me into temptation saying no, that's a very serious thing to do, we must not do it. If there's some thought that comes up, it's called a lost here desire that comes from within and we need to judge it as such. The problem is that we tend to judge others and even God by ourselves. And I think, well, I can change my mind so God can change his. Brother Don Rule is reminding us of that at the Carrollton meetings, and I thought it was such a good point that he made that. I tend to think of God as. In connection with those things that I find in myself and it's very wrong to do that. And so here we find the the double minded man in verse eight. We might be tempted to think that God has different thoughts and maybe he thought one way about our circumstance yesterday, another way today. Worth it somehow, because I'm capricious. I'm arbitrary in the way I act, that God is doing that with me, but he doesn't do that. And so the Spirit of God goes right on verse 17, verse 16. We could connect the verse of verse 15. And don't errors to. Sin in that way, but it could also be connected with verse 17. Don't air, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of lights. And what is that Father? Well, He doesn't have any variable in this and there is no shadow of turning. He's marked by those lights. God is light, and so he doesn't think the way I think. As the heaven is high above the earth, so higher his thoughts above my thoughts, and I can't judge him by myself. And so I need to take responsibility for my own actions. If there's difficulty, yes, God could have allowed that to come in my life. But if there's sin, if there's an evil thought or desire that comes, well, then I need to take responsibility myself. That has come from within, and I need to judge it as such and seek grace from the Lord to go on in a way that's pleasing to him. Every every good giving. Might be the thought in verse 17. So we never receive anything bad in that way or. Us there's there's nothing that leads to corruption that would come from God his way of giving is perfect

so even the very manner of giving every good giving and every perfect gift is from above 1 There's no variableness you know it's been human history to.

Conceive of gods as being in the image, man, that that is idolatry. That's that's the basics of it. And even as Christians, we think of God as being somewhat like us, and that's quite wrong. Is is so different. And the verse 13 is really very central, I think to this this whole. Discussion and you emphasizing that very very important and then I'll just read again verse 17 every good giving the very manner of giving the very manner that a gift comes and the very incentives behind it there's nothing of. A taint when it comes from God, He has no ulterior motive to drive you or whatever. It's it's love, and so it's always a perfect given. I think that's really the thought the Lord himself said, If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father which is in heaven? And sometimes we might give a gift to our child. It might be a good thing, but we might give it in the wrong way, with the wrong spirit and attitude, or maybe even at the wrong time. Maybe we give something to a 5 year old that really shouldn't be given to that child until they're ten years of age. And our Father not only knows how to give good gifts, but he knows when to give them. He knows how to give them. He knows the circumstances under which to give them. And so it's not just the gift itself, but I believe, as Bruce said, this verse really includes more than that. And Mr. Darby has a footnote in his translation that's very helpful in that, in that regard, that good, the good gift and perfect gift. It's almost the same word in the original because the thought is really not just the gift itself, but how and when it is it is given. And that really, if we understand that, brethren, doesn't that really help us again to accept? His will in our lives, you know, sometimes we ask for something and it might be the right thing, but it might be the wrong time. There was a brother Dave was bringing before us how God sometimes says no to us when we ask for something, like with Moses and the apostle Paul. But sometimes it's not just no, it's not. It's not yes and it's not no, but it's wait a while. The timing isn't right. Are we willing to accept God's time? A child is looking forward to a gift that they anticipate and the parent has promised for them. But maybe they got to wait till their birthday. And every day they ask and the father says, now son, daughter, the time isn't right yet the day hasn't come. Well, our God knows exactly as the Father of lights. He knows exactly not only what we need, but he knows when we need it. You know, sometimes we see a little expression and I understand it and I don't want to. Bash it completely. A little model. Prayer changes things, I understand that, and we see prayer doing marvelous things in the scripture and so on. But I would suggest that more often, prayer doesn't change God's mind on things, it changes me. It gives me the proper attitude to accept what God's will and God's time. And I think that's why sometimes God withholds something from us, or so it seems, until we come to that spirit of dependence. And while we're asking, he's got it right there, why didn't He give it to us yesterday? He wanted to bring us to the proper spirit and attitude so that when he gave it to us, not only was it his time and the good, the best thing, but we were in the proper spirit and attitude to receive it. So I appreciate what Bruce said. I believe this 17th verse is more than just what is given. It's how it's given, the timing, and the spirit in which it is given. Can I just say this too, not to go back, but we want to be careful too because we circus, we can never blame sin or failure in the path of faith on our circumstances or our situation. And brother, sometimes we find, and I want to be careful, but we find even sometimes amongst believers, true Christians, this thought to take us back in our life to some circumstance back here.

Some environmental situation that it has affected some failure or sin or caused some failure or sin in our lives now. You know, we can overcome. I'm not saying our environment doesn't affect us, but we can overcome with the resources that we have in Christ. Everything, as we've been saying in these meetings is provided for us. And you know, some of the most godly kings in Israel rose out of ungodly families and situations. A king that did evil in the sight of the Lord, a king that grew our a young boy that grew up in appalling. Circumstances in Israel. Often was raised up to be one of the most God to some of the God most godly kings in Israel. You have it vice versa too. So again, we cannot blame our failure or our sin on our circumstances because there are always the resources not to be overcome. But we can be overcomers in any situation. How wonderful that. We have such a good. And gracious God. And. It tells us here that of his own will, He begat us. Wonderful to contemplate that God's desire was that you and I should be part of His family, that there might be a relationship with Him. And he's made it all possible. And I believe it's through the word of truth. Now in our hands we have the Scriptures. It tells us in first Peter that we're born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, which is the word of God. And of course in John One we understand that we're born. Out of blood, not of flesh, nor the will of man, but the will of God. And so I believe God, he gives to us a brand new life, a new nature, and he gives us that which nourishes that new life. And it's the word of God as it tells us as we go on here, verse 21. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, superfluity of naughtiness, receive with meekness. In grafted word which is able to save your souls, it's I believe that which nourishes. And so. There's also reference to be. Being swift to hear, well, I believe here this afternoon I'm looking into the faces of those. That are swift to hear. You're sitting here because you want to hear the word of God. You want to hear God speaking. No doubt you could be doing other things. Pursuing the world in its interests, but to become a part, to sit in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, to have His word open. And I believe it's a blessed place to be, to be sitting at the feet of Jesus, to hear His Word. Well, sometimes we're more swift to speak than we are to listen, but I think if we're going to say the right thing. We need to be listening first. And it also speaks about being slow. To wrath. Well, I do believe there is a place for wrath. Righteous indignation. But we need to be careful that the old nature doesn't take over. And we become angry because of the fact that. We're experiencing adversity and difficulty in our lives. Sometimes, you know, we're called to endurance, but we're not careful. We might become very irritated because of the circumstances. And I think that's the old nature. So there's a word back in the Old Testament that. If thou faint in the day of adversity.

Thy strength is small. Well, we're in a day of adversity at the present time. But we have no reason to faint. Because Christ is our strength. If we're relying on our own strength, definitely faith. But I often think of how Paul, he could say I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Need to keep our focus on him. Hymn #318. Oh Lamb of God, still. I never said I. Did his own way. Everything said I wanted to be sleeping. Whenever God transparent the sun. Yeah.

2 verses in our chapter before we pray. James One. It's 22. But be doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving your own selves. Verse 25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continue it therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Blessed God and our Father, we have so enjoyed the reading this afternoon. We thank Thee for answering the prayer at the beginning that there would be encouragement for us, and we just thank Thee for Thy Holy Spirit, our God, that would direct our hearts to the truth of Thy word. We thank Thee for what was brought before our hearts of the the goodness of God. We thank Thee, our God, that Thou art the one who purposes blessing for us. And we are the ones who fail. And we just would pray for strength for us to be able to go on in this world. Lord, we know these things. Help us to do them. And so we just thank thee for this time together. Thank thee for those who were used of the our God to bring before us these things. And now we just give thee our thanks for the time together. And we pray to bless our fellowship. We pray in thy name, Lord Jesus, Amen.

(James 1:1-18.)

Please read the passage indicated above before reading this article, and then keep your Bible open so that you may refer to it as may be necessary from time to time.

The writer takes it for granted that you will comply with this request, and hence he addresses you in the terms he would employ if giving a homely “Bible-talk.”

WE incline to think that the Epistle of James is read less than any other of the Epistles. This is a pity, because it deals with matters of a very practical sort. There is in it hardly anything which could be called the unfolding of Christian doctrine, but a great deal which inculcates Christian practice. We might almost call it the Epistle of works, of everyday Christian behavior. Its difficulty lies in the fact that the standpoint from which it is written differs from that of all the other Epistles. But we must not neglect it on that account.

The James who wrote it was not the brother of John. He was slain by Herod in very early years, as recorded in Acts 12:2. The author of the Epistle was the James spoken of in Acts 15:13, and 21:18. Paul calls him, “fames, the then Lord’s brother,” in Gal. 1:19, and he acknowledges him as one of the “pillars” of the Church in Jerusalem in Gal. 2:9. He does not appear to have gone forth to Judea or Samaria or to the uttermost parts of the earth, but to have remained in Jerusalem and there attained to a position of great authority.

The Epistle is not written to any particular assembly of believers, nor even to the whole church of God. It is addressed rather to “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad,” and it is this which accounts for its unusual character. Let us attempt to seize the view-point from which James speaks before we consider any of its details.

Although the Gospel began at Jerusalem and there won its earliest triumphs, the Christians of that city were slower than others in entering into the true character of the faith they had embraced. They clung with very great tenacity to the law of Moses and to the whole order of religion which they had received through him, as is evidenced by such passages as Acts 15, and 21:20-25. This is not surprising, for the Lord did not come to destroy the law and the prophets but rather to give their fullness, as He said. This they knew but what they were slow to see was that having now got the substance in Christ, the shadows of the law had lost their value. The enforcing of that fact is the main theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which tells us, “Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Shortly after those words were written the whole Jewish system, — temple, altar, sacrifices, priests, — did vanish away in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

Up to that point however, they viewed themselves as just a part of the Jewish people, only with new hopes centered in a Messiah who was risen from the dead. The same idea was common among the Jewish converts to Christ, wherever they were found and consequently their tendency was to still remain attached to their synagogues. An exception to this state of things was found where the Apostle Paul labored and taught “all the counsel of God.” In such cases the real character of Christianity was made manifest and the Jewish disciples were separated from their synagogues, as we see in Acts 19:8 and 9. James, as we have seen, remained in Jerusalem and he wrote his Epistle from this Jerusalem standpoint, which was right as far as it went and at the time of his writing.

We might put the matter in another way by saying that the earliest years of Christianity covered a period of transition. The history of those years, revealing the transition, is given to us in the Acts, which begins with the incorporation of the church in Jerusalem, consisting exclusively of Jews, and ends with the sentence of blindness finally pronounced upon the Jews as a people and the Gospel specially sent to the Gentiles. James writes from the standpoint that was usual amongst Jewish Christians in the middle of that period. It is this which accounts for the peculiar features of his Epistle.

Although the Apostle addresses himself to the whole of his dispersed nation he does not for a moment hide his own position as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was still rejected by the majority of his people. Moreover, as we read on, we soon perceive that the believers amongst his people are really in his mind’s eye and that what he has to say is mainly addressed to them. Here and there we shall find remarks specifically addressed to the unbelieving mass, as also other remarks which have the unbelievers in view, though not addressed directly to them.

Take, for instance, the opening words of verse 2. When he says, “My brethren,” he was not thinking of them merely as his brethren according to the flesh, as fellow Jews, but as brethren in the faith of Christ. This is evident if we look at the next verse where their faith is mentioned. It was faith in Christ, and that alone, which at that moment differentiated between them and the unbelieving mass of the nation. To the casual observer all might look alike, for all were waiting on the same temple services in Jerusalem or attending the same synagogues in the many cities of their dispersion, yet this immense line of cleavage existed. The minority believed in Christ, the majority refused Him. This cleavage was manifested in the lifetime of the Lord Jesus for we read, “So there was a division among the people because of Him.” (John 7:43). It was perpetuated and enlarged at the time when James wrote, and as ever the Christian minority was suffering persecution at the hands of the majority.

They had at this time “divers” or “various” temptations. From different quarters there came upon them trials and testing’s which, if they had succumbed to them, would have tempted them to turn aside from the simplicity of their faith in Christ. On the other hand, if instead of succumbing they went through them with God they would be made strong by enduring, and this would be great gain in which they might well rejoice. Hence when the trials came instead of being depressed by them they were to count it an occasion of joy. What a word this is for us today! A word amply corroborated by the apostles Paul and Peter: see, Romans 5:3-5, and 1. Peter 1:7.

These temptations were permitted of God for the testing of their faith and they resulted in the development of endurance. But endurance in its turn became operative in them, and if allowed to have its perfect work it would carry to completion the work of God in their hearts. The language is very strong, “perfect and entire; wanting nothing.” In the light of these words we may safely say that temptation or trial plays a very large part in our spiritual education. It is like a tutor in the school of God, who is well able to instruct us and to develop our minds to the point when we graduate as the finished product of the school. And yet how greatly we shrink from trial! What efforts we make to avoid it! In so doing we are like unto children who scheme with great ingenuity to play truant from school, and end up by becoming dunces. Are we not foolish? And have we not here an explanation of why so many of us make but little progress in the things of God?

Many of us would doubtless rejoin, “Yes, but these trials make such demands upon one. Again and again one is entangled in the most perplexing problems that need superhuman wisdom for their solution.” That is so, and therefore it is that James next instructs as to what should be done in these perplexing situations. Lacking wisdom we are simply to ask it of God, and we may be assured of a liberal answer without a word of reproach; for we are not expected to have in ourselves that wisdom which is in God, and which comes from above. We may assuredly ask God for whatever we lack and expect a liberal answer, though whether we should always get it without a word of reproach is another matter. There were occasions when the disciples asked the Lord Jesus for things which they did not get without a gentle word of reproof: see, for instance, Luke 8:24, 25, and 17:5-10. But then these were occasions when what was wanted was faith, and that, being believers, we certainly ought to possess.

How definite and certain is the word— “It shall be given him.” Take note of it, for the more the assurance of it sinks down into our hearts the more ready we shall be to ask wisdom in faith without any “wavering” or “doubting.” This simple unquestioning faith, which takes God absolutely at His word, is most necessary. If we doubt we become double-minded, unsteady in all our ways. We become like sea-waves tossed about by every wind, driven first in this direction and then in that, sometimes up and sometimes down. First our hopes run high and then we are filled with forebodings and fears. If this be our condition we may ask for wisdom but we have no ground for expecting it, or anything else, from the Lord.

We rather think that verse 7 is also intended to convey to us this thought; that he who asks of God, and yet asks with a doubting mind, is not likely, whatever he may receive, to take it as from the Lord. Wisdom or guidance or anything else is asked of God. Instead of there being calm reliance upon His word the mind is full of questionings and tossed about between hopes and fears. How can real wisdom and guidance be received? And if any kind of help is granted how can it be received as from God? Does not this go far to explain why so many Christians are troubled over questions concerning guidance? And when God’s merciful providence is exercised towards them and things reach a happy issue, they do not see His hand in it and receive it as from Him. They attribute it to their good fortune: they say, as the world would say, “My luck was in!”

Verse 9 to 12 form a small paragraph by themselves and furnish us with an instructive example of the point of view that James takes. He contrasts “the brother of low degree” with “the rich,” and not, as we might have expected, with “the brother of high degree.” The rich, as James uses the term, mean the unbelieving rich, the leading men of wealth and-influence and religious sanctity, who were almost to a man in deadly opposition to Christ, as is shown to us throughout the Acts of the Apostles. God had chosen the poor of this world and the rich played the part of their oppressors, as is stated in chapter 2 of our epistle, verse 5 and 6. How plainly does the Apostle warn the rich oppressors of his nation of what lay ahead of them!

Great they might be in the eyes of their fellows but they were like grass in the sight of God. Grass produces flowers and the fashion of them has much grace about it, but under the burning heat of the sun all is speedily withered. So these great Jewish leaders might be most comely in the eyes of their contemporaries, yet soon they would fade away.

And when the rich fade away here is this “brother,” this Christian, emerging from his trials and receiving a crown of life! Exaltation reached him even during his life of toil and testing, inasmuch as God considered him worthy of being tested. Men do not test mud, except it be that kind of blue clay in which diamonds are found. Base metals are not cast into the crucible of the refiner, but gold is. God picks up this poor brother of low degree, who would have been regarded by the rich of his nation as but the mud of the streets (see, John 7:47-49) and exalted him by proclaiming him to be an object composed of gold. Consequently He permits him to be refined by trials. If we really understand this we shall be able to say with all our hearts, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation.” The testing process itself is not joyous but grievous, as the Apostle Peter tells us, yet by means of it room is made in our hearts for the in-shining of the love of God, and we become characterized as those that love the Lord. Consequently the trial issues in a crown of life when the glory appears. The tried saint may have lost his life in this world but he is crowned with life in the world to come.

Though the primary thought of this passage is the testing which God permits to come upon believers, yet we cannot rule out altogether the idea of temptation, since every test brings with it the temptation to succumb, by gratifying ourselves rather than glorifying God. Hence when God tests us we might be so foolish as to charge Him with tempting us. This it is which leads to the next short paragraph, verse 13 to 15.

God Himself is above all evil. It is absolutely foreign to His nature. It is as impossible for Him to be tempted with evil as it is impossible for Him to lie. Equally so it is impossible for Him to tempt anyone with evil though He may permit His people to be tempted with evil, knowing well how to overrule even that for their ultimate good. The real root of all temptation lies within ourselves, in our own lusts. We may blame the enticing thing which from without was presented to us, but the trouble really lies in the desires of the flesh within.

Let us lay hold of this fact and honestly face it. When we sin the tendency is for us to lay a great deal of the blame on our circumstances, or at all events on things without, when if only we are honest before God we have no one and nothing to blame but ourselves. How important it is that we should thus be honest before God and judge ourselves rightly in His presence, for that is the high road to recovery of soul. Moreover it will help us to judge and refuse the lusts of our hearts, and thus sin will be nipped in the bud. Lust is the mother of sin. If it works it brings forth sin, and sin carried to completion brings forth death.

Sin in this 15th verse is clearly sin in the act: for other scriptures, such, for instance as Romans 7:7, show us that lust itself is sin in the nature. Only let sin in the nature conceive, and sin in the act is brought forth.

At this point we shall do well to think of our Lord Jesus and recall what is stated of Him in Hebrews 4:15. He too was tempted, tempted in like manner to ourselves and not only this but tempted like us “in all things.” And then comes that qualification of all importance, “yet without sin,” or more accurately, “sin apart.” There was no sin, no lust in Him. Things which to us had been most alluring found absolutely no response in Him, and yet He suffered “being tempted” as Hebrews 2:18 tells us.

It is easy to understand how temptation, if we refuse it, entails suffering for us. It is because we only turn from it at the cost of refusing the natural desires of our own hearts. We may not find it so easy to understand how temptation brought suffering to Him. The explanation lies in the fact that not only was there no sin in Him but He was full of holiness. Being God He was infinitely holy, and having become Man He was anointed by the Spirit of God, and He met all temptation full of the Spirit. Hence sin was infinitely abhorrent to Him, and the mere presentation of it to Him, as a temptation from without, caused Him acute suffering. We, alas! having sin within us, and having become so

accustomed to it, are very little able to feel it as He felt it.

God, then, far from originating temptation is the Source and Giver of every gift that is good and perfect. The Apostle is very emphatic on this point; he would by no means have us err as to it. Verse 16 to 18 are another short paragraph, in which God is presented to us in a very remarkable way. Not only is He the Source of every good and perfect gift but also of all that can be spoken of as light. The light of creation came from Him. Every ray of true light for the heart or conscience or intellect comes from Him. What we really know we know as the result of divine revelation, and He is the “Father” or “Source” of all such light. Man’s lights are very uncertain. The light of “science” so-called is very variable. It burns brightly, it dies down, it re-appears, it flares up, it goes out finally extinguished by an oncoming generation which feels sure it knows more than the outgoing generation. With the Father of lights and hence with all light that really comes from Him, there is no variableness neither shadow of turning. Blessed be God for that!

There is a third thing in this short paragraph however. Not only is God the Source of gifts that are good and perfect and lights that do not vary, but also of His people themselves. We too have sprung from Him as begotten of Him according to His own will. We are what we are according to His sovereign pleasure and not according to our thoughts or our wills, which by nature are fallen and debased, and also according to the “word of truth” by which we have been born of Him.

The devil is the father of lies. The world today is what he has made it, and he started it with the lie of Genesis 3:4. In contradistinction to this the Christian is one who has been begotten by the word of truth. By-and-by God is going to have a world of truth, but meanwhile we are to be a kind of first-fruits of that new creation.

Is not this wonderful? A thoughtful reader might have deduced the fact that a Christian must be a wonderful being, inasmuch as he is begotten of God. We might have said, “If God is the Source of gifts and those gifts are good and perfect; if He is the Source of lights and those lights are without variation or turning; then if He becomes the Source of beings those beings are sure to be equally wonderful. We are not however left to deduce it. We are plainly told; and very important results flow from it as we shall see.

F. B. Hole.

Things New and Old: Volume 16, Pure Religion

Let pure religion, undefiled,

Be the path of God’s own child.

To walk unspotted before Him;

To dry the eyes with sorrow dim.

To speak to her whose stay is gone,

That she may lean on God alone,

And tell her of the heart of love,

Who watches over all above!

Let pure religion, undefiled,

Shelter still the orphan child,

That he may thus the Father know,

Who sent His Son on earth below.

To seek the hopeless, helpless, lost,

The soul by sin and Satan tost

Upon the stormy sea of sin,

To rest with Him, to rest within, —

To rest within—to rest with God—

To lean upon His staff and rod;

His home and heart to fully share,

Who calls the widow, orphan, there,

And bids them come in Jesu’s name,

Who died for this the death of shame,

That they might from the world be free,

And rest in God’s own liberty.

O tender love of Christ in God,

Who bore for us the smiting rod—

The rod of His most righteous hand—

Bore it all, that we might stand

Within His presence bright and clear,

And know His joy the song to hear.

All honor, praise, and glory be

Unto Him who set us free!

T. M

Girdle of Truth: Volume 4, Fragment: The Expression of God's Favor

James 1:9-11

"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 is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof faileth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."

The Jews had to be guarded against a wrong thought of the expression of God's favor, because all that which the gospel brought out is so contrary to that which they had been accustomed to. The general character of the epistle of James is like a continuation of our Lord's teaching on earth. It does not present truth in its heavenly application, but in connection with its judgment of earthly things. The Lord looked at all earthly grandeur and the only thought of His heart was, that God has not His place: so here. The divine nature cannot adapt itself to man's lusts; and therefore when in a man, It necessarily comes athwart all that men are cherishing and pursuing. The thought of these verses is that the believer is to rejoice in that which brings out his real condition in God's grace; because it is divine truth which alone does this. By getting social communication on heavenly subjects it brought the one down, and raised the other up. The world had lost its power in principle; and then it is found that inequality of position is that which draws out affection, and not equality. The metaphor in verse 11 states the fact that when judgment comes, the rich are more exposed to trial than the poor; for example, in political revolutions, wars, and earthly changes, &c.; but the great point here is the judging all that appears by letting in daylight upon the scene. Judgment is upon the whole scene we are living in.

Girdle of Truth: Volume 4, Law of Liberty, The

James 1:25

"The law of liberty" is this, when a command is given which it is the greatest desire of the heart to obey. The fulfillment of the "royal law" is when we are free to do nothing but that which belongs to the new nature. We are made "partakers of the divine nature;" (2 Peter 1:4;) and having this nature, " the law of liberty" allows me to walk according to it; and, consequently, not according to the flesh, though the flesh may be there. The precept takes in what the new nature would do if unhindered; and thus our desires have the sanction of the word of God. Moreover, it cannot be a perfect law unless it is "a law of liberty." For i it be addressed to that which has no desire, it is simply its being addressed to the flesh, in which good does not dwell. "A new commandment I write unto you; which thing is true in him and in you." Christ's commandments direct and form the life that is in us, as they are the expressions of His own life; and they form ours by His authority: for it is commandment.

" The law of the Spirit of life" is a different thing. It is not a commandment, but the necessary consequence of the life that is in us-like the law of gravitation, &c. "Looking into the perfect law of liberty" is looking into these commandments.

Helps by the Way: Volume 1, Justification by Works.

AND is a man, then, justified by works? Scripture is clear enough in the matter. It decides positively that he is: “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only.” (James 2:24.) That is a perfectly sufficient answer to the question, so far as the question goes. And a great mass of even Scripture readers are content to leave it there. With light thoughts about sin, and no proper knowledge of themselves, they are content to believe the matter settled. They have never perhaps really faced the question as to whether they could meet God in the day of judgment on that ground. Or have they made the fatal mistake of mixing up God’s mercy with His justice in that day, when the day of mercy will be over. Thus persuading themselves that God will “not be extreme to mark what we have done amiss,” they suppose it will not be so hard to find these justifying works and to pass the easy trial. “They have never wronged their neighbors (is their thought); they have lived respectably, have given to the poor, have gone to church, and perhaps to sacrament. If it went hard with them, it would go hard with a great many more.” So they are persuaded that if people can’t be saved by their works, at any rate they can’t he saved without them, and think it a dreadful thing to say that “just faith alone” will save anybody.

But another class of readers are in real and deep perplexity. They have begun to find out what sin is and what they are; have made perhaps many serious efforts to be better; have found themselves as well “without strength” (Rom. 5:6) as “ungodly;” have learned that God is holy as well as merciful; and cannot think of “the day when God shall judge the secrets of men” so easily. They would fain believe “in Him that justifieth the ungodly,” even “him that worketh not,” (Rom. 4:5) through the sufficient work of One who “died for the ungodly.” But the question of the day of judgment remains yet a dark cloud upon their hearts. Are men to be justified by works then? If so, with a heart “deceitful above all things,” suppose they do their best, how can they be sure it will be accepted? May not God have other thoughts than theirs?

But both these classes of people, very far apart otherwise, have introduced really into the question with which we begin this paper, two things which make it entirely different from the simple one, “Is a man justified by works?” To that question there can be but one answer, that the Apostle James says, he is. People add to this, in their own thoughts, “Is a man justified by works in the day of judgment?” Now that is a wholly different thing; and from not attending to the difference the most serious results follow. Souls, are darkened, perplexity and confusion introduced into the Word of God, self-righteousness built up, and often whole systems of error founded as in this case, upon what is really at bottom inattention to what the Scripture does say. It is well known that Luther, — man of God as he was, — ventured to pronounce the epistle of James “an epistle of straw,” because he thought it contradicted Paul’s doctrine of “righteousness without works.” Others have more commonly, on the other hand, taken the words of James, as meant to guard against taking the words of Paul in the full extent of their plain meaning. But in reality both Scriptures are plain, and as far as possible froth contradicting one another.

The simple truth is that to introduce “the judgment day” into this passage in James is just to bring in all the perplexity for which we would make the inspired writer responsible. He is not speaking of it. Was Abraham’s justification by works “in the day of judgment”.

Clearly not, but as James says, — “when he had offered. Isaac his son upon the altar.” (2:21.) Or again, was “Rahab the harlot justified by works” in the day of judgment? Nay, but “when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way” (verse 26). Plainly this justification by works, then, that he speaks of, is in this life, and not in the future one at all.

But there is still another thing which we have introduced into this text in James, and which is not in it. Let us see if Paul’s statement as to this very Abraham, taken up by him to show that men are justified by faith without works, is not just as clear, and just as free from contradicting the doctrine of the Apostle here, as need be. We shall find that it is rather Paul that guards from any misconception of what he says, than James for him. This then is his doctrine: — “For if Abraham were justified by works” — which James saps he was, “he Hath whereof to glory.” And then, what does he say Abraham was not so justified? That would be indeed to contradict what James says; but there is no fear of Scripture doing this. No, but he guards us from misapprehending both himself and James. If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but NOT before GOD.” (Rom. 4:2.)

That is the whole matter. Now does James say that we are, or that Abraham was, justified by works before God? If he did, he would contradict Paul, but he says no such thing. He does say, what God forbid one should seek to lessen the force of, that the faith which saves is a living faith, not a dead one, and therefore does produce works. And then he tells us that we must show to others that we have this living faith by our works. “A man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works” — it is impossible, — “and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (verse l8).

There is no other way. Men must be justified by works before men (he never says, before God) and not by faith only. So was Abraham, when he offered up Isaac. We see then “the Scripture fulfilled, which Beth, Abraham believed God.” It was plain he did believe God, when he gave that proof of it. But God had seen that faith and “counted it to him for righteousness” before Isaac was born. God did not wait to justify him till He saw the works. He could see the faith man could not see.

And finally, James does not teach us we must see our own works to know that we have faith. Faith is in Christ, not self. I might say, I believe I have faith, and be mistaken; and many a poor soul is in darkness, looking into himself to see if his faith is of the right kind. I am to trust Jesus, not my faith, or anything in which my poor heart can deceive me. Jesus died for sinners, that is sure. I am one, that is as sure. Then and as that, I am made fully welcome to Him.

Edification: Volume 3, Our Scripture Portion.

(James 1:19. — 2:9.)

Please read the passage indicated above before reading this article, and then keep your Bible open so that you may refer to it as may be necessary from time to time.

The writer takes it for granted that you will comply with this request, and hence he addresses you in the terms he would employ if giving a homely “Bible-talk.”

THE nineteenth verse begins with the word, “Wherefore” which indicates that we are now to be introduced to the results flowing from the truth of the previous verse. Because we are a kind of first fruits of God’s creatures, as begotten of Him by the Word of Truth, we are to be “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”

Every intelligent unfallen creature is marked by obedience to the voice of the Creator. Fallen man, alas! shuts his ear to God’s voice and insists upon talking. He would like to legislate for himself and for everybody else, and hence come the anger and strife which fill the earth. We were always creatures, but now, born of God, we are a kind of first fruits of His creatures. What therefore should mark all creatures should be specially characteristic of us. Hearing God’s word should attract us. We should run eagerly to it as those who delight to listen to God.

We only speak aright as our thoughts are controlled by God. If we think God’s thoughts we shall be able to speak things that are right. But, even if we are swift to hear God’s thoughts, we shall only speak them when first we have assimilated them for ourselves and made them our own. We assimilate them but slowly and hence we should be slow to speak. A wholesome sense of how little we have as yet taken in God’s

mind will deliver us from that self-confidence and shallow self-assertiveness which makes men ready to speak at once on any and every matter.

Further we should be slow to wrath. The self-assertive man, who can hardly stop to listen to anything but must at once speak his own opinion is apt to get very angry when he finds that others do not accept his opinion at his own high valuation of it! On the other hand, here may be a believer of godly life who pays great heed to God's word and only speaks-with consideration and prayer, and yet his opinion is equally turned aside! Well, let him be slow to wrath for if it be merely man's anger it accomplishes nothing that is right in God's sight. Divine anger will be made to serve His righteous cause, but not man's anger.

We must remember too that we are a first-fruit of God's creatures as born of Him. Hence not only should we be pattern creatures but we should though creatures exhibit the likeness of the One who is our Father. All evil should be laid aside and the word received with meekness. We are

Missing pages.

Edification: Volume 3, Our Scripture Portion.

(James 2:10-26).

Please read the passage indicated above before reading this article, and then keep your Bible open so that you may refer to it as may be necessary from time to time.

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NOTHING could be more sweeping than the statement made in verse 10, and at first sight some of us might be inclined to question the rightness of it. We have to remember however that the law is treated as a whole, one and indivisible. An errand boy, carrying a basket of bottles, may slip and break one bottle in his fall, and his employer cannot with any justice accuse him of breaking all of them, for every bottle is separate and distinct from each of the others. If however the lad were carrying the basket suspended from his shoulder by a chain, and in falling he also broke one link of the chain, his master could rightly tell him that he had broken the chain. If in addition he indulged in rough horseplay with other boys, and hurling a stone misdirected it through a large shop window, it is rightly spoken of as a broken window.

It is thus with the law. The chain may have many links yet it is one chain. The window may comprise many square feet of glass yet it is one pane. The law has many commandments yet it is one law. One commandment may be carefully observed as verse 11 Says, indeed many commandments may be kept, yet if one commandment is broken the law is transgressed.

If that be so then must we all plead guilty, and we might begin to inquire if then after all we are to stand before God and be judged by Him on the basis of the law of Moses? To this question James replies in verse 12. We stand before God and shall be judged on the basis of the "law of liberty"— an expression which means the revelation of God's will which has reached us in Christ, as we saw when considering verse 25 of the previous chapter. We shall have to answer as being in the much fuller light which Christianity brings. Being in the light of the supreme manifestation of God's mercy in Christ we are responsible to show mercy ourselves. This thought brings us back to the matter with which the paragraph started. Their treatment of "the poor man in vile raiment" had not been according to the mercy displayed in the Gospel. They set themselves up as "judges of evil thoughts," but, lo! they would find themselves under judgment.

A serious position indeed! Are we in a similar position? We shall have to answer to God as in the light of Gospel mercy and as under the law of liberty, even as they.

Notice that the last phrase of verse 13 is not, "Mercy rejoiceth against justice," but, "against judgment." Divine mercy goes hand in hand with righteousness, and thereby it triumphs against the judgment that otherwise had been our due.

The change of subject that we find in verse 14 may strike us as rather abrupt but it really flows quite naturally from the profound insight which James had by the Spirit into the foolish workings of the human heart. He began the chapter by saying, "My brethren have not... faith." They might wish to rebut his assertion by saying, "Oh, yes! we have. We have the faith of the Lord Jesus as much as you." Is there any certain test which will enable us to check these contrary assertions and discover where the truth lies?

There certainly is. It lies in the fact that true faith is a living thing which manifests its life in works: Thereby it may be distinguished from that dead kind of faith which consists only in the acceptance of facts, without the heart being brought under the power of them. We may profess that we accept the teaching of Christ, but unless that which we believe controls our actions we cannot be said to really have the faith of Christ. Hence the latter part of this second chapter is of immense importance.

It must be carefully noted that the works, upon which James so strenuously insists in these verses are the works of faith. Having noted this we shall do well to turn at once to Romans 3 and 4, and also to Galatians 3, where the Apostle Paul so convincingly demonstrates that our justification is by faith and is not of works. These works however which Paul so completely eliminates are the works of the law.

A great many people have supposed that there is a clash and a contradiction between the two Apostles on this matter, but it is not so. The distinction we have just pointed out largely helps to remove the difficulty that is felt. Both speak of works, but there is an immense difference between the— works of the law and the works of faith.

The works of the law, of which Paul speaks, are works done in obedience to the demand of the law of Moses, by which, it is hoped, a righteousness may be wrought that will pass in the presence of God. "This do, and thou shalt live," said the law, and the works are done in the hope of thereby obtaining the life—life upon earth—that is proffered. No one of us ever did obtain this abiding earthly life by law-keeping, since as James has just told us we became wholly guilty directly we had transgressed in, one point. Hence we all lie by nature under the death

sentence, and the works of the law are dead works, though done in the effort to obtain life.

The works of faith, of which James speaks are those which spring out of a living faith as its direct expression and result. They are as much a proof of faith's vitality as flowers and fruit prove the vitality and also the nature of a tree. If no such works are forthcoming then our faith is proclaimed as dead, being alone.

Is there any contradiction between these two sets of statements? By no means. They are indeed entirely complementary the one to the other, and our view of the matter is not complete without both. Works done for justification are rigorously excluded. Works flowing from the faith that justifies are strenuously insisted on, and that not only by James but by Paul also; for in writing to Titus he says, "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain that good works." (3:8). The works that are to be maintained are those done by "they which have believed"; that is, they are the works of faith.

The above considerations do not entirely remove the difficulty for there remain certain verbal contradictions, such as, "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28), and in our passage, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Again we read, "If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God" (Rom. 4:2), and in our passage, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" Some puzzled reader may wish to ask us if we can extricate ourselves from the contradictory conclusions that in the distant past Abraham both was and was not justified by works; and further that in the present a man is justified by faith without works, and also by works and not by faith alone?

We should reply that there is really no difficulty from which to extricate ourselves. We have but to remark that in James the whole point is that which is valid before man, as verse 18 of our chapter shows. A man has the right to demand that we display our faith in our works, thus justifying ourselves and our faith before him. In Romans the whole point is that which is valid before God. The very words, "before God," occur in Romans 4:2, as we have seen. Our faith is quite apparent to His all-seeing eye. He does not have to wait for the display of the works that are the fruit of faith, in order to be assured that the faith really exists.

In the world of men however works are a necessity, for in no other way can we be assured that faith exists of a living sort. The illustrations of verse 14 to 16 are quite conclusive. We may profess faith in God's care for His people in temporal things, but except our faith in that care leads us to a readiness to be the channel through which it may flow, our faith is of no profit to the needy brother or sister; nor indeed to ourselves. Our faith as to that particular point is dead and consequently inoperative, as verse 17 tells us, and we must not be surprised if it is challenged by others.

A man may come up to you and say, "Well, you say that you believe but you produce no visible evidence of your faith, kindly therefore produce your faith itself for my inspection." What could you do? Obviously, nothing! You might go on reiterating, "I have faith. I have faith." But of what use would that be? Your confusion would be increased if he should further say, "At all events I have been doing such-and-such a thing, and such-and-such, which clearly evidence that I personally do believe, though I am not in the habit of talking about my faith."

So far the Apostle has urged these very practical considerations upon us in connection with matters of every day life in the world, but they stand equally true in connection with matters of doctrine, matters connected with the whole faith of the Gospel. In verse 19 the very fundamental point of faith in the existence of the one true God is raised: "Oh, yes," we each exclaim, "I believe in Him!" That is good; but such faith if real is bound to affect us. We shall at least tremble, for even demons, who know right well that He exists and hate Him, go as far as that. The multitudes, who in a languid way accept the idea of His existence and yet are utterly unmoved by it, have a faith which is dead.

"What!" someone may remark, "Is such a thing as trembling counted as a work?" It certainly is. And this leads us to remark that James speaks simply of works, and not of good works. The point is not that every true believer must do a number of kindly and charitable actions—though it is of course good and right for him so to do—but that his works are bound to be such as shall display his faith in action if men are to see that his faith is real. This is an important point: let us all make sure that we seize it.

As an illustration, let us suppose that you go to visit a sick friend. You inquire for his health when he at once assures you that he is perfectly certain to get well. As he does not seem particularly cheerful about it, you ask what has given him this assurance—upon what his faith rests? In reply he tells you he has some wonderful medicine, as to which he has read hundreds of flattering testimonials; and he points you to a large bottle of medicine standing on the mantelpiece. You notice that the bottle is quite full, so you ask him how long he has been taking the stuff, when he surprises you by saying that he has not taken any! Would you not say, "My friend, you cannot really believe that this medicine will cure you without fail, otherwise you would have begun to take it"?

You would be even more surprised however if in response to this he calmly remarked, "Oh, but my faith in it is very real, as may be seen by the fact that I have just sent £5 to help our local charities." "What has that to do with it?" you would exclaim. "Your gift seems to show that you have a kindly heart, and that you believe in local charities, but it proves nothing as to your belief in the medicine. Start taking the medicine: that will demonstrate that you believe in it!"

Here is a rich man who, when requested, will draw out his check-book and sign away large sums for charitable services. There is a poor woman who is astonishingly kind and helpful to her equally humble neighbors. What do their works show? Their faith in Christ? Not with any certainty. True it may be that their kindly spirit is the result of their having been converted, but on the other hand it may only spring from a desire for notoriety or for the approbation of their fellows—. But suppose they both begin to display great interest in the Word of God, together with a hearty obedience to its directions, and a real affection for all the people of God. Now we can safely draw the deduction that they really do believe in Christ, for that is the only root from which springs such fruit as this.

Two cases are cited in verse 21 to 25—Abraham and Rahab. Contrasts they are in almost every respect. The one, the father of the Jews, an honored servant of God. The other, a Gentile, a poor woman of dis, honorable calling. Yet they both illustrate this matter. Both had faith, and both had works—the works exactly appropriate to the particular faith they possessed, and which consequently showed it to others.

Abraham's case is particularly instructive since Paul also cites him in Romans 4 to establish his side of this great question; referring to that which happened under cover of the quiet and starry night, when God made His great promise and Abraham accepted it in simple faith. James refers to the same chapter (Gen. 15) in our 23rd verse; but he cites it as being fulfilled years after when he "offered Isaac his son upon the altar," as recorded in Genesis 22. The offering of Isaac was the work by which Abraham showed forth the faith that had long been in his heart:

Many a critic is inclined to object to the offering of Isaac and to denounce it as unworthy of being called a “good work.” That is because they are entirely blind to the point we have just been endeavoring to make. When Abraham believed God on that starry night, he believed that He was going to raise up a living child from dead parents. How could he have so believed except he had believed that God was able to raise the dead to life? And what did his offering of Isaac show? It showed that he really did believe in God, just in that way. He offered him “accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead” (Heb. 11:19). His work showed forth his faith in the most precise and exact way.

With Rahab it was just the same. She received the spies from Joshua and sent them out another way. Again our critic is far from pleased. He denounces her action. It was unpatriotic! It was treason! She told lies! Well, poor thing! she was but a depraved member of an accursed race, groping her way towards the light. Her actions can easily be criticized, yet they had this supreme merit—they clearly demonstrated that she had lost faith in the filthy gods of her native land and had begun to believe in the might and mercy of the God of Israel. Now—this was exactly the point, for the faith she professed to the spies was, “I know that the Lord hath given you the land... for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Joshua 2:9-11). Did she believe this? She did, for her works showed it. She risked her own neck to identify herself with the people who had JEHOVAH as their God.

Is not all this very wholesome and important truth? It is indeed. It is reported that Luther was betrayed into speaking of James with contempt, and referring to his Epistle as “the Epistle of straw.” If so, the great Reformer was mistaken, and did not grasp the real force of these passages. If we have grasped their force we shall certainly confess it to be more like “an Epistle of iron.” There is a sledge-hammer directress about James hardly equaled by any other New Testament writer.

The sum of the matter we have been considering is this—that, “as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” We may talk of our faith in Christ, or of our faith in this, that and the Oilier detail of Christian truth; but unless our faith expresses itself in appropriate works it is DEAD! That is a sledge-hammer hit! Let us allow it to exert its full effect in our consciences.

F. B. Hole.

Things New and Old: Volume 22, Justification by Faith, and Justification by Works

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (Rom. 3:18.)

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1.)

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” “Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” (Jas. 2:21, 24, 25.)

At first sight these verses might seem to some to be contradictory, but there cannot possibly be a shadow of a contradiction in the inspired word of God. God speaking to us in His word is a great reality. Here all is truth. It is evident, however, from the above statements, that it is of all importance rightly to understand the purpose and scope of each part, or book, of holy scripture. We shall find this not only removes all contradiction, but also shows the greatest harmony.

Let us then first take the subject of justification by faith. The blessed declaration of the gospel is this: “Through Jesus is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things.” This is an absolute fact: that all who believe in Jesus, and believe the forgiveness preached through Him, are justified. The Epistle to the Romans also distinctly recognizes the believer in this justified state—accounted righteous by faith: and thus having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Believers are justified, and they have peace with God. This much is established by the word of God.

Now just as there might be two photographs taken of one house, the front and the back—both equally perfect, yet the contrast, though not contradictory, might be very striking—so there is also in our all-important subject. There is a front view, and a back. There is what God sees, and what man sees—justification by faith, and justification by works. Romans brings out or photographs the former, and James the latter; but both are equally perfect.

What is man when placed in the front, and the full ray of divine light falls upon him as seen of God? Take man in his Gentile condition. What a black negative! (Read Rom. 1:21-32.) What a description: “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,” &c. This is the true photograph of man in his most polished Gentile condition. All history bears witness to the terrible truth of every word in this chapter.

Place the Jew in the light. He had had great privileges for fifteen centuries. He had the advantage of the law, the Psalms, and the prophets. Have the full rays of inspired truth and light upon him, will you not get a better negative? No, he says, “ In no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable,” &c. Examine the photograph in every detail, all proved guilty. This is the truth as to every one—Gentile or Jew, religious or profane-when brought into the powerful light of the presence of God. All are guilty.

Is it not also evident, this being man’s condition, that the law cannot possibly mend matters, it can only righteously condemn such wickedness as this: and this is what man is. The law cannot justify wickedness. And yet on this question of righteousness, all that can be said on man’s side is, that he is guilty and under judgment. There may be great difference before men. But we are now examining man before God; and the testimony of the word of God is as to this, that “ there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

It is not then the righteousness of man, for in His sight, in God’s sight, he has none. But it is the righteousness of God that is revealed; and is the great subject of this epistle. “Even the righteousness of God—by faith of Jesus Christ;” “being justified freely by [not here works of our own

but] his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Thus after proving man's guilt, (Jew and Gentile) righteousness is now wholly of God. God hath set forth the propitiation through faith in His blood. Two things God hath done, they are these: He gave His beloved Son to bear our sins, "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification, and believing God, we are accounted righteous," or justified. And this gives perfect peace with God according to all that God is. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We call attention to the fact that Abraham is cited for proof of both these justifications; his justification by works is not for a moment denied in its proper place, as we shall see in James. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Thus it was faith apart from all works that was counted for righteousness. This is most clear if we turn to the scripture, and examine the passage. "Behold the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir," &c. "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it unto him for righteousness." (Gen. 17) " He considered not his own body clearly he believed the bare word of the Lord. And this faith: apart from all works here, was counted for righteousness. Is it not exactly so with the believer? If he considers himself, he never can have peace, for there is nothing in sinful self for faith to rest in. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And then we have David's description of " the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Yea, even still more, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin." Wonderful as this is, it must be so; God says it. Through the atoning death of Jesus (not by works) God is righteous in forgiving our sins. By that judgment of sin, the root, in the sacrifice of Christ, God is righteous in not imputing it (sin) to us. Nay, having once laid it on Jesus, He would not, could not, be righteous in imputing it to us. What blessed reality all this is: our sins forgiven: and sin, our very nature, not reckoned. And it was not written for Abraham's sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." There is this difference, however: Abraham believed the promise of God; we believe the fact. Redemption, His death for us, is an accomplished fact. His resurrection from among the dead for our justification: to be our subsisting righteousness is an accomplished fact. But this matter is entirely of God: not a particle of our works in this case. Justified freely. Justified by faith without the works of the law. This is "to be justified in his sight." By the accomplished work of Christ, God is just and the Justifier of him that believeth.

All this love commended to us; all done for us when enemies, and without strength; then Christ died for us. Believing God, we are accounted righteous in His sight. Thus justified by faith, we have peace with God. But this entirely through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus all works of man are entirely excluded, where it is a question of justification in His sight, of peace with God. If this righteousness be of the law, or of works, then Christ died in vain. (Gal. 2:21.) To turn to the law, or works, for additional righteousness, Christ shall profit you nothing, (Gal. 5:1-4.) Both in the first eight chapters of the Romans, and the Epistle to the Galatians, these truths are clear, and undeniable.

Equally clear and most important is the truth of justification by works in the Epistle of James. Only mark, the righteousness of God through the accomplished redemption by the blood of Jesus, forms no part of the subject of James. The Spirit of God has quite another object here. Christian practice is the theme in James. It is not the question either of being justified in God's sight, or having peace with God; though divine sovereignty is fully owned. It is justification by works in man's sight. "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou [or thou seest] how faith wrought with his works?" And again, "Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Just then, as in Romans, it is the great question of justification in God's sight; and there man has no righteousness, he has black sins against God. Righteousness, then, being wholly of God, through the propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ. And thus, by faith, without works of law, the believer is accounted righteous in God's sight. So in James, living faith produces fruit in the sight of men: and if it does not produce the fruit of obedience to God, and subjection of the will, it is the mere assent of the mind—such a belief as the devils have. It is simply the quality of the faith proved by the works, in the sight, not of God, but before men.

Suppose we walk over a field in early spring. The farmer says, "This is a field of barley." "Field of barley," you say, "why we do not see a single blade." The farmer may know the quality of the seed sown, but you do not. It may be dead and worthless stuff, or every grain may have the germ of life. You might say to the farmer, "Show me thy field of barley without a crop!" How could be, if never a blade or ear appeared? Let us come months, and months after—you watch the steady growth. God has watered it with His clouds, and warmed it with His sun: and now ye see the truth of what the farmer said before. It is not a field of barley in the complete sense, until the seed sown has fulfilled its growth. Only mark, the farmer never expects the crop without the seed sown first. It is only in spiritual things that man is so blind, as to expect the fruit before the seed.

This is exactly how the Spirit of God, both by Paul and James, refers to Abraham. Where Paul speaks of justification in the sight of God, he takes us to Gen. 15. There Abraham believed the bare word of God; and faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. God spake; Abraham believed. Not a blade of works. But faith is a mighty power in the soul. Years and years passed on. Ishmael was fourteen years old when Isaac was born. There was blade, and stalk, and the full ripe ear of faith in God, fulfilled in the offering up that very son in whom centered the promises of God. "Ye see how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." Apart from the obedience of faith, neither the act of Abraham, nor of Rahab, was good works; but nothing could more strikingly demonstrate the power of faith before men.

There is no more contradiction between justification in the sight of God, by faith without works; and justification in the sight of man by works of faith, than there would be between the description of a field, when the seed alone was buried in the soil and not a blade to be seen; and a description of that same field, as the fruit of that seed browns in the sun, in the days of harvest. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The inspired Epistle, then, of James, is of immense importance to the child of God who desires not only to be a hearer, but a doer of the word. We are convinced it is especially needed at this time. It was addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. Great numbers professed to be christians, though still attending the synagogue. With many, as in this day, it was a mere dead, empty profession of faith—the lamp without the oil. And hence the importance of pressing practical christian walk.

Young Christian: Volume 1, 1911, Praying First

Two Christian men “fell out.” One heard that the other was talking against him, and he went to him and said, “Will you be kind enough to tell me my faults to my face, that I may profit by your Christian candor, and try to get rid of them?”

“Yes sir,” replied the other, “I will, do it.”

They went aside, and the former said: “Before you commence telling what you think wrong in me, will you please bow down with me and let us pray over it, that my eyes may be opened to see my faults as you will tell them. You lead in the prayer.”

This was done, and when the prayer was over, the man who had sought the interview said, “Now proceed with what you have to complain of in me.” The other replied, “After praying over it, it looks so little that it is not worth talking about. The truth is, I feel now that in going around talking against you, I have been serving the devil myself, and have need that you pray for me and forgive me the wrong I have done you.”

Are there not many who may profit by this incident? “Speak not evil one of another, brethren.” James 4:11.

Young Christian: Volume 37, 1947, Character of the World and Its Friendship, The

“The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” Powerful testimony! which judges the walk and searches the heart. The world’s true character has now been manifested, because it has rejected and crucified the Son of God. Man had been already tried without law, and under law; but after he had shown himself to be wholly evil without law, and had broken the law when he had received it, then God Himself came in grace; He became man in order to bring the love of God home to the heart of man, having taken his nature. It was the final test of man’s heart. He came not to impute sin to them, but to reconcile the world to Himself. But the world would not receive Him; and it has shown that it is under the power of Satan and of darkness. It has seen and hated both Him and His Father.

The world is ever the same world: Satan is its prince, and all that is in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. The heart of man, the flesh, has since the fall been always enmity against God. It is often thought and said, that since the death of Christ, Satan is no longer the prince of this world; but it was precisely then that he declared himself as its prince, leading on all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, to crucify the Saviour. And although men now bear the name of Christ, the opposition of the world to His authority remains the same.

Only observe and see if the name of Christ is not dishonored. Man may indeed be taught to honor it; but it is none the less true that where he finds his enjoyment, where his will is free, he shuts out Christ, lest He should come in and spoil his pleasures. If left alone he does not think of Him, he does not like to be spoken to of the Saviour; he sees no beauty in Him that he should desire Him. Man likes to do his own will, and he does not want the Lord to come and oppose it; he prefers vanity and pleasures.

We have the true history of the world and its practical principles in Cain. He had slain his brother, and was cast out of the presence of God, despairing of grace, and refusing to humble himself. By the judgment of God he was made a vagabond on the earth; but such a condition did not suit him. He settled down where God had made him a vagabond, and he called the city after the name of his son, to perpetuate the greatness of his family. That his city should be deprived of all the delights of life would have been unbearable; therefore he multiplied riches for his son. Then another member of the family invented instruments of music; another was the instructor of artificers in brass and iron. The world being cast out from God, sought to make its position pleasant without God, to content itself at a distance from Him. By the coming of Christ, the state of man’s heart was manifested, not only as seeking the pleasures of the flesh, but as being enmity against God. However great His goodness, it would not be disturbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the world, nor submit itself to the authority of another; it would have the world for itself, fighting to obtain it, and snatching it from the hands of those who possessed it. Now, it is evident that the friendship of this world is enmity with God. As far as in them lay, they cast God out of the world, and drove Him away. Man desires to be great in this world; we know that the world has crucified the Son of God, that it saw no beauty in the One in whom God finds all His delight.

J. N. D.

Echoes of Mercy: Volume 14 (1904), "Never, Never to Part."

“MAN proposes, God disposes,” is a well-known and very true French saying.

The apostle James (4:13-15) says much the same under the guidance of God’s Spirit: “Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.”

How little we know what a day, nay, what an hour may bring forth! It is generally the unexpected that happens, and often the least desired. Since this is the case, would it not be a mark of wisdom to be ready for anything? Sickness, poverty, death may come—are you prepared to face either?

The rich man (Luke 12) counted on a long life and said to himself, “Thou hast much goods laid up for many years.” But God said unto him, “This night thy soul shall be required of thee.” Not even one day’s illness was accorded to him wherein to prepare for death; he was cut off like the flower of the grass. So it may happen to you, to me—are we ready?

A young man was lately returning from South Africa to be the support of his widowed mother, and he was well worthy of the love she bestowed upon him. His last letter had been full of affection: “Coming home to you, mother,” he wrote, “never, never to part.” It was touching to read, and it filled his mother’s heart with joy as she eagerly reckoned the days ere they should meet, for she had heard that he had actually embarked. But the days lengthened into weeks and the weeks into months—three had passed, till with a heart made sick by “hope deferred,”

she said, “He cometh not.” Then came the fatal day when the tardy War Office apprised her of the heartrending fact that her loved son had succumbed to enteric on the voyage home.

“Never, never to part!” Ah, how those words ring in her ears, and ring in ours too! We cannot apply them to anything on earth; it is the place of partings, of heart-breakings.

Have you ever imagined the feelings of that other mother—a widow and childless—who left the city Nain with the funeral cortege of her son and met Jesus on the road? And then have you pictured the return journey with her living son restored to her from the portals of the grave? Yet even then she could not say, “Never, never to part.” He had been rescued from the tomb, but only for a space—death and the grave remained ahead of him still—and the sad parting of mother and son must again take place.

The Lord Jesus was the only One who ever came out of the grave never to return thither. He really died, He was really buried “according to the Scriptures,” and then He rose triumphant over death, out from among the other sleeping dead, “now no more to return to corruption,” and believers are to have the same portion. “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit.” Hence someday the sleeping dead in Christ will rise as He did—forth from among the wicked dead they will come—they will find themselves, even as to their bodies, on the other side of death and the grave, and for the first time will be able to say, “Never, never to part,” which the widow of Nain even in her overwhelming joy could not say any more than we can. But, thank God, it will come true at last, true to the very letter, in heaven—

Well, friend, have you a title to heaven? If “this night your soul be required of you,” will an abundant entrance be granted you into that “haven of eternal rest”? “To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Rom. 14:9). He died that you might live, He rose that you too might rise from among the dead, He lives that you may be saved by His life. Do not turn away from Him who speaks to you from heaven. He is a Saviour who has proved His love and His power, by doing what none other could do; and through death He now delivers from sin, and Satan, and death, all who trust Him. Will you not thank Him, and join in singing —

H. L. H.

Christian Truth: Volume 37, He Giveth More Grace

"He giveth more grace."

To be anxious for souls and yet not impatient, to be patient and yet not indifferent, to bear the infirmities of the weak without fostering them, to testify against sin and unfaithfulness and the low standard of spiritual life, and yet to keep the stream of love free and full and open-to have the mind of a faithful shepherd, a hopeful physician, a tender nurse, a skillful teacher-requires the continual renewal of the Lord's grace.

Young Christian: Volume 13, 1923, Why Does the Apostle James Use the Title, "Lord of Sabaoth"?

Answer: James wrote by the Spirit of God to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. He includes unsaved ones in his epistle. Its subject is practical righteousness. In Chapter 5:1-6, he is speaking against the wickedness of the rich men who were grinding the faces of the poor (Isa. 3:15), and defrauding their labors, an says their cries of distress under such tyranny, “are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth,” the great “Ruler over all,” Jehovah of Hosts. This is in keeping with the object of the epistle, which contains truth alike applicable to Israel, or the church.

Christian Treasury: Volume 4, End or Purpose of the Lord, The

"Ye... have seen the end of the Lord."

James 5:11

The Lord always has an "end" or object in view in all that befalls His people, particularly when sicknesses and similar troubles come upon them. It is exceedingly important that we have that fact firmly established in our hearts, for if we know "the end of the Lord," it will enable us to pass even more joyfully through the period of trial. And the more firmly we are convinced of the fact, the lighter the trial will seem and the shorter its duration.

The Apostle Paul, in his unparalleled afflictions, knew that "the end of the Lord" was a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." With that prospect in view, his present affliction seemed to be light as to its character, and for a moment as to its duration. (2 Cor. 4:17, 18.)

There is a great difference between looking for the end of the trial and looking for "the end of the Lord." It is natural to be looking for the former, and if the trial is a sickness, then the usual thing is to send for a doctor and take remedies in order to escape it. However, we are expected to take care of these bodies we now have. But it takes faith to look for the "end of the Lord," for that is one of the things that are "not seen." "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:1.

The Lord's Purpose

In this connection it has occurred to me that the people of God rarely seek for, or even think of, the Lord's purpose in permitting affliction to fall on them. His purpose may be preventive as with Paul's thorn in the flesh or productive as in John 15, as well as corrective. Sometimes the saints of God suffer needless trials, diseases, and hastening of death, because of their ignoring one of the very plainest and one of the most practical lessons taught in the Word of God. It is certain that if we believed and acted upon the simple fact stated in James 5:11, we would in

every trial and trouble of whatever nature, ask and diligently seek to learn, not how we can escape the trial, but what purpose does the Lord wish to accomplish by means of it? The end of the Lord is "for our good always." (Deut. 6:24.) His chastenings are invariably for our "profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." No lesson of Scripture is more plainly taught than that, but how often do the people of God act in accordance with it? And who can say how much they lose through slighting and ignoring it?

How Much They Lose

The Apostle James in the verse from which we have quoted, sums up in a few words, the lesson of the extraordinary afflictions of Job saying, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." That is, he emphasized the endurance Job had in the many things he suffered and what God purposed in it all.

This Scripture is very important. It refers back to the great Bible lesson given in the book of Job concerning human sufferings, and especially bodily sicknesses which are the most common of them all. It leads into the practical directions which the Lord has given to be followed by His people when ill. It carries us on to the effectual working of the "prayer of faith" as exemplified by Elijah, "a man subject to like passions as we are." He prayed until the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit which is the great "end of the Lord" who is the "husbandman [who] waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he [it] receive the early and latter rain." James 5:7. Rain is a symbol of God's blessing.

Like Plows and Harrows

We would remember that afflictions are like plows and harrows that prepare the soil by painful operations to receive the seed. The soil is put into condition to drink in the rain when it comes. "For the earth [or land] which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God." Heb. 6:7.

The reference in James 5:11 is the only allusion to the book of Job in the whole Bible, although Job's name is twice mentioned in Ezek. 14. Job, in all his explanations of his afflictions, attributed them to God's actions, but he did not recognize that God had any beneficent purpose in them. The only prospect of escape from them that Job could see was by death. The difference between Job's view and that of His three friends was that Job maintained that God sent evil upon men, just as He sent good, and that being God He had the right to do as He pleased with His own creatures. Therefore men must accept evil uncomplainingly just as they accept good at God's hands. Job's words to his wife state his views: "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." Job 2:10.

Job maintained this until he had silenced his three friends.

Job's Three Friends

His friends maintained the contrary. They said that afflictions were punishments for sins and were always in exact proportion to the nature of the sins. By this argument it was made plain that Job, being the most afflicted of all men must be the most wicked of all men. The great discussion came to an end without any of the four men indicating that he had the faintest idea of the purpose of God, in spite of the many excellent things they said about God.

God's purpose in permitting afflictions is to bring the afflicted one into blessing through self-judgment, confession, and correcting of their ways. None of them had the faintest thought of the "end of the Lord" or that "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." In all that those four men said about God, the words, love, mercy, kindness, goodness, compassion, pity and the like, did not once occur. Notwithstanding all their great thoughts about God, they did not know Him well. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jer. 9:23, 24.

Elihu sums up Job's contention in chapter 33:9-11: "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. Behold, He findeth occasions against me, He counteth me for His enemy; He putteth my feet in the stocks, He marketh all my paths." That is, God did all these things arbitrarily, though Job was in his own eyes clean without transgression and innocent.

Elihu dismisses that view of the matter by saying briefly, "Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man." Then he proceeds to show that in all God's dealings with men, His purpose is to save them from going down to the pit, and to bring them into the light of the living. He showed that God first speaks to men once and twice, in a vision (there was no written Word then) and if that fails, He chastens him with pain upon his bed, perhaps with sickness that brings him "near unto the grave."

Casual Happenings

Is it not strange that with only a few exceptions, the Lord's people fall into the error of Job? They are just as blind as he was to God's purposes in afflicting the children of men and especially His own people. With few exceptions they view their sicknesses as mere casual happenings, the ordinary mischances of life. It is sometimes expressed as the mysterious workings of an inscrutable Providence, the common vicissitudes of men to be endured patiently and certainly to be escaped from as soon as possible. There seems no regard whatever for the "end of the Lord."

We often act as if we did not have any inspired "Interpreter" to tell us plainly the meanings of these things, One who will tell us that "the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." There is One to reveal the fact that He Himself "has found a ransom" in the Person of His own beloved Son. He will freely open the storehouse of His rich mercies to every man, saint, or sinner who will say, "I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not." Job 33:27.

It is no wonder the people of this world are blind to the purposes of God in permitting wars, diseases, and other grievous afflictions, seeing that God's own people are in darkness in regard thereto. How can we expect the unconverted to realize God's desire to save them, and expect them to hear the Interpreter, and count upon the merit of the Ransom when we ourselves are so blind to all this?

God's First Lesson

It does seem as if God's first—lesson to which the entire book of Job is devoted—were also His last, both to His own people and to the children of Also His Last men. As to the former, Elihu concludes his lesson with the words in Job 37:23: "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: He will not afflict." In regard to the latter also it is written, "But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. 3:32, 33.

One may be inclined to ask, "Why did the Lord allow this?" But we know His ways are so much higher than ours, and He knows the end from the beginning. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil." How often God's children have to learn the hard way. The old German saying is sure: "Who will not hear must feel." The gracious pleadings of the Lord pass by unheeded till each time it must be more plainly spoken. We see that first in Job 33:14, 15. Next by instruction in verse 16, and chastening in verses 19-22. Often He has to bring man up to the grave before He can tell him the gracious gospel of Christ and the glory of Christ. In many cases the one that is dealt with breaks down and gets saved. But even then some refuse to hearken so we read Prov. 1:24-31 and 29:1. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded.... Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way.

Young Christian: Volume 26, 1936, "The Coming of the Lord Draweth Nigh"

James 5:8

The times are really very solemn, and it behooves us to think seriously of our true state. There are, we fear, many—God only knows how many, who are not ready—many who would be taken aback and terribly surprised by death, or the coming of the Lord.

God grant that the reader may know what is to be ready in title and ready in state: that he may have a purged conscience and a truly exercised heart. Then he will be able to enter into the meaning of,

“And while they (the foolish virgins) went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage; and the door was shut.” (Matt. 25:10).

How solemn! Those who were ready went in, and those who were not ready were shut out. Those who have life in Christ, and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, will be ready. But the mere professor—the one who has truth, in the head and on the lip, but not in the heart—who has the lamp of profession, but not the spirit of life in Christ—he will be shut out into outer darkness, in everlasting misery and gloom, the eternal monotony of hell.

O! beloved reader, put this question home to your very inmost soul,

“Are you ready?”

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John 3:36).

Simple Testimony: Volume 20, Fervent Prayer.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—James 5:16.

“AN arrow, if it be drawn up but a little way, goes not far, but if it be pulled up to the head, flies swiftly and pierces deep. Thus, prayer if it be only dribbled forth from cold and careless lips, falls at our feet. It is the strength of ejaculation and strong desire which sends it to heaven and makes it pierce the clouds. It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they are; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet our voice may be; nor the method of our prayers, how orderly they may be; nor' the logic of our prayers, how argumentative they may be; nor even the divinity of our prayers, how good the doctrine may be; but it is the fervency of spirit that availeth much. Cold prayers are a sacrifice without fire. "BISHOP HALL.

Young Christian: Volume 23, 1933, Pray for One Another

James 5:16

There is nothing that makes us love any one so much as praying for him; and when you can do this sincerely for any one, you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil toward him.... Be daily on your knees in a solemn, deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such form, with such length, importunity and earnestness as you use for yourself; and you will find all little, ill-natured passions die away, and your heart grow great and generous.

Young Christian: Volume 25, 1935, "Seeing These Things are So"

“Be ye also patient: stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8).

The day of God’s long-suffering is rapidly drawing to a close, and the day of wrath is at hand. The wheels of Divine government are moving onward with a rapidity truly soul-subduing; human affairs are working to a point. There is an awful crisis approaching; precious souls are rushing forward along the surface of the stream of time into the boundless ocean of eternity. In a word, “the end of all things is at hand” (1 Peter 4:7).

Now, seeing these things are so, let us ask each other: How are we affected thereby? What are we doing in the midst of the scene which surrounds us? How are we discharging our fourfold responsibility to the Lord, to the church, to perishing sinners, to our own souls?

Questions and Answers in Christian Treasury, Questions and Answers: No Healing a Reflection of Assemblies?

QUES. Why is it that healing as recorded in James 5:14 is not practiced more today? Is it a reflection on the state of assemblies?

Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing 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. James 5:14, 15.

ANS. First, we notice that the one who initiates any practice of the promise to save the sick in James 5, is the sick one himself. He must then call the elders of the Church. It may be difficult to know who these elders are in the divided and weak state of the Church. Prominently, faith must be there, first in the one who calls and then in those who, as overseers or elders, have a responsibility to discern the case and whether to act or not to act. The promise is that the prayer of faith will save the sick. The power is from the prayer and not any miraculous gift of healing given to any persons.

As to the second question we say, yes, it is a reflection on the state of the assembly. Also perhaps there are few who have faith to act according to this provision.

Ed.

Questions and Answers in Christian Treasury, Questions and Answers: Please Explain "The Early and Latter Rain"

QUESTION: Please explain James 5:7, "The early and latter rain.”

ANSWER: It is God that gives the increase. The husbandman plows and plants and cultivates, then he waits with patience for the precious fruit of the earth. The rains give the increase.

Jehovah promised these rains if the Israelites were obedient (Deut. 1.1:13-14), but because of their wickedness the rains were withheld (Jer. 3:3; 5:24). On Israel's repentance they are encouraged to expect these rains again. Hosea 5:15; 6:1-3, and also Joel 2:23-32 and Zechariah 10:1, connect the fulfillment with "the day of the Lord" when Israel is restored. James 1:1 has Israel in view, and so looks on to the coming of the Lord for their blessing. The Christian waits to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-17). He looks for no signs.

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came (Acts 2:33). He formed the house of God of those one hundred and twenty and baptized them into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit came then and never went away again. He is here still, dwelling in every saved one and also in the house of God. Since then everyone that believed the gospel of his salvation has been added to that one body. The baptism of the Spirit took place then and can never be repeated. Christ is not said to have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, nor is any individual baptized with the Holy Spirit. It reads, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." Individuals are sealed and so added to the body formed at Pentecost. The Gentiles are also included in this action of the Spirit (Acts 11:15-16).

Joel's prophecy (ch. 2:28-32) was not fulfilled at Pentecost, but will be to usher in the day of the Lord, for Israel's deliverance. Peter quoted it to show that what was happening was not from men drunk with new wine, but like what Joel spoke of.

The church is not waiting for the kingdom with blessings on the earth, but for the coming of the Lord to meet us in the air—not on the earth (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

The woman in Revelation 12 is Israel of whom Christ, the man child, came. We are now in the last days (2 Tim. 3). Insubjection to God's Word increases. Paul said by the Spirit that women were to keep silence in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:34), and he adds in verse 37, "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”

Speaking with tongues is mentioned three times in Acts. The hundred and twenty spake with tongues, and were understood. The converts did not speak with tongues as far as we know. The Samaritans did not, nor the eunuch, nor Saul when he received the Spirit. The Gentiles in Acts 10:46 did to confirm Peter and those with him in admitting the Gentiles into the house of God. But notice, they magnified God; it was intelligent, not jabbering. Acts 19 is the other place, and there they prophesied; again, it was intelligent giving out the mind of God.

The gift of tongues is different in 1 Corinthians 14. Directions are given that such a gift is not to be used in the assembly, except someone can interpret (vs. 28). The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. But this so-called speaking in an unknown tongue comes on those who have given themselves up to it when they are alone or in a group without someone to interpret, when it can have no meaning. They say they cannot help it. What power is behind such ways?

In Acts 2:22, God bore witness to Jesus with power and signs and wonders, but we find in 2 Thessalonians 2:9 that one is coming after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. God's signs were at the beginning; Satan's signs are at the end. And the mystery of iniquity is working already; even now are there many antichrists (1 John 2:18). There is a demon or evil spirit behind every evil doctrine, giving it power in men's souls to hold them enthralled (1 John 4:1-3). Our only safety is to act on the Word of God. "Let everyone that nameth

the name of Christ [or, the Lord] depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

Helps by the Way: Volume 1, "Is Any Merry."

“Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.” Jas. 5:13

THERE are perhaps few simpler and more practical tests of the character and depth of what we may call “our religion,” than our ability to enter into and realize the words before us. Do you “sing psalms” when you, are “merry,” dear reader? Does your heart in its seasons of fullest joy habitually and naturally turn to God thus, to utter it 1 If it be so indeed with you, happy are you! Your joy has in it the essential element of all true joy: — perpetuity. That joy will last. None other will.

Perhaps you will think this extreme and fanatical. But at least you must own, it is Bible fanaticism. The inspired writer, — that is, God by him, — does certainly enjoin upon the merry-hearted to sing psalms. Is it indeed a strange thing with you to go to God with your joy? Your sorrow, I suppose you would think it all right to take to Him; you can understand the beginning of this verse I am quoting: “Is any among you afflicted, let him pray.” Well, is it quite unnatural, that He who is the best and surest Comforter in sorrow, should be the sharer also, and companion of our joy; of all our joy?

Alas, is the breach in Eden still so unhealed with you? Are you still so like that “elder son” in the parable, to whom music and dancing in the Father’s house are such strange things, that he must call a servant and ask what it all means?

Perhaps you too, like him, are bard at work for Him you call your Father. Perhaps you are saying, with as good a conscience as he, “Lo, these many years do I serve Thee.” Come now, honestly, — is there no hardness in the service? Are you never saying, like him, “And you Thou never gavest me a kid that I might make MERRY—with my friends”?

It is very true, this hard working, painstaking religion that so many have, too careful for the holiness of God to allow Him to kill a fatted calf for returned prodigals, — it does bring little joy, little brightness, little peace for the present, does it not, dear reader? Oh, what does your heart say to all this? You that say, you have to “keep the commandments” to “enter into life” — and can quote (as you think) Scripture for it, — but are not keeping them, — you that have to do the best you can to be saved, but, alas, are not doing it; — poor, careless professor, or sad and weary worker after a life which is “God’s gift,” — will you not ask yourself oven now, whether this is “peace with God” you have I whether this is the “rest” Christ gives to those who come to Him?

O I would I could assure you, that there is “music and dancing” in the Father’s house; nay, that it is ‘the only place where joy in its reality is to be found. You may never have known it, and yet none the less is it there. If it be not, tell me, O tell me, where is that home of joy? Can the world furnish better “mirth” than heaven? or the poor blighted earth than the One who fashioned its unfallen beauty? No, but the secret is, you are unreconciled to via, aid thus you cannot understand Him nor His love. You “sing psalms,” perhaps; but you are not “Merry.” Your religion is a sad and cheerless thing. You never did think certainly of singing psalms just because you were “merry.” Perhaps you did it because you liked the tunes. Perhaps because it was part of the decent ceremonial by which you thought God would be propitiated; and at least for the time it pacified your conscience, and male you think you were not irreligious. No matter much why it was you did it. It was not “joy in God,” as those joy, who “have received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:12, margin). You do not joy in him, because you have not received it.

Poor, wretched soul, thou art, whoever thou art. The rags of the “far country” are still upon thee! Knowest thou not, “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags?” But come, arise and come to thy Father! There is bread enough, and to spare, and thou art perishing with hunger. Take with thee words and return: say only,” I have sinned.” He against whom have been all thy sins, “will in no wise cast thee out.” The very enemies of Christ preach the gospel to thee, as they cry “This man receiveth sinners.” “This man.” Yes, verily; and yet “God manifest in the flesh.” He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. His own picture of your reception is: “his father saw him and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

Oh, when you have heard for yourself God’s own justification of His joy over you, “It was meet that we should make merry and be glad” — you, too, will find how meet it is to be merry, and what joy there is in His presence. It will no more be strange to you to carry your joy, as well as your sorrow to Him, — or when “merry,” to “sing-psalms.”

Bible Treasury: Volume 3, Scripture Query and Answer: Swearing

Q. What does James 5:12 take in? Is not swearing or taking an oath, for any purpose or in any place, positively forbidden by this scripture? And ought not a Christian, in a court of justice, as well as in his daily walk amongst men, to let his yea be yea and his nay nay, lest he fall into condemnation?

W. G.

A. The passages in James 5, as in Matt. 5, refers solely, in my judgment, to the question of light, irreverent asseveration or imprecation, so common among men, and especially in that day among Jews. The Christian was, of course, in danger of the same. No form of judicial oath, it will be noticed, is referred to. It is a. question, in Matthew expressly, of our communication, not of a declaration before a magistrate The Lord was silent before the high priest, till adjured. The oath in such a case is the solemn intervention of God's authority in those who are His ministers in the world.

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