

synagogue, but show forth the word in themselves among men. Ten years after this time the faithful witness, true to his people to the last, was slain in the temple in the scenes of riot which foreshadowed the destruction of the city and the extinction of the Jewish state.

#### EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL NOTES.

**Verse 16. Do not err.** Rev. Ver., "Be not deceived." The apostle is here placing the Jewish Christians upon their guard against the error that God is the author of sin, and responsible for the evils in the world. **My beloved brethren.** He addresses in this epistle those Jews who had embraced Jesus as the Christ, a section of the Church of which James was the recognized leader.

**17. Every good gift.** He means to show that God is the author of good, and the Father of us all, and not the fickle divinity of the heathen. **Every perfect gift.** "Perfect boon," Rev. Ver. In the original the word translated "gift" is not the same in the two clauses. One may mean "the act of giving;" the other, "the boon given." 1. God's gifts are good in their motive and their nature. **From above.** As the bubbling spring shows a higher source, so the blessings of life reveal a heavenly origin. **The father.** The word is here used in its Hebrew sense of source or origin. **Of lights.** The heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars, are here referred to. 2. As God is the author of light, he cannot be the prince of darkness in the moral world. **No variableness, neither shadow.** While the heavenly lights grow dim, and darkness and night succeed each other, there is no change in God, the Sun behind the sun. 3. Let us rest our hearts in the one stable spot in the universe, the heart of God.

**18. Of his own will.** Here is another evidence of God's goodness, that the blessing of salvation was given out of his own will, from love to men. **Begat he.** Revised Version, "Brought us forth." We are the children of God, the princes of the royal family, in the proudest position among the sons of men. **Us.** We must keep in mind that this Epistle of James was addressed especially to Jewish Christians. These, despised by their fellow Jews as followers of the Nazarene, he reminds that they are the most highly honoured of men, not only as the children of God, but also as those chosen first of all the world in the New Dispensation. **With the word of truth.** The Gospel message which brings to men a new life and new heart. **First-fruits of his creation.** The first sheaf of the harvest was consecrated to God by the Jewish farmer. So James reminds the Jewish disciples, that in the great harvest of the world's salvation they are the first-fruits.

**19. Wherefore.** Rev. Ver., "Ye know this." He appeals to their knowledge of the

facts which he has just asserted, and then turns to another subject—their conduct in the assemblies for worship, and their use of the word as taught. **Swift to hear, slow to speak.** This, though good advice for all men, refers especially to the Jewish disciples when gathered in their synagogues. We saw in the last lesson that the Jewish faction in the Church were inclined to be turbulent and headstrong. James exhorts them to an earnest listening and a careful utterance. "Speech is silver and silence is gold," says the proverb. **Slow to wrath.** Why is this injunction here given? Perhaps because there are no controversies more bitter than those on doctrinal questions of religion, and one most important was then in process of settlement—the question of Gentile membership in the Church, upon which many of the Jewish disciples had very decided opinions. 4. Let us seek the calm and sober spirit when we talk of the things of God.

**20. The wrath of man.** A passionate spirit, like that of unregenerate men, is sometimes shown by the adherents of a good cause. **Worketh not the righteousness of God.** Does not carry forward the kingdom of God, and does not help to establish righteousness in the earth. 5. How often a noble cause is injured by the intemperate zeal of its promoters! 6. Let us seek to make others righteous by being righteous.

**21. Wherefore.** The key to this verse is in the word **engrafted**, which the Rev. Ver. more properly translates implanted. The heart is compared to a ground which must be cleared and cleansed of all evil growth before the good seed of the kingdom can be planted in it. **Lay apart.** Rev. Ver., "Putting away." **Filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.** The latter clause is better translated in Rev. Ver. by "overflowing of wickedness." We must put out of our heart all evil, which in God's sight is filth and defiling, and makes the life overflow with sin; we must lay aside the contentious and self-asserting spirit rebuked in the previous verses, and **receive with meekness** the word of life. **The engrafted word.** Rev. Ver., "The implanted word." Not here like a graft on a tree, but like a seed in the soil. 7. We should take the word of life to our hearts as the good ground takes the seed into its bosom.

**22. Doers of the word.** To be a doer is more than to do, for it is "to make the doing an occupation, a business." 8. It should be our first work in life to put into practice the principles of God's word. **Not hearers only.** That is, hearers who do not obey. 9. Are there not many such sitting in the pews, and listening to the word? **Deceiving.** Rev. Ver., "deluding." **Your own selves.** People imagine that there is some saving virtue in church-going and Bible-reading, but they are self-deceived. 10. No man was ever yet saved merely because he loved to hear good preaching.