

nigh to you. In the influences of his Spirit, and in a direct care over the life. **Cleanse your hands.** Since it is only the pure who come near to God, therefore this exhortation follows the preceding one. The hands are named as the instruments of action, and the sentence means, "Let your lives be righteous." **Purify your hearts.** The heart as the seat of emotion and will, must be made holy, that God may enter into fellowship with man. **Ye double-minded.** Those whose affections are divided between God and the world.

**9. Be afflicted.** The sins for which sorrow should be felt are specified in the earlier verses of the chapter, selfishness, ambition, worldiness, and pride. **3.** Let us remember that these exhortations are addressed to Christians, and consider whether we may not need them. **Laughter...to mourning.** Those who should feel their sins the most deeply are often the most frivolous and careless of their condition. **4.** Those only have a right to joyfulness who have found forgiveness for their sins.

**10. Humble yourselves.** Do not blind your eyes to your true condition, but see your state as neglecters of duty, and seek a lowly place before God. **He will lift you up.** He will lift you from penitence to pardon; from affliction to rejoicing; from alienation to acceptance. **5.** The highest joy is that of sins forgiven and peace made with God.

**11. Speak not evil.** With this verse opens a new subject, a warning against evil speaking and the censorious spirit. **One of another.** There are times when criticism becomes a duty, but a spirit of fault-finding is never in harmony with the Gospel. **His brother.** The evil rebuked is especially severe judgments upon fellow-Christians. **6.** How much easier it is to judge others than ourselves! **Speaketh evil of the law.** The law of Christ, "the royal law," "the law of liberty;" that law by which Christ's followers profess to live is here referred to. **Judgeth the law.** That is, he judges not only as to facts, but as to motives and principles, and takes upon himself to decide their application. **Not a doer.** Those who devote themselves to judging others generally find little time to apply the requirements of the Gospel to themselves. **But a judge.** And our business is not to set up a tribunal and act as judge, but to keep the law.

**12. There is one lawgiver.** Rev. Ver., "one only is the lawgiver." The Lord Jesus, who founded his Church, is its only legislator; and no body of men, council, or convention, has the right to add to, or to alter, his laws as given in the Gospel. **Who is able to save.** Rev. Ver., "even he who is able to save." A judge must have power to enforce his decisions, to give justice to the innocent and penalty to the guilty; no man possesses that power under the Gospel; but it is in the hand of Christ alone; so we should leave all judgment to him. **7.** Let us leave ourselves and our fellow-men in the safe hand of the just and the supreme judge.

**13. Go to.** A phrase like our "come now." **Ye that say.** He is now addressing those who do not recognize the divine intervention in human affairs. **To-day or to-morrow.** Forming their plans as if the human will were the only one to be considered. Every element in the case, the going, the staying, the business, the gain, the life itself, is dependent upon another will than man's. **Get gain.** Probably in this is a reference to the trading habits of the Jews, as marked then as now.

**14. Ye know not what shall be.** How true, yet how constantly forgotten! No man knows that he will live a day, yet men plan and talk as if expecting to live forever. **It is even as a vapor.** Rev. Ver., "Ye are a vapor." Not our lives, but ourselves, are like the mist, suddenly rising and as suddenly passing away. **Vanishing away.** The works of men may remain for a time, the building, the painting, the sculpture, the institution, but the hand which formed them soon passes away. **8.** Let our short life, therefore, be spent upon the best and most enduring results.

**15. Ye ought to say.** Not that the words should be upon your tongue, but that the thought should be ever in our heart. **If the Lord will.** Our plans should take into account the element of God's providence, and our hearts should be submissive to his will.

**16. Ye rejoice in your boastings.** Rev. Ver., "Ye glory in your vauntings." You make your boast and show your pride in that which has no real foundation, because it rests not upon God's will. **All such boasting** ("All such glorying," Rev. Ver.) **is evil.** All confidence in self apart from God, in the wisdom of our schemes, and in the vigor of our execution of them, except it seeks in them to do God's will, is evil, and will come to nought.

**17. To him that knoweth to do good.** While the sentence contains the statement of a great principle, its particular application here is to the evil already referred to, the forgetfulness of God in our ordinary life. **To him it is sin.** He who, knowing that God reigns, fails to recognize him, and lives as though there were no God, commits a sin. Yet the proposition may have a general application to sins of omission in general.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. James 4. 10.

#### OUTLINE.

1. As our Friend, v. 7-10.
2. As our Judge, v. 11-12.
3. As our Guide, v. 13-17.

#### HOME READINGS.

- M. Living as in God's sight. James 4. 7-17.
- T. Turning to God. Isa. 5. 1-13.
- W. The true repentance. Isa. 1. 10-20.
- Th. Righteousness an iniquity. Ezek. 18. 23-32.
- F. Faithfulness to God. 1 Pet. 5. 1-10.
- S. The boasting of to-morrow. Luke 12. 13-23.
- S. The old man and the new. Eph. 4. 17-32.