

## THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

## CHAP. I.

UNTO the twelve tribes scattered abroad,  
 James, an apostle of the living God,  
 And of the Lord Christ Jesus, salutation.  
 My brethren, when you fall into temptation  
 Of divers kinds, rejoice, as men that know  
 From trial of your faith doth patience flow.  
 But let your patience have its full effect,  
 That you may be entire, without defect.  
 If any of you lack wisdom, let him cry  
 To God, and he will give it lib'rally,  
 And not upbraid. But let him ask in faith,  
 Not wavering, for he that wavereth,  
 Unto a wave o' th' sea I will compare,  
 Driv'n with the wind and tossed here and there.  
 For let not such a man himself deceive,  
 To think that he shall from the Lord receive.  
 A double-minded man most surely lacketh  
 Stability in all he undertaketh.  
 Let ev'ry brother of a low degree  
 Rejoice in that he is advanc'd, but he  
 That's rich in being made low, for he shall pass  
 Away, as doth the flow'r of the grass.  
 For as the grass, soon as the sun doth rise,  
 Is scorch'd by reason of the heat, and dies;  
 Its flow'r fades, and it retains no more  
 The beauteous comeliness it had before,  
 So fades the rich man, mangr'd all his store. }  
 The man is blest that doth endure temptation  
 For when he's try'd, the crown of God's salvation,  
 The which the Lord hath promised to give  
 To them that love him, that man shall receive.  
 Let no man be possess'd with a persuasion,  
 To say, when he falls under a temptation,  
 That God's the cause; for with no evil can  
 God be tempted, nor tempts he any man.  
 But every man is tempted when he's drawn  
 Away, and by his lusts prevail'd upon;  
 Then when lust hath conceiv'd, it ushereth  
 In sin, and sin when finished brings death.  
 Err not, my brethren, whom I dearly love,  
 Each good and perfect gift is from above,  
 Down from th' original of lights descending,  
 With whom's no change, nor shadow thereto tending,  
 According to his own good pleasure, he }  
 Begat us with the word of truth, that we  
 Should as the first fruits of his creatures be. }  
 Wherefore, beloved brethren, I entreat  
 You to be swift to hear, and slow to speak,  
 And slow to wrath, for wrath cannot incline  
 The sons of men to righteousness divine.  
 Wherefore avoiding ev'ry filthiness,  
 And superfluity of naughtiness:  
 Receive with meekness the engrafted word,  
 Which can salvation to your souls afford.  
 But be ye doers of the word each one,  
 And not deceive yourselves to hear alone;  
 For he that hears the word and doth it not,  
 Is like unto a man that hath forgot

What kind of man he was, tho' in a glass  
 He just before beheld his nat'ral face.  
 But whoso minds the law of liberty  
 In its perfection, and continually  
 Abides therein, forgets not what he's heard,  
 But doth the work and therein hath reward.  
 If any man among you seem to be  
 Religious, he deceives himself if he  
 Doth not his tongue as with a bit restrain;  
 And all that man's religion is but vain.  
 Religion, pure and undefil'd, which is  
 Acceptable before the Lord, is this:  
 To visit widows and the fatherless,  
 In time of their affliction or distress;  
 And so to regulate his conversation,  
 As to be spotless in his generation.

## CHAP. II.

Faith of the Lord of glory, Jesus Christ,  
 Doth with respect of persons not consist;  
 For if, my brethren, when there shall come in  
 To your assembly one with a gold ring,  
 In goodly clothes, and there shall also be  
 Another man that's meanly cloth'd, and ye  
 Shall have respect to him in rich attire,  
 And say unto him, come thou, sit up higher;  
 And bid the poor man stand or sit below, }  
 Are ye not partial then, and plainly show, }  
 That you do judge amiss in what you do? }  
 Harken, my brethren, hath not God elected  
 The poor, who by this world have been rejected;  
 Yet rich in faith, and of that kingdom heirs,  
 Which God will give his foll'wers to be theirs?  
 But you, my brethren, do the poor despise.  
 Do not the rich men o'er you tyrannise;  
 And hale ye to their courts; that worthy name  
 By which you're call'd do not they blaspheme?  
 Then if ye do the royal law fulfil,  
 To love thy neighbour as thyself, 'tis well,  
 According to the scripture; but if ye  
 Shall have respect to persons, ye shall be  
 Guilty of sin, and by the law condemn'd.  
 As such who have its righteousness contemn'd.  
 For he that shall but in one point offend,  
 Breaks the whole law, whate'er he may pretend.  
 For he that doth forbid adultery,  
 Forbids likewise all acts of cruelty.  
 Now tho' thou be not an adulterer,  
 Yet if thou kill, thou shalt thy judgment bear.  
 So speak and do as those men that shall be  
 Judg'd by the perfect law of liberty:  
 For he shall judgment without mercy know; }  
 That to his neighbour doth no mercy show; }  
 And mercy triumphs against judgment too. }  
 Brethren what profit is't if a man saith  
 That he hath faith, and hath not works; can faith  
 Save him? If any of the brotherhood  
 Be destitute of clothes or daily food,  
 And one of you shall say, Depart in peace,  
 Be warmed or be fill'd, ne'ertheless,

Ye do not furnish them with what they need,  
 What boots it? Thus faith without works is dead.  
 Yea may a man say, thou dost faith profess,  
 And I good works, to me thy faith express  
 Without thy works, and I will plainly show  
 My faith unto thee by the works I do.  
 Thou dost believe there is one God, 'tis true,  
 The devils do believe and tremble too.  
 But wilt thou know, vain man, that faith is dead,  
 Which with good works is not accompany'd.  
 Was not our father Abraham justify'd  
 By works, and by the same his faith was try'd;  
 When he his Isaae to the altar brought;  
 Seest thou how with his works his faith then wrought?  
 And with his works he perfected his faith?  
 And so the scripture was fulfill'd, which saith,  
 Abraham believed God, and 'twas imputed  
 For righteousness, and he God's friend reputed.  
 Thus may you see, that by works ev'ry one  
 Is justify'd, and not by faith alone.  
 Thus was the harlot Rahab justify'd  
 By works, when she the messengers did hide, }  
 And by another way their feet did guide.  
 For as the body's dead without the spirit,  
 So faith without works never can inherit.

CHAP. III.

Affect not, brethren, superiority,  
 As knowing that we shall receive thereby  
 The greater condemnation in the end:  
 For we in many things do all offend.  
 Who doth not with his tongue offend, he can  
 Guide his whole body, he's a perfect man.  
 Behold, in horses' mouths we brides put,  
 To rule and turn their bodies quite about.  
 Behold likewise the ships, which tho' they be  
 Of mighty bulk, and thro' the raging sea  
 Are driv'n by the strength of winds, yet they  
 By a small helm the pilot's will obey.  
 Ev'n so the tongue of man, which tho' it be  
 But a small member, in a high degree  
 It boasts of things. Behold, we may remark:  
 How great a matter's kindled by a spark.  
 The tongue's a fire, a world of ill, which plac'd  
 Among the members, often has disgrac'd  
 All the whole body, firing the whole frame  
 Of nature, and is kindl'd by hell flame.  
 All kind of beasts and birds that can be nam'd,  
 Serpents and fishes, are and have been tam'd  
 By mankind; but the tongue can no man tame,  
 A stubborn evil full of deadly bane.  
 We therewith God the Father bless, and we  
 Therewith curse men made like the Deity:  
 Blessing and cursing from the same mouth flow,  
 These things, my brethren, ought not to be so.  
 Is any fountain of so strange a nature,  
 At once to send forth sweet and bitter water?  
 Can olives, brethren, on a fig-tree grow, }  
 Or figs on vines? no more can water flow  
 From the same fountain sweet and bitter too. }  
 He that's endu'd with wisdom and discretion  
 Amongst you, let that man by the profession  
 Of meekness, wisely give a demonstration,  
 Of all his works, from a good conversation.

But if your hearts are full of bitterness  
 And strife, boast not, nor do the truth profess.  
 This wisdom is not from above descending,  
 But earthly, sensual, and to evil tending:  
 For where there's strife and envying there's confusion  
 And ev'ry evil work in the conclusion.  
 But the true wisdom that is from above,  
 Is, in the first place, pure, then full of love,  
 Then gentle and entreated easily,  
 Next merciful, without partiality, }  
 Full of good fruits, without hyypoerisy. }  
 And what is more, the fruits of righteousness  
 Is sown in peace, of them that do make peace.

CHAP. IV.

From whence come wars and fights, come they not hence,  
 Ev'n from th' inordinate concupiscence  
 That in your members prompts to variance?  
 You lust and have not, kill and desire to have;  
 But ne'ertheless obtain not what you crave.  
 With war and fighting ye contend, yet have not  
 The things which you desire, because you crave not;  
 Ye crave but don't receive, the reason's just,  
 Ye crave amiss to spend it on your lust.  
 You that live in adultery, know not ye  
 The friendship of the world is enmity  
 With God? He is God's enemy therefore  
 That doth the friendship of the world adore.  
 Do ye think that th' scripture saith in vain,  
 The spirit that lusts to hate, doth in you reign?  
 But he bestows more grace, wherefore he says,  
 God scorns the proud, but doth the humble raise.  
 Unto the Lord therefore submissive be,  
 Resist the devil and he'll from you flee.  
 Draw nigh to God, and he'll to you draw nigh.  
 Make clean your hands you sinners, purify  
 Your hearts you double-minded, weep and mourn,  
 And be afflicted, let your laughter turn  
 To sorrow, and your joy to sadness: stoop  
 Before the Lord, and he will lift you up.  
 My brethren, speak not evil of each other;  
 He that doth judge and speak ill of his brother,  
 Doth judge and speak ill of the law; therefore  
 If thou dost judge the law, thou art no more  
 A doer of the same, but dost assume  
 The judgment-seat, and art thyself become  
 A judge thereof. There is but one law-giver, }  
 That's able to destroy and to deliver; }  
 Who then art thou that dost condemn thy neighbour?  
 Go to now, you that say, to such a place  
 To-morrow will we go, and for the space  
 Of one whole year, or so, will there remain,  
 And buy and sell, and get great store of gain:  
 Whereas ye know not what a day may do.  
 For what's the life of man? Ev'n like unto  
 A vapour, which, tho' for a while it may  
 Appear, it quickly vanisheth away.  
 So that ye ought to say, If God permit  
 Us life and health, we will accomplish it.  
 But now ye glory in your confidence,  
 Such glorying is of evil consequence.  
 He therefore that doth know, and doth not act  
 The thing that's good, doth guilt thereby contract.

## CHAP. V.\*

Go to now, O ye rich men, howl and cry,  
 Because of your approaching misery:  
 Your riches are corrupted, and the moths  
 Have ent'red, and have eaten up your clothes.  
 Your gold and silver's canker'd, and the rust  
 Thereof, shall be an evidence that's just  
 Against you, and like fire your flesh devour:  
 Against the last days ye have heap'd up store,  
 The hire of them that reaped down your field,  
 The which by you is wrongfully withheld,  
 Cries, and the voice thereof hath reach'd the ears  
 Ev'n of the God of sabbath, and he hears.  
 Your lives in pleasure ye on earth have led,  
 And as in days of slaughter nourished  
 Your wanton hearts, and have condemn'd and slain  
 The just, and he doth not resist again.  
 Be patient therefore, brethren, ev'n unto  
 The coming of the Lord: behold, ev'n so  
 The husbandman expecteth patiently  
 The precious increase of the earth to see,  
 With patience waiting till he doth obtain  
 The showers of early and of latter rain.  
 So be ye patient, fixing stedfastly  
 Your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.  
 Grieve not each other, brethren, lest ye bear  
 The condemnation; † lo! the judge stands near.  
 The prophets, brethren, who all heretofore  
 In the name of the Lord their witness bore,

Take for examples in their sufferings  
 And patience: they that endure such things,  
 Ye know are counted blest. Have ye not read  
 Of Job, how patiently he suffered?  
 Have ye not seen in him what was God's end;  
 How he doth pity and great love extend?  
 My brethren, but above all things forbear,  
 By heav'n or earth, or otherwise to swear;  
 But let your yea be yea, your nay be nay,  
 Lest ye become reproveable I say.  
 Let him sing psalms that's merry; he that's griev'd,  
 Let him by prayer seek to be reliev'd.  
 If any of you by sickness be distress'd,  
 Let him the elders of the church request  
 That they would come and pray for him a while;  
 Anointing him in the Lord's name with oil;  
 So shall the pray'r that is of faith restore  
 The sick, and God shall raise him as before.  
 And all th' offences which he hath committed  
 Shall be forgiv'n, and he shall be acquitted.  
 Confess your faults each one unto his brother,  
 And put up supplications for each other,  
 That so you may be heal'd; the fervency  
 Of just men's prayers prevails effectually.  
 Elias was a man as frail as we are,  
 And he was earnest with the Lord in pray'r,  
 That there might be no rain, and for the space  
 Of three years and six months no rain there was:  
 And afterward, when he again made suit,  
 The heav'n gave rain, the earth brought forth her fruit.  
 If any one shall from the truth desert,  
 And one, my brethren, shall that man convert;  
 Let him be sure, that he that doth recall  
 The poor backsliding sinner from his fall,  
 Shall save a soul from death, and certainly  
 Shall hide a multitude of sins thereby.

\* By a typographical error, in the original edition, it is misprinted  
 CHAP. XLVI.

† How admirably does Bunyan enlarge upon this in his 'Peaceable  
 Principles yet true.'