

COMMENTARY ON
THE CATHOLIC
EPISTLE OF JAMES BY
OECUMENIUS (6TH
CENTURY)

John Litteral



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INTRODUCTION

Oecumenius has been one of my favorite Bible commentators for decades. I remember twenty years ago when I first read the English translation of his commentary on the book of Revelation that I admired the way that he explained and interpreted the words of Scripture. After all of these years I was disappointed to learn that other commentaries by Oecumenius have never been translated into English nor published, with the exception of excerpts that can be found in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Sacred Scripture series. I plan to change that, starting with this commentary by Oecumenius on the Epistle of James.

When it comes to the identity of Oecumenius, there are different conclusions that scholars have come to. Not only about who he was, but when he wrote his commentaries, and which ones are actually his, and which ones are not. There have been manuscript discoveries of his commentary on Revelation that have given evidence that the author of that commentary on Revelation wrote in the seventh century, perhaps very early 600's. Some think that Oecumenius lived in the sixth and seventh centuries. Not all scholars agree that the Oecumenius who wrote that commentary on Revelation is the same Oecumenius who wrote the other commentaries on the New Testament, but some do think it is the one and same Oecumenius.

It has been thought for a long time that Oecumenius was bishop of Tricca in ancient Thessaly. Others think he was a lay person from Isauria in Asia Minor. Herman Charles (H.C.) Hoskier, who published the first critical Greek text of the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius had this to say...

It is, therefore, not inappropriate to bring to public attention the text and commentary of OECUMENIUS, who flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries, and whose commentary on the Apocalypse has been missing for a long period, although some of his commentaries on other New Testament books have come down to us. Attributed generally to the tenth century, the document which we now publish itself gives us the correct date (preceding Andreas 563–614 A.D. and

Arethas 860-939 A.D.), and we can now place Oecumenius, Greek Bishop of Tricca, towards the beginning of the seventh century.¹

While H.C Hoskier and some others believed that the same Oecumenius who wrote the commentary on Revelation is the same one who wrote the other New Testament commentaries, others, such as William C. Weinrich does not think it is the same Oecumenius...

Questions concerning the identity, date and provenance and literary output of Oecumenius continue to elicit various conclusions. In 1532 Donatus Veronensis published under the name of Oecumenius commentaries on the book of Acts, the seven Catholic Epistles and the letters of Paul. Although some scholia from the commentary on the Pauline epistles may be authentic to Oecumenius, the remainder of these commentaries have been demonstrated to be falsely ascribed to him.²

In my opinion, it is probably the same Oecumenius who is responsible for the commentary on the book of Revelation and the commentaries on the entire New Testament with the exception of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). His commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's Epistles relied heavily upon the homilies by John Chrysostom and other writings from the Early Church Fathers that preceded Oecumenius, so much so that those commentaries, especially of Paul's Epistles, are in the manner of a catena rather than an ordinary Bible commentary. Greek catenae were popular in the early Greek Church. The word "catena" means "chain", which is a chain of quotes by different writers that create a running commentary on Scripture. A common Bible commentary is when a writer will comment on each passage of Scripture, while the catena is when a compiler will take, often, direct quotes from multiple writers and place them after each passage of Scripture to serve as commentary that explains the meaning and interpretation of each given passage. By the time of Oecumenius in the sixth century, those who wrote commentaries on the Bible were somewhat compilers themselves, because it was a sign of orthodoxy to draw from earlier Church Fathers when expounding Scripture. Even ordinary Bible commentaries by individual writers were in many ways catenae, because even though many of them may not have copied word for word from earlier Church Fathers, they would often depend on them and preserve what their predecessors wrote. Especially by the time of the ninth and tenth centuries, just after the time of what most consider to be the period of the Early Church Fathers, those writers

who made commentaries on the Bible rarely ever wrote anything original in their commentaries but would write in the manner of a catena without necessarily appearing to be a catena outwardly; but with examination, it would be obvious that they drew heavily upon others, not entirely quoting word of word, but slightly rephrasing excerpts. In this day and time some would consider that flirting with plagiarism, while back in those days it was considered sound orthodox exposition on Scripture, and no one took offense to it. While the Greek Church produced commentaries in the form of catenae, the Latin Church evolved in a similar fashion by creating glossed Bibles such as the *Glossa Ordinaria*, which was the standard “Study Bible” for centuries during and after the twelfth century.

As for the commentaries by Oecumenius, it is outwardly obvious that he took the role as a compiler of quotes for his commentaries on Paul’s Epistles, while his commentaries on the Catholic Epistles, even though he did draw upon earlier Church Fathers, those commentaries are in the manner of an ordinary commentary. Here is an excerpt from the introduction to the commentaries by Oecumenius from the *Patrologia Graeca* (Greek Church Fathers collection) concerning the topic...

Moreover, it is clear who the author of the commentaries is; it is evident that he is not the primary author of all the material, since in the Acts of the Apostles and in the letters of Paul, many things are summarized here, which Chrysostom had treated more extensively. Furthermore, the opinions of many others are referenced, sometimes with only the names placed in the text, and sometimes with additional notes in the margin: which we have entirely left as they were found in the example. However, regarding the Apocalypse, a certain author is clearly indicated, with the names of those from whom he had extracted some things added at the beginning. Moreover, in all these commentaries, the opinions of various authors are frequently presented, with their names suppressed, I do not know whether due to the negligence of the copyists. Nevertheless, it is evident from this that you often find something contrary to what had preceded. And let us bring forth an example for the sake of a word: when he previously said in the Apocalypse that Babylon is Constantinople, not the world nor any other city, afterwards he states and proves in many places that it is the world, and no particular city. Moreover, although in the earlier books no one has prefixed his name, as is the custom among the Greeks, never publishing under his own name what he has not elaborated by his own effort, but rather collecting certain patches from various sources: yet from evident conjectures we gather that Oecumenius is

partly the author of these, partly the collector who, however, sometimes, when he presents his opinion after others, has also added his own name, lest anyone attribute it to others, which he himself did not consider worthy to be compared with their opinions. However, he has extracted many things from Chrysostom, whose name he only took care to add when he was reciting his words, but not when he was referring to his opinion in more concise terms. As for Oecumenius, who has transmitted all these things to us, except for the Apocalypse, as they are now published, we gather this from the following arguments. First, in the last words of the commentaries on the Epistle to the Colossians, with his own name prefixed in the margin, he writes in this manner: "Since I have not found the scholia of the blessed John on the Epistle to the Colossians in an unbroken form, I have written them as I could. Therefore, if anything light or worthy of reproach has been found in them, let him who reads know that such a lapse is mine." Again, in the fourth chapter to the Ephesians, he has these words, added in the margin under the name of Oecumenius, "Notice what I also thought: for it was not given to consider what belongs to the saint himself." Understanding Chrysostom, for which reason the name of John was added in the margin. Therefore, Oecumenius sufficiently shows that he is a collector of commentaries on all the Epistles, yet he has made no mention of himself elsewhere, because he had obtained an entire copy of Chrysostom. Again, the explanation of this is placed more frequently after the explanations of others, sometimes providing a reason for those things that were previously mentioned, often adding, "It seems to me that this can also be said." What if it is said in this way, according to the understanding that Saint John also holds: or even citing the names of Cyril or Basil or others. Furthermore, this can be seen in many places, some of which we will enumerate here. To the Romans, in the fifth chapter at those words, "Sin is not imputed where there is no law"; in the ninth chapter at those words, "Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed"; in the first to the Corinthians 6, when it says, "He who engages in sexual immorality sins against his own body"; in chapter 7, "I have no command of the Lord concerning virgins"; in chapter 15, "When he delivers the kingdom to God the Father." And likewise, "As if God were all in all"; to the Ephesians 2, "According to the prince of the power of the air"; in chapter 4, "From whom the whole body is fitted and joined together." In chapter 4, "Let not the sun go down on your anger," where he says: "I have heard some interpret it this way." To the second Thessalonians 3, "Furthermore, may the Lord direct your hearts." To the Hebrews 10, "Having a shadow of the law of good things to come"; in chapter 12, "Who for the joy set before him"; and in many other places as well. Since it is therefore

more clearly evident that the Oecumenius collected commentaries on the Epistles of Paul, we believe that he did the same in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Catholic Epistles, although he did not add his name there: since the phrasing is entirely his, except that he had fewer to copy there, the names of whom we scarcely ever find added in the Greek manuscript, neither in the text of the letter nor in the margin.³

As for the commentaries on the Catholic Epistles by Oecumenius, some commentators on the Bible after him from the Greek Church relied heavily upon him, most especially Theophylact (1055-1107 A.D.), who was a Byzantine Archbishop of Ohrid and Bulgaria. As a matter of fact, Theophylact's commentaries on the Catholic Epistles are somewhat slightly condensed versions of Oecumenius. Some sources say that their commentaries are "identical", but that is not entirely true. These commentaries by Oecumenius and Theophylact are not carbon copies of each others, but Theophylact was not shy about copying at length word for word from Oecumenius. Theophylact did slightly condense the content by Oecumenius when he could, and he would rephrase some things. But by today's standards it would be considered blatant plagiarism. But like I said above, back then, this was considered to be a noble preservation of traditional orthodoxy. It is said that imitation is the best form of flattery.

The English translation of this commentary by Oecumenius on the epistle of James comes from the *Patrologia Graeca (Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Greek Series)* volume 118.

1 The complete commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse : now printed for the first time from manuscripts at Messina, Rome, Salonika, and Athos, Ann Arbor : University of Michigan, Hoskier, H. C. (Herman Charles), 1864-1938, editor. Page 4

2 William C. Weinrich, *Greek Commentaries on Revelation*, InterVarsity Press, 2011, Pages xix-xx

3 *Patrologia Graeca* (*Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca*) 118. Oecumenius v.1: *Commentary on Acts, Commentary on Paul's letters, Commentary on the Catholic letters*. Pages 16-17

OECUMENIUS

on the Epistle of James

HYPOTHESIS OF THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JAMES

James writes to those who have been dispersed from the twelve tribes and have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. He writes a letter suitable for teaching, addressing the variety of temptations, distinguishing which come from God and which arise from the human heart: that faith should be demonstrated not only in word but also in deed, and that it is not the hearers of the law who are justified, but the doers. He also instructs that the rich should not be given precedence over the poor in the assembly of the church, but rather be rebuked, as they are haughty and proud. Finally, he comforts those who are wronged, urging them to be patient until the coming of the Judge, where he also teaches about the benefit of patience, using Job as an example. He instructs that the elders should be called for the sick and that they should strive to convert those who have been led astray or who are in error: for he says there is a reward from the Lord for the remission of sins. And thus he concludes the Epistle.

Why the following Epistles are called Catholic.

These are called Catholic, that is, universal, or circular, because they are not specifically dedicated to one people or city (as the Apostle Paul does to the Romans or Corinthians) but rather to all the faithful universally, whether Jews who were dispersed, as also Peter does, or to all Christians living under the same faith.

SECTIONS OF THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES OF JAMES

1. On patience and faith, nothing is to be judged or discerned, and on the modesty of the mind towards the wealthy: in which he also discusses the desire that is within us and the affections that follow it, which is not a cause from God: for if there is anything good in us, he says it comes from Him.
2. Of humility and innocence and good action which leads to happiness, and of knowledge and moderation of speech.
3. From charity, let each one act without regard to person according to the law.
4. That man is justified not by faith alone, but also by works, and not by one separately, but together by both.
5. That which a hasty and disordered tongue destroys when it has been seized by it: which must be overcome for the praise and glory of God: in which it also deals with good conduct and without strife of one against another, out of the desire for glory, because of human wisdom: and about divine wisdom: and that quarrels, seditions, and enmity against God arise from negligence and the love of pleasures, and about repentance for salvation, and about not judging one's neighbor.
6. That the steps of man are directed not by man, but by God: in which it is also discussed regarding the avarice of the rich, and their delights in this world, and about the just judgment of God.
7. On patience and tolerance of afflictions, and on truth; in which special exhortations are presented suitable for each according to faith: and that one must serve the salvation of one's neighbor.

CHAPTER 1

With humility and faith, without hesitation or judgment, from the modesty of the mind to the wealthy: in which he also discusses the desire that is within us and

the affections that follow it, which is not caused by God: for if there is anything good in us, it is said to be from Him.

1:1 *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion, greetings. Rejoice, my brothers, when you fall into various temptations,*

Indeed, the Son is of the Father, truly the Lord. Therefore, if the servant is equally of the Father and the Son, the Son is equal to the Father in honor, and in essence and in operation. But above all worldly dignity, the Lord's apostles, boasting that they are servants of Christ, want this to be a sign of themselves, both in speaking and writing and teaching.

Rejoice. He saw these godly sorrows and temptations as commendable and worthy of joy. For these are indeed a strong bond, and an increase of charity and remorse. Hence it is also said: "Son, if you come to serve God, prepare your soul for temptation." (Sirach 2:1) And Christ said: "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer." (Jn. 16:33) and: "Narrow and sorrowful is the path that leads to life." (Matt. 7:14) For neither without struggle and training can one obtain earthly or divine crowns. But, out of humility about himself, he calls them *brothers*, not sons. Moreover, for the virtuous and diligent, temptations or afflictions are a source of the highest joy, although their testing is evident through them. The trial, however, leads to perfect work. But someone will say: If temptations do this, how does Christ teach us to ask God in prayer not to be led into temptation? (Matt. 6:13) We therefore say that there are twofold temptations or afflictions. Some have their origin from ourselves; others, however, are brought to us by God for the sake of practice and the declaration of victory. There are two things that have their origin from us. Indeed, some, because of their unreasonable courage, which we call reckless boldness, are taught by the Lord to observe this: that the spirit is indeed ready: But that readiness is extinguished in the midst of struggles, nor does it yield to good in those who use it: but some are brought because of sin, as the destruction of the Sodomites. We should flee these temptations as much as we can, by living without sin. Moreover, those things that are from God, such as those that happened to Job or Abraham, should not be avoided, but rather, if it can be done in any way, they should be embraced through patience and thanksgiving. For God, who tempts, knows how to do

this for the benefit and declaration of victory. He said that there are various temptations, because some come from God, as we have said, while others come from ourselves.

1:3-4 *Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience; but let patience have its perfect work, that your work may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

Testing, he says, that which is searched, that which is received, that which is pure: as it is written: “tried in the fire, purified in the earth.” (Ps. 11:7) But how does *testing produce patience*? Because that faith is proven to be pure, which is perfected through patience and endurance of the conditions inflicted. For it is the work of a truly faithful person to receive such desires with patience and thanksgiving: just as Job behaved, who gave thanks in all things (Job 1:1).

"that your work may be perfect." Notice that he did not say it in the indicative. The work is perfect, but through the imperative, *let [patience] have*. For he does not preach that virtue which preceded it, but that which comes next, and he has determined how it should be done.

1:5-8 *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without blame, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven by the winds and swept away by force. For let not that man think that he will receive anything from the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

He says wisdom is the cause of the perfect work. “*let him ask of God.*” Since he knows that the proof of faith and the endurance in afflictions is not the work of any men, but of those who are wise according to God, therefore he urges those who strive to achieve these things towards the pursuit of wisdom.

“he who wavers.” For if he trusts, let him ask; but if he wavers, let him not even ask, because he who does not trust that he will receive, will not obtain.

“like a wave of the sea.” For he who wavers, doubtful about his requests, after having endured for a little while, immediately withdraws. But this happens to him from pride,

that he quickly despairs because he does not follow through on what he asks for: since he thinks great things of himself and deserves to be rejected in the request he makes. Moreover, he behaves in the opposite way to one who is of modest mind.

"For let not man think that," namely, one who asks out of pride and carelessness. Remove from yourself the duplicity of mind, and never waver in your mind when you ask something from God, saying to yourself, "How can I ask and receive anything from the Lord, since I have sinned against Him so often?" Do not think of these things, but turn to the Lord with all your heart, and ask of Him without hesitation, and you will know the multitude of His mercy, which will never forsake you, but will fulfill the request of your soul. For God is not like men, who holds grudges against one another, but He forgets, and He has compassion on His creation.

"A man of double mind." He calls a man of double mind unstable and not firm, who is never firmly established for the future, nor securely for the present: but is led here and there and carried about: always moving to the future, but never enduring the present. But he also compared such a thing to a wave of the sea, which has neither firmness nor stability: and to a flower of grass, which likewise does not persist, but fades away at the same time as the sun rises. Consider, however, that he did not say that such a one is likened to a grass, but to a flower of grass, signifying by the flower a very short time. But since he knows that modesty of mind gives birth and is a nurturer of all things, and without this there is nothing excellent in upright and scholarly men, therefore he adds: *Let the brother who is humble glory*, etc. (James 1:9) But how and why was another called double-minded? That he is not established for the present life nor for the future: for life is also called soul, when it is said: "all that a man has will he give as a ransom for his life." (Job 2:4)

"In all his ways." He means the ways of the mind's emotions by which hope is raised, whether useful or useless, according to what David says: "And you have known all my ways." (Ps. 138:4)

1:9-11 *Let the brother who is humble glory, in his exaltation: But the rich, in that he is made humble: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls,*

and the beauty of its appearance perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Because he likens the wavering, to a wave driven by the wind, who, being inflated, is exalted together with the winds of the sea, but before he is raised, he prostrates himself and gives himself up: but this very thing happens to the wavering one, who, in spite of his pride, does not confirm his petitions in any of the things that are necessary;

therefore he adds: *"Let the brother who is humble glory."* As if he were saying: Whoever wishes to ask for something, let him first ask for what is right, and He will not refuse those who ask. For of these is the kingdom of God and righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) Then let him be tolerant in the petition of such, and let him not depart immediately when he has prayed a little, for that is arrogant; but let him wait until he receives, by enduring with humility.

"Who is humble, in his exaltation." From humility according to God, all good is bestowed upon us. He calls the rich arrogant and proud, whom he also calls humble, because by the very act of being elevated, he is brought low.

"But the rich, in that he is made humble." It would have been more fitting for him to say, "But let the rich man be ashamed in his humility," but avoiding saying it in an offensive manner, he added this instead: *"and the beauty of its appearance."* Appearance, that is, face or countenance, He spoke in a critical manner: for this is said of man alone and not of other animals; however, among the quadrupeds, the snout is not called a face. but on birds it is a beak.

"in his ways." He speaks of ways or paths of the rich, in prosperous success, or business, among which he unexpectedly receives a change to unhappiness and misfortune.

1:12-16 *Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him. Let no one who is tempted say he is tempted by God: for God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempts no man. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own conscience. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin: but sin, when it is conceived, brings forth death. Be not deceived, my beloved brethren.*

It seems that this blessed one has made use of the discourse about temptations more securely, in which he says, "Rejoice, my brethren, when you fall into divers temptations." (James 1:2) Then, remembering the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:12), which commands what is best, namely that we pray that we may not fall into temptation, he repeats the discourse: according to what is proposed here, showing what temptation is sent by God, namely, which is also a source for joy, and which is from our will. Yet it can rightly be said that the Lord and God Jesus Christ, looking to the weakness of human nature, admonishes the disciples to flee temptations, since they were still more badly affected: which he also did to others in many places, meanwhile abstaining from those who perfected them. But after our weak nature was strengthened by the thought of His resurrection and ascension into heaven: His [Jesus] brother [James] according to the flesh teaches us, so that we may not fear temptations, since we can, after being strengthened by the Lord's afflictions, overcome every ensuing affliction and temptation. Since there are twofold temptations, as we have said, patience is useful in both: in those that come from God, because afterwards we attain praise from victory, like Abraham; in those that are from ourselves, because by enduring with gratitude, we refer this as a kind of compensation for the sins we have committed. He who was conscious of his own sins, lays the beginning of his salvation and conforms himself to the form of a righteous man, as the first accuser of himself.

"Let no one who is tempted say." If there are two kinds of temptations, why does he now reject the cause of all temptation from God? But consider that he does not say: He who was tempted, but he who is tempted. For he who, through his own fault and depravity, gives rise to temptations, so that he is a perpetual slave, says that he is not tempted by God, but by his own desire. He who has overcome the temptation that has come upon him, having established himself more securely, still becomes difficult to tempt, especially by those arising from himself. For having turned towards a wiser life, he has blocked the source of temptations, and now he lives free from temptations. But God cannot be tempted by evil: according to him who said (although he is external to us and alien to faith); Divine and blessed nature neither endures trouble nor inflicts it on others. For around mortal and earthly nature, in which variety and change are evident, all these things that preoccupy our nature occur. Indeed, lust and sin, and the death of the soul that follows from this, have been established as certain stages leading to human perdition. For lust, seizing a place to stay, having found a dwelling place, has wrought sin, which

gives birth to death, unless, by removing it from the mind, we renew for ourselves the beginning of another life. Therefore, it sufficiently demonstrates divine nature, neither able to be tempted nor providing temptations to others; however, it says here that thoughts disturb and confuse the splendor of the soul. For those things that are from God greatly soothe the soul, illuminating it and revealing his ineffable beauty in many ways: therefore, he now adds.

1:17-18 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change or shadow due to change. In His destined will, He has begotten us by the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.*

"is from above, from the Father of lights." Since those things that come from us do not have perfection, but rather much imperfection, nor do they illuminate the soul, think what perfection they will have who acquire it after a joyful journey through life, and with much effort hardly cleanse the ugliness contracted from birth, and then reach divine splendor.

"With whom there is no change." For He Himself cries out through the prophet: "I am and I do not change." (Mal. 3:6) But what he says: *"shadow due to change,"* that is, not even doubt or any shadow of doubt.

"In His destined will." He said destined will, silencing those who foolishly assert that the world was produced by chance. For since he said above: with whom there is no change, and from this he shows that God is unchanging, he adds:

"In His destined will, He has begotten us." For if we are born, it is clear that we are also changed. For how could that which proceeds from non-being to being through change be unchangeable? Then, because he said: *He has begotten us,* lest anyone suspect that He has begotten the Son in the same way as us, and that He was born as a Son together with us, he adds:

"By the Word of Truth." For all things, according to blessed John, were made through the Son. (John 1:3) Therefore, if progress has happened to us through the Word of Truth,

who have our being from the Word, we are not begotten together with him from whom we were made.

"*we should be a kind of first fruits.*" That is, the first and most honored. But κτίσματα means the visible creature itself.

1:19-20 *Therefore, my beloved brothers, let every man be quick to hear; slow to speak, slow to anger. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

What James says is not referred to mere hearing, but to vigorous action in work and to the one who, after hearing, proceeds to perform what he has heard. For he knows that he who listens with interest to what is said will also show himself prepared for their performance: just as, on the other hand, he who is affected by slowness in procrastinating in something, will be completely separated from all effort at work by being distracted. Therefore, in the doctrine of divine things, he prescribes speed, but in those things which have a dangerous administration, slowness. But those are speaking and being angry. For both thoughtless speech and uncontrolled anger never know how to end in good. Because of which a certain divine man once said [Xenocrates]: He often regretted having spoken, but never having remained silent. Again, that blessed David says: "Be angry and do not sin," (Ps. 4:5) that is, lest by being easily angry, you also incite the fury which anger suggests. These things are also similar to what is said here. Indeed, slowness in speaking and slow in becoming angry, preserved by hesitation in these matters, lead to what is decent and right: and either completely dissolve the impulse around these things through deliberate consideration, or teach a suitable way to respond to the occurrences that arise in their course, especially regarding anger; which, if it is induced irrationally, deprives divine justice. And therefore, he adds this reason:

For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. For if righteousness is a habit in the soul which divides each according to his dignity, but anger, as he says, destroys even the wise, how could this very thing which so darkens the mind with passionate affection as to destroy even the wise, constitute that which divides each according to his dignity?

"*Slow to anger.*" He wants slowness to be exercised in us in two ways, for example in speaking and in becoming angry. For he knows that hesitation produces abstinence from committing an action.

Of meekness and innocence, and of good actions which lead to happiness, and of knowledge and moderation of speech.

1:21 *Therefore, putting away all filthiness and excess of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

He also adds to impurity the excess of nastiness, wishing to demonstrate this: Although someone frequently falls into some impurity, he should quickly depart from it, and not by remaining and lingering in it, through habit do they make the evil stronger and more difficult to cleanse: since those things are born which continually and abundantly find their way into us, to reduce to nature that which is done, or to acquire the habit of nature itself.

"*with meekness.*" For discipline is conveyed through meekness and not through uproar and disturbance.

"*implanted word.*" It is called implanted word that which better distinguishes the good from the bad: by which we are also said to be natural.

1:22-25 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer: he shall be compared to a man beholding his natural face in a mirror. For he saw himself, and went his way, and immediately forgot what manner of a man he was. But he that has looked in the law of perfect liberty, and has remained in it, not made a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work: this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

Since he knows that some who listen to the word with diligence often extinguish their fervor even at the very time they are listening, therefore, he now adds this, commanding it in effect: Do not show diligence only in hearing, but much more in doing.

"deceiving yourselves." That is, seducing. Furthermore, he says that the natural face is to know oneself through the law. Therefore, with *"face,"* he added *"natural."* For by saying through the law what kind of things we have become, we consider that such things are made by the spiritual law to perfect us through the washing of regeneration. May we not, by remaining in such consideration through action, forget the grace and gift of God. For he who exposes himself to wicked actions does not even remember that he has been favored by God. For if he had remembered that he had been adopted as a son of God and justified and sanctified, which are spiritual gifts, he would never have given himself over to works that repel grace.

"in a mirror." From this common mirror he speaks figuratively for an intellectual mirror, without going into detail: for example, he might say in this way: If anyone hears the discourse and does not express it in actions, he is like a man looking at the face of his action in a mirror. For just as he considered himself and went away, immediately forgetting what he was like: so also this one who, through the law of Moses, considered for what purpose he had been made, namely that he had been made for the glory of God and in the image of the Creator God, after he had considered, expressed none of those things that had been considered in actions, but was inclined to go back to the same way he as before. It is not therefore a matter of how it should be used. But James, the disciple of the Lord, does not do this vainly or rashly, but speaks everything briefly, as if he were a disciple of the abbreviated word, and at the same time gathering and restraining the listener, lest he should listen to these things idly.

"But he that has looked in." Consider what it says: *Who has looked in,* and not, *Who entered.* The spiritual law indeed has something magnificent and desirable everywhere, from which it also knows how to attract and render perfect, even from those in wrongful pursuit of it: and since it has perfection and lacks defect in all things, it leaves no one who has attained it in doubt regarding anything that is connected to it; and it persuades those who have even merely looked upon it to remain in it.

"in the law of perfect." Because the Jews were exalted because of the observances of the law, and thought that by these they showed themselves the highest piety towards God; and devoting themselves to these alone, they claimed perfection for themselves, but towards other men, being moved by a proud and reproachful spirit, they erred. As is evident from the Pharisee, of whom it is written in the Gospel (Luke 18:10), and from

those who were scornful against the Publican: repressing this fear, blessed James speaks of the things that are proposed. For indeed, by mentioning his works, which express speech through actions, where he proclaimed him blessed, he immediately corrects the evil that arises from many actions, and says: Do not think that you derive blessedness from the works of the law, as if mere action could render one acceptable before God: not at all; but he is blessed who both acts and is not affected by a scornful or inhumane spirit towards others of his kind.

"of liberty." Where he had said the perfect Law, he added: of liberty, making liberty his official sign. For the law of Christ, freeing from the servitude of all fleshly things, such as the Sabbaths, circumcision, and ceremonies regarding other purifications, established a liberty and rest for those approaching it: and because of the freedom and sweetness that proceeds from this freedom, it also makes one attentive and liberates from oblivion, which corrupts all good things. For indeed, nothing persuades one to adhere to something as much as that which seems to offer rest from business and freedom. Moreover, he has also demonstrated this to be blessed.

"a forgetful hearer." He linked forgetfulness to hearing, because hearing requires action, but no action follows forgetfulness: as if hearing were unessential, which has the ability of action.

1:26-27 *And if any man think himself to be religious not controlling his tongue, but seducing his heart: this man's religion is useless. Religion pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their affliction: and to keep himself pure from the world.*

Religion seems to have something more than faith. For the name itself promises knowledge of certain hidden things and the firmness of those things that are perceived by faith. Therefore, the blessed James also used this expression, saying: Religion, as if he had said: You think you know and precisely observe the secrets that are in the law. How can this happen when you do not know how to restrain your tongue, slandering your neighbor: and living proudly, you do not show mercy to any needy person: when the law neither receives the slanderer (Ps. 100:5) nor commands you to have mercy on your enemies, and even commands that you should be a help to the enemy occupied in

lifting up what has fallen under the burden? (Ex. 23:5) If, therefore, you wish to be religious, do not show yourself to be religious from knowledge of the law, but from action, and that by showing mercy to your neighbor: for mercy towards your neighbor is a certain likeness to God. For he says: "Be merciful, just as your heavenly Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36) But mercy should not be with respect to persons: for neither does God distribute His benefits (Matt. 5:45) to this one or that one, but involves all with benefit, rich and poor, evil and good, without distinction. However, this is restraint, and not out of arrogance as if it were expressing a law through actions, deceiving one's own conscience: for this signifies the heart, as it is written: "A broken and humbled heart God will not despise." (Ps. 50:19)

"Religion pure." Perhaps someone will say: If James is the teacher of the covenant which Christ established, how is it that he does not now repeal the things of the law, but rather exalts them, welcoming those who are engaged in its observance, and not rebuking or resisting them from the observance of the law? To that which we say, that in the manner of introducing, he rather now discusses with them, and lowers himself to their weakness, lest by immediately overturning the law from the beginning, he causes them to retreat, becoming weary of the novelty of the doctrines and leaning towards disbelief. However, addressing the matter more conveniently and yielding to the law, regarding those things in which he did not bring harm to the new covenant with the legalistic fallacies (for what harms the faith that is in Christ, such as the observance of sabbaths or fasting or abstaining from certain foods), and making them more attentive to his discourse, he gradually encourages them to indeed depart from the observances of the law, as if they were laborious and yet useless, and as if they were calling to servitude, not to the freedom that is in Christ. Therefore, having wisely used brief exchanges and alternations, when he found that they were no longer seriously bearing what was being said, he then presents those things that were suitable for Christians.

"to keep himself pure from the world." By "world" here we must understand the popular and common crowd, which is corrupted by the desires of its own error.

CHAPTER 2

On charity towards each one without respect of person according to the law.

2:1-4 *My brothers, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with bias to individuals. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

"with bias to individuals." For he who does something with respect to individuals fills himself with many blemishes and much reproach, afflicting his neighbor with disgrace, and also himself before him: for the treatment of a companion transmits what is done even to oneself.

"have you not shown partiality." The conjunction, "And", abounds, that is, you have corrupted the power of judging which was in you, making no inquiry as to whether he is to be honored, the poor man who is upright and industrious, or the rich man who is lazy: but without judgment and with respect to persons, you honored the one indeed because of his riches, but you held the other in contempt because of his poverty.

"among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" That is, unjust judges, affected by jealousy out of respect for persons. In this place, the conjunction *καὶ* abounds, that is, "and", as has been said, from the use of the former phrase. For since this discourse is a response to what has gone before, the conjunction is unnecessary. For the sentence should be arranged thus: For if a man wearing a gold ring, dressed in splendid clothing, enters your assembly, while a poor man in filthy clothing also enters, etc., you have not judged among yourselves and have become judges of evil thoughts: that is, corrupting the power of judging, you have chosen evil thoughts, honoring the one indeed, but holding the other in contempt: although yet the nature was the same in both.

2:5-9 *Listen, my beloved brothers: has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to those who love Him? But you have despised the poor. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do*

they not blaspheme that good name by which you are called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

Since poverty is a serious matter for many, when he said, "*the poor of this world*," he immediately added, "*rich*." But in what way are they rich? In faith and concerning faith. For so it is. Indeed, when the poor are not distracted by worldly things, once they come to faith, they become more diligent and more devoted to labor than the rich. Therefore, the Lord also chose such disciples, whom he declared to be heirs of the kingdom.

"*They blaspheme the good name*." A good name is a new name according to the prophet saying: "To those who serve me, a new name will be called, which will be blessed over all the face of the earth." (Isa. 62:2) "According to Scripture." Deuteronomy says.

2:10-13 *And whosoever shall keep the whole Law, but offends in one: is made guilty of all. For he that said, You shall not commit adultery, said also, You shall not kill. And if you do not commit adultery, but shall kill: you are made a transgressor of the Law. So speak, and so do, as beginning to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment without mercy to him that has not done mercy. And mercy exalts itself above judgment.*

"*but offends in one*." He said this concerning love, for the sake of which he also discussed all the preceding discourse at greater length for the sake of proof. But he said, "*You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill*," for example. Consider, however, that the examples are from the law, insofar as it contributed to love. For he who loves his neighbor perfectly will neither commit adultery nor kill. For these are his who is affected with a hostile spirit towards his neighbor. Since it would not be said in this way, no one among men would be saved, since no one keeps the integrity of the commandments in all things. For he who has preserved chastity for the sake of the word has sometimes been overcome by anger; and he who is adorned with almsgiving has perhaps been obscured by envy. Therefore, it is not said of anyone who has no defect in virtues, but of love, that it should not be attained with defect due to respect for persons, but wholly. However, we also speak of these virtues. For one who has not perfectly adhered to modest or just matters, for example, but has used them with a deficiency, here, staggering in dealing with virtues, has been corrupted in the whole body of virtue. The law must therefore be understood as

dealing with love, which is its chief aim. But the law of freedom says that it is without regard to persons: this is the law of Christ. For he who respects persons is not free, but a slave: "For whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved." (2 Peter 2:19)

"For judgment without mercy to him that has not done mercy." If we have forgiven our neighbors the sins they have committed against us, and have made the needy among us sharers in our alms, then God's mercy will deliver us from judgment. God will also welcome the merciful. Indeed, it is a remarkable deed, just as on the other hand, a serious condemnation will be for those who have not been well and piously disposed towards the people of their own class. For those who remain unmoved by any feeling of sympathy towards their neighbors who have wronged them, the condemnation of the evil servant will embrace them, together with the retribution that the Lord's Prayer designates. For there we ask God to forgive us as we forgive those who have sinned against us. And those who are hard-hearted, moved by no feeling of mercy towards those who lack bodily comfort, will also receive judgment without mercy according to the present discourse.

"mercy exalts itself above judgment." For the merciful shall obtain mercy, according to the judgment of the Lord. (Matt. 5:7) Furthermore, if in an idolater's mercy towards the poor he can erase sins, as we learned in Daniel (Dan. 4:24), what would he not do in faithful men? But this mercy seems to me to accomplish something like this oil from the manna trees, anointed on athletes. For this enables them to escape, lest they be held by their adversaries: and so also in the universal judgment our mercy towards the needy will enable them to escape the attacks and dangers which will threaten us from the demons who accuse us. In another way.

"judgment without mercy." The cause of restitution is against those who have shown pride and arrogance with great cruelty towards the lower classes with respect to persons. Therefore, it softens their cruelty and hardness, with this terrifying sentence, as if it were saying: The law commands you to love your neighbor as yourself: just as no one regards a person with respect to themselves (for that would be insane), so neither should you regard a person. But if, out of arrogance and hardness, you deviate towards respect for persons, fear that in some way you too might receive similar treatment from a just judge, and exclude from yourself that mercy: for judgment without mercy, etc.

"And mercy exalts itself above judgment." That is, it conquers, subdues, dulls, or blunts.

That man is justified not by faith alone, but also by works, and not by one separately, but by both together.

2:14-19 *What shall it profit my brethren, if a man say he has faith: but has not works? Shall faith be able to save him? And if a brother or sister be naked, and lack daily food: and one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled: but you give them not the things that are necessary for the body: what shall it profit? So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself. But some man says, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without works: and I will show you by works my faith. You believe that there is one God. You do well: the demons also believe and tremble.*

Notice the spiritual understanding. For he did not only say: If you have faith, but also: What is the benefit? As if he were saying: Show me the work from which I can judge that this title suits you: for that is the benefit of faith.

“*So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself.*” These things are not opposed to blessed Paul, since the name faith is applied to two meanings. (Rom. 4:1) For we often say that faith is a simple approval, according to that which we also know the demons believed, that the Son of God was Christ. (Matt. 4:3; Luke 4:1) And again, when we call the consequence proceeding from affection with firm acceptance the name of faith; indeed, James says that simple acceptance is a dead faith and devoid of living works; however, Paul says that it is that which is from affection and is in no way lacking in deeds: for it could not arise without honorable deeds. Indeed, Abraham did not attain this unless a contest was first held, by which he would be expelled from his paternal kinship, for which contest faith was declared as the reward: but Paul placed this before works, namely the observance of the Sabbaths according to the law, circumcision, and other purifications. Indeed, two meanings are also seen in works. For certain works are said to confirm faith, without which faith is dead. And again, works are said to be those of the law, without which both Abraham and all who follow Christ are justified. For who would deny that it is true that faith would in no way approach the impure? But I speak of true faith. For neither would an ointment be stored in a vessel that was full of mud, nor would faith be imparted by God to an impure man. Therefore, the holy apostles are not contradictory, but each, operating in a different meaning, directs and leads to the use of its own meaning that is proposed to it.

2:20-26 *But will you know O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Abraham our father was he not justified by works, offering Isaac his son upon the altar? see that faith did work with his works: and by the works the faith was complete? And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying, Abraham believed God, and it was reputed him to righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. Do you see that by works a man is justified: and not by faith only? And in like manner also Rahab the harlot, was not she justified by works, receiving the messengers, and putting them forth another way? For even as the body without the spirit is dead: so also faith without works is dead.*

He called a man vain who boasts of a bare faith, when he has obtained nothing of substance for completion through works.

“Abraham our father.” Both Paul (Rom. 4:12) and James take Abraham as an example in their discourse on faith: Paul, indeed to show that faith is superior to works, while James, on the other hand, asserts that works are more excellent than faith through the same Abraham. And indeed, it has been said above that concerning the dual meaning of faith, each one brings forth what is beneficial to the explanation of their own purpose. Some of the Fathers, however, understood this matter in this way. For they say that the same Abraham bore the image of both faiths at various distinct times, and that the faith which is before baptism does not require works, but only faith and the confession of salvation and the word by which we are justified, believing in Christ; and that which follows baptism is connected with works. Thus, it does not appear that the spirit who spoke in the apostles is different; but that this faith indeed justifies the one who approaches by confession alone, if he immediately departs from a sinful life (for to him there are no works, but purification through baptism is a sufficient remedy), while that which is required from one who has already been baptized also demands the display of good works. With this sense, Paul also agrees in another place, saying and teaching that faith after baptism requires perfection through works, when he says: “Neither circumcision benefits anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.” (Gal. 5:6) And love needs lengthy practice to be perfected.

In another way. Abraham was indeed an image of the justification which is by faith alone, when it was imputed to him for righteousness that he believed (Gen. 15:6); but of that which is by works, when he offered his son upon the altar. (Gen. 22:10) If anything, he

not only completed the work but also remained in faith that through Isaac his seed would be multiplied like the stars, considering that God could even raise the dead. (Heb. 11:17-19) Yet Paul also brings David as a witness (Rom. 6:6), wisely confirming his own. For he knew through the Spirit that faith which was to come in future times through Christ: therefore he said: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Ps. 31:2)

"faith without works is dead." He says faith which is after baptism. For faith without works profits nothing, except that it makes us liable to a still greater punishment, who indeed have received the talent, yet have not returned the gain. From which the Lord also teaches us that after baptism good works are necessary for us, since after being baptized by John he went to the desert and undertook struggles against the devil. (Matt. 4:1) Paul also exhorts those who had already received the mysteries, saying: "Let us strive to enter into that rest." (Heb. 4:4) As if faith were not enough, but purity of life should also be added, and great diligence should be applied to this.

CHAPTER 3

3:1-2 *Do not become many teachers, my brothers, knowing that we shall receive a greater judgment: for in many things we all stumble.*

When he had said and taught the faithful in the above matters that they should possess faith that is not empty of good works, he turned to another commandment similar to this. For indeed, some attempt to teach things which they themselves do not practice: and it is said that their judgment will be harsher, since they have brought no profit. For whoever teaches what is not beneficial, as if possessing it, is condemned just as if he has slipped with his own tongue. Moreover, confirming this abundantly, he says, Although in another way the tongue is prone to slip due to negligence, in the case of those whose judgment will not escape, who has acquired this, as Solomon has it, saying: "Because of the sin of the lips, the sinner falls into a snare"; (Prov. 12:13) much more, however, will he who knowingly and deliberately sins, teaching with his tongue what he has not learned through experience, be unable to escape the inevitable punishment.

The unrefined and chaotic tongue destroys the one who has acquired it: it is necessary to overcome it for the praise and glory of God; in which he also discusses good conduct and without strife of one against another, out of a desire for glory, because of human wisdom; and about divine wisdom: and that quarrels, seditions, and enmities against God arise from laziness and the love of pleasure; and about repentance for salvation, and about not judging one's neighbor.

3:2-4 *If anyone does not stumble in speech, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the mouths of horses so that they may obey us, and we turn the whole body about. Behold, ships also, though they are so large and driven by fierce winds, are turned about by a very small rudder wherever the impulse of the helmsman wishes.*

That no man can lead a life without sin is confirmed by the slipperiness of the tongue. From the same, it also demonstrates that no one can attain perfection. For who is there who has not erred through his tongue? But if someone has overcome the slipperiness of his tongue, is he not suitable to govern the whole body? For he who has conquered that which is easiest to slip, could by no means be overcome by that which is much more difficult.

"Behold, we put bits in the mouths of horses." This is the order of letters: We put the reins in the mouths of horses; for unless it is arranged this way, speech is unintelligible (namely, if we take the Greek words in the order they are placed). This confirms what has been said about the tongue, and also addresses something greater: namely, that he who brings into his power that which is easy to arrange, will also overcome that which is difficult to handle. However, this resolves the objection. For it was plausible that someone might add: What labor is there in governing such a small member? Or what harm can come from the smallest member? And this shows that from the bridle and the helm and from the small things which are indeed small, but make great things. — In another way. Furthermore, these also show that the tongue should not move recklessly, but should be directed towards better things: just as the strength of horses is restrained by the bridle, and the onslaught of a ship is controlled by the rudder. Thus, we must also direct the tongue to what is beneficial with proper speech. For this signifies what is said: So also the tongue, that it should be directed in this way with proper speech, and not do what it does: for when it is small, it does great things, and kindles a great fire for us, since

it is itself a fire. And what does it do? It adorns iniquity through the cunning eloquence of orators, contaminates the body, persuading women to allow its approach: it operates through deceit: it slanders others with falsehoods: and above all, it ignites the wheel of hell: that is, it sets on fire and stirs up hell in us, as if making a fire rage against us. But it also, he says, is set on fire by hell, as is evident from the rich man who was tormented by the tongue. (Luke 16:24) For the tongue is punished not for any other reason than because it has been inclined towards pleasures and trifles. Therefore, if the Wheel of hell is read, as some copies have it, the meaning must be explained accordingly. However, if it has the Wheel of Birth, it achieves this solution: the Wheel of Birth signifies our life. Therefore, inflaming the wheel of birth contaminates life: and how? While it is moved carelessly and lustfully, from which our life is enraged, or the time of our life. For this, the Psalmist also called it a crown, saying: "You will bless the crown of the year." (Ps. 65:11) Indeed, the wheel and the crown agree in that both are circular and spheric; the Wheel is said to be life, as if rolled back upon itself. But how does it contaminate our life? As it is moved, as we said before: because of which our life is both soiled and full of sighs. Thus, the tongue is turned about in proper speech. Indeed, the world is full of iniquity, as if it were cast down to a vile and popular crowd, looking back. For the world is understood here as a multitude. Or the world is, that is, an ornament, or adorning human nature: through this, we communicate our thoughts to one another, for in this meaning, some also wish to accept the World. Therefore, while it is directed towards the vile crowd, it does harm and injures and contaminates the whole body, and the wheel of birth is inflamed and is inflamed by hell. Yet, it is not difficult to direct it so that it moves rightly and in the way that the one who governs wishes. But if all of nature of wild beasts, birds, serpents, and marine creatures is tamed and has been tamed by human nature, is it true that the tongue, which is an uncontrollable evil, full of deadly poison, cannot be tamed by any human? I would say by no means is this the case. For if it cannot be tamed, it never inclines toward what is better; how is it that by it we bless God and the Father, and by it we curse men? Behold, it is governed by the will of the one who uses it. But it should not be so, my brothers. For if by it we bless God, is it not shameful to curse men who are made in the likeness of God? Is it just that from the same mouth there should come blessing and cursing? It should not be so.

3:5-9 *So the tongue also is certainly a little member, and boasts great things. Behold how much fire what a great wood it kindles? And the tongue is fire, a whole world of iniquity. The tongue is set among our members, which defiles the whole body, and inflames the wheel of our birth, inflamed of hell. For all nature of beasts and fowls and serpents and of the rest is tamed and has been tamed by the nature of man. 8 But the tongue no man can tame, an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison. By it we bless God and the Father: and by it we curse men which are made after the similitude of God.*

"*So the tongue also.*" As if it were said: In the same way, the tongue must be rightly moved, which, although it is a small member, nevertheless accomplishes great things, both good and bad: however, the discourse is not so explicit, since the one who writes this is a disciple of a condensed writing style.

"*world of iniquity.*" In this place, some wish to signify the multitude, just as where it is said: "The world did not know him," (Jn. 1:10) that is, the popular multitude. Therefore, the world is also the tongue, that is, the multitude of iniquity. And how great if a multitude was said there when it was sent before, how great the matter.

"*For all nature.*" One must understand the objections in accordance with what has been said previously. For when he had previously said and demonstrated that those things which are indeed small become great when moved correctly, and had added that in the same way the tongue should be directed by appropriate language: he now shows with the examples given that it is not impossible for it to be instructed: as if he were to say: But someone will say that although the tongue is a small member, it nonetheless accomplishes great things, both good and evil: it is neither obedient nor manageable by us in what we desire. This does not affect the response. For if wild animals are tamed by man not by their nature, indeed fierce in appearance, but far more fierce in handling, would it not be much more appropriate to handle a member that is appropriate so that it might easily obey? Therefore, also what he says:

"*the tongue no man can tame,*" should not be read affirmatively, but rather with doubt or as a question, so that it might be said in this way. If a man can tame wild beasts and make them manageable, can he not tame his own tongue? Thus, this must be read and understood. For if it were said assertively, it would not seem right to use it as an exhortation when it says: "*My brothers, this should not be done.*" (James 3:10) For if it were impossible to adjust in such a way, he who admonishes impossibilities does not

make a stable and fitting warning. Someone might say: "Nevertheless, what he says." An uncontrollable evil must be expressed assertively, for these show through amplification that the tongue is untamable. However, on the contrary, the statement, "*From out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing*," (Jame 3:10) must be read with hesitation: for it is the speech of one exhorting the listeners. For if we are commanded to bless all, since the cursed will not inherit the kingdom of God, is it not shameful to use the same member for the ministry of iniquity and good works? No wise person would use the same instrument to move mud and oil. Do you pray? Do not curse your enemy. There is a great difference between prayer and cursing. If you do not forgive him who has troubled you, neither will you be forgiven: but by cursing you will ensnare yourself, when you pray that your debts may be forgiven, just as you forgive your debtors. (Matt. 6:9) But let us provide, for the sake of easier consequences, the whole section in the middle to present the order of the required phrase, adding some things that are lacking. It will be in this way: Behold, we put the reins on the horses so that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body around: behold also that ships, however large they are and tossed by fierce winds, are turned about by a small rudder wherever the impulse of the helmsman wishes. Thus also let the tongue be turned about in right speech. Nor is this difficult. For all nature, both of wild beasts and birds and serpents and sea creatures, is tamed and has been tamed by human nature. If this is so, can no one tame the tongue? This cannot be said at all.

3:10-18 *From out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, this should not be done. Does the fountain give forth out of one hole sweet and sour water? Can, my brethren, the fig tree yield grapes: or the vine, figs? So neither can the salt water yield sweet. Who is wise and has knowledge among you? Let him show by good conversation his working in mildness of wisdom. But if you have bitter zeal, and there be disputes in your hearts: glory not and be not liars against the truth. For this is not wisdom descending from above: but earthly, sensual, devilish. For where zeal and contention is: there is inconstancy, and every perverse work. But the wisdom that is from above, first certainly is faithful: then peaceable, modest, vulnerable, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, not judging, without distinction. 18 And the fruit of justice, in peace is sowed to them that make peace.*

"From out of the same mouth." This kind of sacred discipline has received nothing bitter to be emitted, nothing ungrateful.

"Who is wise and has knowledge among you?" When men were ambitious and boasted of the wisdom of this world, they preached from disagreement and rivalry of the rulers, openly inciting the people to agitation, and besides, they were wasting away with envy and allowing human things to mingle with divine, so that the examiners were drawn in by the novelty of what was being said; hence also heresies arose. Therefore, after completing the discourse on the slander and intemperance of the tongue, he then transitions to envy, which arises in men from similar recklessness: and he says that these doctrines are not established and firm, as they are not from divine wisdom, but rather demonic. However, he said this to encourage the good teacher, saying that he should show his wisdom through good works with his gentleness. Moreover, since the name of zeal, that is passion, is neutral and indifferent in itself to good and evil. (For zeal, or passion, is a movement of the heart stirred up towards something with some similarity to that which is the object of study or affection) therefore he added *bitter zeal*, showing what passion leads to. Indeed, contentiousness is a blameworthy contention and obstinacy.

"first certainly is faithful." That is, pure and without stain, adhering to no fleshly thing.

"without distinction." Not discerning the observance of foods and various washings. Paul discusses these matters in detail in the Epistle to the Colossians. (Col. 2:1)

CHAPTER 4

4:1-4 *Where do wars and conflicts come from among you? Is it not from here, namely from your pleasures that wage war in your members? You desire and do not have; you kill and covet, and cannot obtain; you fight and wage war, and you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hatred against God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

It shows that although they may imitate the speech of the teacher, they are all entirely fleshly and commit the most disgraceful acts, calling pleasures to themselves: some indeed seek a more delicate table (which Paul also argues against them saying, "For such are not serving our Lord but their own belly;") (Col. 2:1) others desire the possession of precious fields or houses: others again wish to take on a household or join one house to another: while another seeks something else, in which that evil one imposes upon them, attempting to steal their souls.

"You desire and do not have," etc. Through thesis and antithesis, that is, position and removal, it proceeds: when the thesis is assumed due to absurdity, absurdity arises because the incentives of pleasure are later seen to lie hidden in the thesis. For both desire ends in the perfection of pleasures, and murder, rivalry, and similarly strife and war are not good: therefore, neither do those things follow whose cause they affect. It should be noted at this point that he speaks of murder and war not in a bodily sense: for it would be serious even to think about robbers; much less, therefore, about those who were somewhat faithful and approached the Lord. But as it seems to me, those are said to kill who, through these reckless attempts, destroy their own soul, which is why war is also against piety for them. And just as in the course of the text he calls *adulterers and adulteresses*, not because they are entirely such, but because they corrupt divine and rightly established precepts by turning to other illegitimate things: for no one would tolerate a whoremonger as a teacher, even if he were more entangled in filth than a pig: so he speaks of murder and wars not in a bodily sense, but concerning the soul,

"You ask and do not receive." Just as the Pharisee, of whom it is written in the Gospel according to Luke (18:11); for the more he recounted his good works, the more he blocked the divine ears, and the empty splendor of words flowed around his lips and dissolved into foam like a surging wave. But someone will say: if the promise of the Lord Jesus, who cannot be deceived, is true, in which He says: "Everyone who asks receives," (Matt. 7:8) how does the present apostle say this now? But we say that he who proceeds in the proper way and order to ask also has the complete promise, not being frustrated in anything he asks for. If, however, he seems to ask outside the scope of the given petition, not asking as he ought, he does not even ask, and therefore he will not receive. For example, if a grammar teacher promises to teach everyone who comes to him grammar, but the one who wishes to learn approaches improperly and does not direct himself towards the reception of what has been promised, then if he falls into absurdity similar

to his own, will anyone justly accuse the teacher of lying? Certainly, such a person would not act wisely. Nor did the one who was to receive the discipline approach as the teacher exhorts. However, someone might say: And how or what should one ask? Listen to Him who made the promise. "Seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness." (Matt. 6:33) Therefore, it is clear that he who asks in this way, especially concerning such things, will not be disappointed in other matters, since receiving them will not fall outside of what is for his salvation. But he who asks for harmful and damaging things will not have them from Him who gives every good gift. Moreover, if one seeks divine knowledge or some spiritual gift out of pleasure, he will not receive it: for he asks wrongly, and it is for his own destruction; furthermore, God does not grant evil things at all.

"You adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world." For he had previously reproached a few false wise men who would corrupt the divine Scripture and pervert it to their own will, so that they might have a backing for their luxurious life: this arises from nothing other than arrogance and pride, and for this reason, he now proceeds more severely and uses words that are particularly strange to his own humor, calling such people adulterers and adulteresses, and by reproaching them, he brings them to shame, and using almost such accusations: Tell me, vain one: do you wish to present yourself as wise? and from where do you have that, while you continually avoid conflict and war, you are always fixated on the present and pursue the joy of this life with certainty of mind? This is not the way of the wise but of ordinary men, and those who have inclination towards the friendship of the world, and it shows you to be adulterers who prefer the vulgar, profane, and shameful over the hidden, divine, and honorable beauty, and bear hatred towards God out of affection for the present. Do you not know that the friendship of the world alienates from the friendship of God, or makes one an enemy of God? In this context, the world refers to all material and vile life, as if it were the mother of corruption, of which he who attempts to partake becomes an enemy of God. For due to a passion for the useless, he neglectfully and disdainfully regards the divine, which pertains only to those whom we hate and who are our enemies. Therefore, since there are two things that men strive for, namely God and the world, and around both of these revolve two things, friendship and hatred: if we are found to be studious of either, we seem to entirely neglect the other. However, diligence produces friendship, while negligence produces hatred. Therefore, whoever clings to the divine is a friend of God, and it is said: But whoever neglects God and is firmly attached to the things of the

world should be considered among those who are the greatest enemies of God. Moreover, since this and all such evil has been shown to have originated from the arrogance of the false wisdom of the teachers, he used another argument, wishing to bring them back from such drunkenness and to free them from gluttony, and he says:

4:5-6 *Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, or out of envy? That the spirit desires which dwells in you? But he gives a greater grace?*

This signifies something through these means, through the lack of using language, and again through the use of abbreviated wording. Therefore, he says: Indeed, I have criticized you in my own words regarding the correct and blameless use of your wisdom, lest you, abusing it out of arrogance, pollute and deceitfully handle the discourse of doctrine. But if you seek this from Scripture, listen. For it says: "The Lord resists the proud." (1 Peter 5:5) Therefore, I was not speaking absurdly when I said that contempt for divine doctrines arises from pride and a great zeal for the world constitutes hate against God. For if He resists the proud, and we are accustomed to resist enemies, surely the proud must also be numbered among the enemies. For Scripture does not publish difficult precepts to us in vain or out of envy, but to desire or seek the grace that dwells in us through its exhortation: which, when it finds working in us through spiritual modesty, gives a greater grace. Therefore, if you obey the Scriptures, humble yourselves and become lowly before the Lord, and you will find grace through His exaltation. [Γπερηφανία] Pride, however, is a vice that inflates deeply, which we call elevation: and it differs from arrogance, which is called [οἷσις] conceit, because the former is exalted by what it has, while the latter is exalted by what does not belong to it in any way. On the contrary, humility or modesty of the mind is a great good. And since both are voluntary for us; whoever exalts himself through arrogance, apart from being condemned by the Lord, is also humbled by Him: exalted through the occasion of the one who had humbled himself out of modesty of spirit: so that, guided by this, he who exercises himself in these things achieves spiritual greatness in the contests.

"Do you think that Scripture speaks in vain, or out of envy?" None of these, but it desires or seeks grace in you through its counsel dwelling within. It is similar through the restraint of the response, as in Job: Do you think I have answered you for any other purpose than to appear just? Indeed, in this place the response: No, is not expressed.

"*The spirit desires.*" It refers to the good intention, as David also says: "With a willing spirit:" (Ps. 50:14) that is, by the Lord's will through which He sends afflictions. And it refers to the right spirit as the right will.

4:7-13 *Be subject therefore to God, but resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Approach God, and he will approach you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners: and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be miserable, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning: and joy, into sorrow. Be humbled in the sight of our Lord, and he will exalt you. Do not speak ill of one another my brethren. He that speaks ill of his brother, or he that judges his brother, speaks ill of the Law, and judges the Law. But if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law, but a judge. For there is one law-maker, and judge that can destroy and deliver. But you, who are you that judges another?*

"*purify your hearts, you double minded.*" 'Double of mind' refers to those who do not wish to live in a certain way but are driven and carried away by the wickedness of men. For they do not dwell in the house under the Lord in one way. Moreover, that the soul is also called life will be sufficiently taught to us in Job. "Skin for skin, all that a man has will he give as a ransom for his life." (Job 2:4)

"*Do not speak ill of one another.*" New pride and arrogance arise from contempt and speaks ill against the meek, which drives those who use it to complete contempt for these things. Therefore, withdrawing them from this, he wishes to make them modest through what is submitted here, saying:

"*He speaks ill of the Law and judges the Law.*" This is to condemn, to despise. For he who condemns does so out of contempt. But which law? First indeed that which commands: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged." (Matt. 7:1) Therefore, what is in the Psalms: "I was secretly pursuing this one who was detracting from his neighbor." (Ps. 101:5) And because this is done out of contempt, he adds: If you judge the law, whether you condemn it, you are not a keeper of the law. For who indeed despises anyone, how will he bear to live from now under his authority? Therefore, he says, do not despise, and have as if a contrary legislator. For it is not permitted to you, since there is only one lawmaker, God, who can save and destroy the transgressors of His law. For it is the role of the law and the lawmaker to make their transgressors subject to

punishment; it is not yours, who can do nothing else but joke about these matters. Moreover, you fall upon yourself and are contrary to yourself, bringing a judgment against yourself. For when you do the same things as the one you speak ill of, in the very act of condemning him, you condemn yourself long before.

"*Who are you that judges another?*" By despising: that is, when you are such, how do you dare to judge or condemn him who is similarly affected?

That the steps of a man are directed not by man, but by God: in which it is also discussed about the greed of the rich and their delights in this world and about the just judgment of God.

4:13-17 *But you, what are you that judges another? Whoever says, Today or tomorrow we will go to that city, and we will spend a year there, and we will trade and make a profit. Who are ignorant what shall be tomorrow. For what is your life? It is a vapor appearing for a little while, and afterward it shall vanish away; for that you should say, If the Lord wills, and if we live, we will do this or that. But now you glory in your arrogance. All such rejoicing is wicked. To one therefore knowing to do good, and not doing it: to him it is sin.*

"*Whoever says, Today.*" It does not take away power or free will but shows that not everything is in his hands: for even the heavenly needs grace. For although one may strive, run, engage in business, and do all things necessary for life, one should not attribute these to one's own efforts, but to divine kindness. For Jeremiah says: "Lord, life is not in man himself." (Jer. 10:33) And the author of Proverbs [Παροιμιαστής] says: "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring." (Prov. 27:1)

"*For what is your life?*" This says, pointing out the vanity and wretchedness of our life: and shaming us for the fact that throughout all the time of our life we consume ourselves in temporary evils, and in those things that arise and vanish simultaneously, all our labor is fulfilled. This is also echoed by David, saying: "Yet man passes away like a shadow; yet he is in vain troubled," (Ps. 38:7) that is, about that which is not, but exists only in a mere illusion: for such are the things and the image; or about that which does not exist, but insofar as it has a resemblance and image with life that truly proceeds.

"It is a vapor." Vapor is a condensation of air expiring from the moisture due to the heat of fire, having minimal existence. For due to its extreme low density, it easily yields to the surrounding body and vanishes and dissolves, like a moderate moisture when water is added. Thus, it has similarity to our life: and that very cleverly. Furthermore, having intercepted such speech by this example, it again returns from the perspective to what was following. For the whole particle is to be ordered in this way: Now you who say,

"Today or tomorrow we will go to that city, and we will spend a year there, and we will trade and make a profit," for what you ought to say. *If the Lord wills, and if we live, we will do this or that. "But now you glory in your arrogance."* Since this was truly a consequence of the discourse, it does not do this, but after it interrupts the continuity of the discourse with an example, it subsequently adds what it intended, by portraying the thing and proving the vanity that lies beneath what distracts us regarding this world. It is to be understood in this way:

"Glory in your arrogance." *Who are you that do not know what will happen the next day? What is your life?* etc. By saying, *"What is your life?"* it despises life, and by this, it paves the way with an example set against brittleness, thus it also adds an example, rendering this most solid.

"Glory in your arrogance." The arrogant and arrogance are affections for non-sustaining things. Therefore, it is also called ἀλαζών, which means "living with the sea," that is, living with something unstable and lacking permanence.

"All such rejoicing is wicked." He repeats the empty boasting that desires to arise from pride, and as if concluding his speech, he supposes that it is evil: if it is evil, it is certainly also from the Evil One. However, those who have been consecrated to the Lord through baptism should not receive any corruptions from the Evil One. He also infers this: Therefore, he who knows how to do right and does not do it is held by sin; he also rebukes false teachers. Do you dare to rebuke these things when you have not first acted rightly in them? "For blessed," he says, "is not he who has taught, but he who has both done and taught." (Matt. 5:17) For it is necessary that works precede the word, since the righteous proclaim the faith they have exhibited. "For whoever breaks one of these least commandments," says the Lord, "and teaches men so, that is, in vain, namely in those things in which he has not labored, shall be called least; but he who has both done and taught shall be called great." (Matt. 23:19) Since both God and man taught this doctrine

which He had begun to practice first. It also seems to be the case that Paul says: "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord;" (2 Cor. 10:17) that is, according to the Lord, using His example long before, and thus doing and teaching. For when David says: "My soul shall make its boast in the Lord," (Ps. 33:3) he says nothing other than that by walking according to the Lord's commandments, he is praised.

CHAPTER 5

5:1-6 *Act now you rich men, weep, howling in your miseries which shall come to you. Your riches are corrupt: and your garments are eaten by moths. Your gold and silver is rusted: and their rust shall be for a testimony to you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. You have stored to yourselves wrath in the last days. Behold the hire of the workmen that have reaped your fields, which is defrauded of you, cries: and their cry has entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. You have made merry upon the earth: and in riotousness you have nourished your hearts in the day of slaughter. You have presented, and slain the Just One: and he did not resist you.*

"Act now." The greed and frugality of the rich are made evident by their lamentation, commanding them to weep, that is, to mourn, as those who hide their wealth for destruction and ruin, nor do they spend it on the needy: for indeed, the expenditure of wealth on these does not perish, but the one who spends it remains intact. Therefore, the author of Proverbs [Παροιμιαστής] also says: Cast your bread upon the waters, (Eccles. 11:1) that is, upon the apparent dissolution and corruption (for bread cast upon the waters is destined to be lost): yet it is by no means lost, but through its corruption it provides us with refreshment, when it would come to pass that we were pressed by thirst like a tongue tortured in flame.

"Your riches." Or your wealth. It must be understood, that is, what wealth, as the saying goes: Your riches, which you have hidden like fire as a treasure, will exceed your flesh.

"Your garments are eaten by moths." The rotting, he says, of riches and the corrosion or consumption of garments by moths, and the rust of gold and silver will bear witness against you, arguing your greed. Because of this, *in the last days* (the Lord says of His

coming), you will find your riches hidden for you like fire for destruction: which also happened to the rich man, of whom it is told in the Gospel. (Luke 15:24)

"*You have made merry upon the earth.*" The Jewish leaders were devouring the poor, and they were growing fat on honors that were conferred by all, but they were being prepared for slaughter under the hands of the Romans. And especially because they condemned the Lord, who alone was just, and killed Him without resisting or shouting. Therefore, He now says:

"*You have slain the Just One.*" Without a doubt, this refers to Christ. However, by what He adds:

"*He did not resist you,*" He makes a common statement also to others who have suffered similar things from the Jews. Perhaps, however, He also prophetically designates His own passion.

On patience and tolerance of afflictions, and on truth: in which special exhortations suitable for each are presented along with faith: and what is to be done for the salvation of one's neighbor.

5:7-11 *Be patient therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it until he receives the early and latter rain. Be patient therefore, you also, and establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door. Take as an example, my brothers, of suffering and patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who endured. You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end intended by the Lord, that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.*

After he has accused the indulgences of the Jewish leaders, and their cruelty and inhumanity towards the poor, he also turns to the faithful and says: "Do not be offended by seeing these things, brothers, nor be disheartened, as if either vengeance is not being taken against them, or if it is indeed being taken, it is too delayed. For there is certain retribution, and it will come immediately." He speaks of the insult of the Romans and the captivity of the Jews under them, which he even calls the coming of the Lord: just as

John, who reclined on the Lord's breast, when he speaks of his own destruction, introduces the Lord himself, saying: "If I want him to remain until I come." (Jn. 21:22) Indeed, this time of this life has been extended until the captivity of Jerusalem, and a little beyond that time.

And that *the coming of the Lord* and the destruction of Jerusalem in this place and in John is evident from the prophet, who says: "Behold, the Lord will come, and who will endure the day of his coming?" (Mal. 3:1) as the coming of the Lord brings judgment against the wicked. But also John Chrysostom, in a certain commentary of his, explains the same thing, saying: This statement intends to signify the complete destruction of Jerusalem: and he confirms it from the prayer of the three youths, who said: "So let our sacrifice be in your presence today, and may it be perfected after you." (Dan. 3:40 LXX) He says: What does "after you" mean? It means, after your fury has passed. And when did it come? When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. And indeed, this is about the coming. However, some of the Fathers say that "*patience*" [μακροθυμία] here refers to long-suffering, which pertains to those who are among us; while "*endurance*" [ὑπομονή] refers to patience towards strangers. For one bears with those whom he could avenge; but he endures those whom he cannot avenge. Therefore, in God, "*endurance*" [ὑπομονή] is never said but "*patience*" [μακροθυμία]; in men, however, it is "*endurance*" [ὑπομονή].

Until he receives the early and latter rain. The *early rain* is repentance completed in youth with tears, while the *later rain* is that which occurs in old age. Indeed, all things depend on God's kindness, therefore it says: *Until he receives.*

5:12 *But above all, my brothers, do not swear, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath. But let your yes be yes, and your no be no, so that you do not fall into hypocrisy.*

But someone will say: If someone is compelled to swear, what should be done? We say that the fear of God will be stronger than the necessity imposing force. However, someone might doubt, since the old law holds that those who swear by the name of the Lord are worthy of praise, how does grace forbid this? Therefore, we say that the old law, leading the Jews not to swear by idols, commanded them to swear by God: just as it

also commanded them to sacrifice to God, withdrawing them from sacrificing to idols: where it sufficiently taught the worship of God, then it also rejected sacrifices as useless: not seeking the sacrifice of animals, but a repentant soul as a sacrifice. But what is that? It is one that is entirely set ablaze with the fire of love through the modesty of the spirit, such as was also the soul of Paul, who, because some of the faithful were offended, was wondrously kindled.

"*But let your yes be yes.*" This means your deposit should be firm and reaffirmed, and denial in those things that do not correspond to the act.

"*That they may not fall into hypocrisy.*" The term *hypocrisy* refers to condemnation, that is, the condemnation that follows those who incessantly and without selection swear: and by the habit of swearing, they are led to perjury. Or even the term *hypocrisy* in this context has a specific meaning (for example, simulation) which is different from what it appears. How then does one who swears fall into hypocrisy? For in swearing, one is believed to be truthful, but by subsequent transgression, he is found to be lying instead of truthful. Or also because *ναί*, that is *yes*, is not presented for confirmation, nor is *οὐ*, that is *no*, in response to what does not correspond to the act. However, swearing by God is prohibited because of perjury; but swearing by heaven and the rest, so that these may not be referred to divine honor. For whoever swears, swears by the greater.

5:13-18 *Is anyone among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? 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 will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man is very effective. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*

Prayer go together with *affliction*, so that for the one who is afflicted, the withdraw from afflictions or temptations may be lighter. Then, when through prayer it has pleased God to remove the things that trouble us, and the soul has reached its state of peace and

tranquility, *let him sing psalms*, so that what is beneficial may be multiplied, and it may delight in spiritual joy. Indeed, joy and gladness are the right state of the mind, according to our great Basil, for hymns or divine praises confer the grace of consolation. Therefore, whoever has not progressed in this way, nor reached such a state, which David also calls holiness: "Sing to the Lord, you His saints," (Ps. 30:4) does great nonsense, singing vainly and empty, as the proverb says.

"anointing him with oil." This is what the apostles did while the Lord was still among men, anointing the sick with oil and healing them. (Mark 6:13)

"The effective prayer." The prayer of a righteous person is effective when he who prays helps the one for whom he prays with spiritual affliction. For if, while others pray for us, we indulge in pleasures and dissolutions, and our lives are full of transgressions, we dissolve through this the fervor of the prayer that strives for us: and that which Saint Peter says is fulfilled in us: "One builds and one destroys, what does it profit them but labor?" (Sirach 34:28)

5:19-20 *Brothers, if anyone among you has strayed from the truth and someone turns him back, let him know that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*

"someone turns him back, let him know." For it is necessary to serve the salvation of one's neighbor.

"whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way." This is also said by Jeremiah: "And if you separate the precious from the vile, you will be as my mouth." (Jer. 15:12) For whoever announces His words becomes the mouth of God. "For it is not you who speak," He says, "but the Spirit of my Father who speaks in you." (Matt. 10:19) Therefore, He also forbids the sinner, through David (Ps. 49:16), not to declare his justifications, and to take the covenant upon his lips.

The end, with the help of divine grace, of the Catholic Epistle of James.

