**11, 12.]** *Exhortation against evil speaking and uncharitable judgment.* Some  
have thought that there is no close connexion with the preceding: and Huther  
urges this from the milder word **brethren**  
being here used, whereas before it was  
“*adulteresses*,” “*sinners*,” “*double-  
minded.*” But it may be observed, that  
St. James frequently begins his exhortations mildly, and moves onward into  
severity: in this very paragraph we have  
an example of it, where unquestionably the  
tone of the question, “Who art thou that  
judgest thy neighbour?” is more severe  
than the “*brethren*” with which it began,  
The connexion is with the whole spirit of  
this part of the Epistle, as dissuading  
mutual quarrels, undue self exaltation, and  
neighbour depreciation. Chap. iii. dealt  
with the sins of the tongue: and now, after  
speaking against pride and strife, the  
Apostle naturally returns to them, as  
springing out of a proud uncharitable  
spirit. **Do not speak against one another**  
(it is evident, what sort of speaking against  
one another he means, by the junction of  
**judging** with it below: it is that kind which  
follows upon unfavourable judgment:—depreciation of character and motive), **brethren** (prepares the way for the frequent  
mention of *a brother* below): **he that  
speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his  
brother, speaketh against the law** (of  
Christian life: the old moral law glorified  
and amplified by Christ: the “*royal law,*”  
ch. ii. 8; “*law of Christ,*” i. 25), **and  
judgeth the law** (viz. by setting himself  
up over that law, as pronouncing upon its  
observance or non-observance by another):  
**but if** (as thou dost) **thou judgest the law,  
thou art not a doer of the law, but a  
judge** (seeing that he who judges, judges  
not only the man before him, but the law  
also: for he pronounces not only on the  
fact, but on that fact being, or not being,  
a breach of the law. So that thus to  
bring men’s actions under the cognizance  
of the law, is the office of a judge).

**12.]** **One** (God) **is the lawgiver and  
judge** (unites these two offices in His own  
person: the latter of them depending on  
the former), **He who is able to save and  
destroy** (He who is **able,** because He alone  
has the power to carry out His judgment  
when pronounced. On the word **save,** see  
on ch. i. 21, ii. 14, as relating to ultimate  
salvation: and on **save and destroy,** Matt.  
x. 28, to which this is the key-text, fixing  
the reference there to God, and not to  
God’s Enemy): **but thou, who art thou**  
(thou feeble man, sho hast no such power,  
and who art not the lawgiver) **that judgest  
thy neighbour?**

**13–17.]** *Against ungodly and presumptuous confidence in our worldly plans for  
the future.* This again falls into the  
previous context, where we are warned  
against hearts divided between God and  
the world. But, as has been rightly remarked as early as Bede, and by many  
since, St. James, though carrying on  
the same subject, is no longer, from this  
place to ch. v. 6, addressing members of  
Christ’s church, but those without: the  
ungodly and the rich in this world. This  
however must be taken with just this reservation,—that he addresses Christians in   
so far as they allow themselves to be identified with those others. This first paragraph, for example, might well serve as a  
warning for Christians who are in the habit  
of leaving God out of their thoughts and  
plans. That it is still *Jews* who are addressed, appears from ver. 15, and ch. v. 4.  
**Go to now** (Bengel calls this an exclamation to excite attention. This seems to be