

*C. L. Storr.*

THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY

A CRITICAL AND  
EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY

ON THE

EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES

BY

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## PREFACE.

A COMMENTARY like the present draws frankly from its predecessors, just as these in their turn used materials quarried by earlier scholars, whom they do not name on each occasion. The right to do this is won by conscientious effort in sifting previous collections and reproducing only what is trustworthy, apt, and instructive for the understanding of the text. If new illustrations or evidence can be added, that is so much to the good.

So far as I am aware, the solution I have given of the textual problem of 1<sup>7</sup>, the "shadow of turning," is strictly new. It is a matter of no consequence in itself, but acquires interest because it bears directly on the relation of the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts, and because Dr. Hort candidly recognised this reading of  $\aleph$  and B, as hitherto understood, to present a grave, although unique, obstacle to his and Dr. Westcott's theory.

To some other discussions, of the nature of detached notes, in which material is freshly or fully collected, I have ventured to call the reader's attention in the Table of Contents. It may also be not improper to remark that the account of extant ancient commentaries on James in Greek and Latin (pages 110-113) runs counter to some recent statements.

The explanation offered of "thou" and "I" in 2<sup>18</sup>, which seems to me to solve the problem of that passage, is not strictly new, but has been overlooked in most current works on the epistle. In the light of modern geographical knowledge the reference in 5<sup>7</sup> to "the early and latter rain" gains a greater importance than has generally been observed.

The summary of the epistle (pages 4f.) may make more

clear and intelligible than I have been able to do elsewhere the measure of unity which the epistle shows, and the relation of its parts.

A marked defect of this commentary, although one not peculiar to it, is that its rabbinical illustrations ought to be fuller. The glaring technical inconsistencies in the mode of referring to such passages as are cited will betray at once that they are drawn from various secondary sources and not from original and systematic research. It would be a great service to New Testament scholars to provide them with a new and adequate set of *Horae hebraicae*, and nowhere is the need so great as in James and the Gospel of Matthew.

These two writings are sources from which a knowledge of primitive Palestinian Christianity can be drawn, and they represent a different line of development from that of the Hellenistic Christianity which finds expression in Luke, Paul, and John. The grounds of the distinction are other than those which the Tübingen School believed to have controlled early Christian history, but they are no less clear or far-reaching. A just understanding of these tendencies requires a sound view not only of the origin and meaning of the Epistle of James, but of its history in the church. And here the critical question is that of the Shepherd of Hermas. The view stated below that Hermas betrays no knowledge of James and is not dependent on him was forced on me, I am glad to say, by the study of the facts, against a previous prejudice and without at first recognising where it led; but it is in truth the key to the history. If Hermas really read the Epistle of James so often that he knew by heart its most incidental phrases, now working them into his own writing and again making them the text for long expansions, the place of the epistle in early Christianity becomes an insoluble riddle.

The notes on textual criticism in the commentary are intended to treat chiefly those selected variants which make a difference in the sense; the materials employed do not ordinarily go beyond the apparatus of Tischendorf. I hope later to treat the criticism and history of the text of James in the light of all the

evidence, including as nearly as may be the whole body of extant minuscule Greek manuscripts.

To many friends who have helped me in countless ways and from great stores of thought and knowledge I would gratefully express the obligation that I owe them.

JAMES HARDY ROPES.

Harvard University,  
October 15, 1915.



## ABBREVIATIONS.

- Blass = F. Blass, *Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 21902.
- Blass-Debrunner = A. Debrunner, *Friedrich Blass' Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch, vierte völlig neugearbeitete Auflage*, 1913.
- Bultmann = R. Bultmann, *Der Stil der Paulinischen Predigt und die kynisch-stoische Diatribe* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, xiii), 1910.
- Burton, *Moods and Tenses* = E. D. Burton, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, 1900.
- Buttmann = A. Buttmann, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek*, Thayer's translation, 1876.
- DB = *Dictionary of the Bible*.
- DCA = W. Smith and S. Cheetham, *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, 1893.
- EB = *Encyclopædia Biblica*, 1899-1903.
- Gebser = A. R. Gebser, *Der Brief des Jakobus*, Berlin, 1828.
- GgA = *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen*.
- Goodspeed, *Index* = E. J. Goodspeed, *Index patristicus*, 1907.
- Hadley-Allen = J. Hadley, *A Greek Grammar for Schools and Colleges*, revised by F. D. Allen, 1884.
- Harnack, *CaL* = A. von Harnack, *Die Chronologie der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius* (Geschichte der altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius, Zweiter Theil), 1897, 1904.
- Hatch, *Essays* = Edwin Hatch, *Essays in Biblical Greek*, 1889.
- HDB = J. Hastings, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 1898-1902.
- Heisen = H. Heisen, *Novae hypothesis interpretandae epistolae Jacobi*, Bremen, 1739.
- Herzog-Hauck, *PRE* = A. Hauck, *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, begründet von J. J. Herzog, 1896-1913.

- Hort, "Introduction," "Appendix" = B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Introduction, Appendix*, 1881, <sup>2</sup>1896.
- JE = *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1901-6.
- JTS = *The Journal of Theological Studies*.
- Krüger = K. W. Krüger, *Griechische Sprachlehre für Schulen*, <sup>4</sup>1861-2.
- Leipoldt, GnK = J. Leipoldt, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, 1907-8.
- Lex. = J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1886.
- L. and S. = H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, <sup>1</sup>1883.
- Mayor = J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St. James*, 1892, <sup>2</sup>1897, <sup>3</sup>1910.
- Meyer = *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament begründet von Heinr. Aug. Wilh. Meyer*.
- J. H. Moulton, *Prolegomena = A Grammar of New Testament Greek. Vol I. Prolegomena*, 1906, <sup>2</sup>1908.
- NkZ = *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift*.
- NTAF = *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* by a Committee of the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, 1905.
- ol. = *olim* (used to indicate Gregory's former numeration of Greek Mss., in *Prolegomena*, 1894).
- OLBT = *Old-Latin Biblical Texts*, 1883-.
- Pauly-Wissowa, RE = G. Wissowa, *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft; neue Bearbeitung*, 1894-.
- Pott = D. J. Pott, in *Novum Testamentum Græce, editio Koppiana*, Göttingen, <sup>2</sup>1816.
- SB = *Studia biblica et ecclesiastica; Essays chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism*, 1890-.
- Schmidt, *Synonymik* = J. H. H. Schmidt, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, 1876-86.
- Schürer, GJV = E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, <sup>4</sup>1901-9.
- Taylor, SJF = C. Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, <sup>2</sup>1897.
- Trench, *Synonyms* = R. C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, <sup>12</sup>1894.
- TS = *Texts and Studies, Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature*, 1891-.
- TU = *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 1882-.

Vg	= Vulgate.	Zahn, <i>Einleitung</i>	= Theodor Zahn,
Westcott, <i>CNT</i>	= B. F. Westcott,	<i>Einleitung in das Neue</i>	
	<i>A General Survey of the</i>	<i>Testament</i> , <sup>1</sup> 1906-7.	
	<i>History of the Canon</i>	<i>GnK</i>	= <i>Geschichte des</i>
	<i>of the New Testament</i> ,		<i>Neutestamentlichen</i>
	<sup>1</sup> 1896.		<i>Kanons</i> , 1888-92.
Winer	= G. B. Winer, <i>A Gram-</i>	<i>Grundriss</i>	= <i>Grundriss der</i>
	<i>mar of the Idiom of the</i>		<i>Geschichte des Neutes-</i>
	<i>New Testament</i> , Thay-		<i>tamentlichen Kanons</i> ,
	er's translation, <sup>2</sup> 1873.		1901, <sup>2</sup> 1904.

The commentaries named on pp. 113-115 are frequently referred to by the author's name.

The page numbers sometimes given with citations from Philo are those of Mangey's edition.

The Psalms are regularly cited by the Hebrew numbers, both for Psalms and verses.



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## INTRODUCTION.

### I. THE EPISTLE.

The Epistle of James is a religious and moral tract having the form, but only the form, of a letter. It contains counsels and reflections on a variety of topics relating to personal character and right conduct, but attains a certain unity from the writer's own traits of sincerity, good sense, and piety, which are manifest in every paragraph. The epistle has been assigned to many dates and several places of origin, and is held by many to be a genuine writing of James the Lord's brother; but it is probably the pseudonymous production of a Christian of Jewish origin, living in Palestine in the last quarter of the first century or the first quarter of the second. The precise limits of the period within which it was written cannot be determined.

The epistle reflects the conditions of Jewish life in Palestine, and almost all the ideas have their roots in Jewish thought, but in much of the language, style, and mode of expression generally, and in some of the ideas, Hellenistic influences are unmistakable and strong. The interweaving of the two strains contributes much to the freshness and effectiveness of the epistle as a hortatory essay.

Our first certain knowledge of the book is from two sources of about the same date; namely, Origen (c. 185-c. 254) and the pseudo-clementine *Epistles to Virgins*, written in Palestine in Greek in the early decades of the third century. After Origen the Epistle of James seems soon to have become widely accepted in the Greek church as a part of the N. T. In the West the translation into Latin, made before 350, gives the earliest evidence of acquaintance with the epistle by Latin-speaking Christians. In Syria the Greek original was known

as early as the latter half of the fourth century, and it was first translated into Syriac (as a part of the Peshitto) in the early part of the fifth.

§ 1. THE PURPOSE AND CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE.

(a) *Purpose.*

The writer of the Epistle of James has in mind in his counsels the general needs of such Christians as he is acquainted with or of whose existence he is aware. The epistle does not treat of the special concerns of any particular church nor owe its origin to any specific occasion. The author addresses any Christians into whose hands his work may fall and touches upon subjects of wide and general interest. It cannot be said that the epistle has any more specific "purpose" than the general aim of edification. In the selection of topics the writer was governed partly by his own special interests at the moment, partly by what he drew from his own experience of the life about him as to the needs of human nature in general. Doubtless here, as always, the impulse to expression arose from the consciousness of having something to say which by its freshness either of form or substance would interest readers and strike home. There is no attempt in the epistle to give a full or systematic account of the author's ideas on any subject.

(b) *Contents.*

Like the ancient Wisdom-literature of the Hebrews, with which (in spite of entire difference of style) the writer probably shows some familiarity, much of the epistle is in aphoristic form. Such sentences, having their meaning complete in themselves, gain comparatively little illumination from the context; they are the well-rounded and compact results of whole trains of previous thought, and are successful in suggesting these to the reader's mind. In trying to interpret by a paraphrase, or to show the connection of ideas, it is difficult to avoid ascribing to the writer what he has not said, and elaborating thoughts hinted at, rather than fairly implied, by the text (*cf.* the full and instructive *Paraphrases* of Erasmus, and the attempts to

summarise the epistle found in the commentaries and the books on Introduction).

The aphorisms are not generally isolated, but are gathered in paragraphs; and these often have unity and show connection and progress of thought. The paragraphs are grouped loosely under more or less definite points of view, and in chs. 2 and 4<sup>1-5</sup><sup>6</sup> we find an approach to the fuller discussion of a topic from various sides. In some instances the connection between smaller divisions is made by the skilful use of the same or a similar word at the close of one sentence and the opening of the next (thus, 1<sup>1 f.</sup> *χαίρειν, χαράν*; 1<sup>4 f.</sup> *λειπόμενοι, λείπεται*; 1<sup>12 f.</sup> *πειρασμόν, πειραζόμενος*; 1<sup>21 f.</sup> *λόγον, λόγου*; 5<sup>16 f.</sup> *προσεύχασθε, δέσεις*; cf. the connection made by 3<sup>14-18</sup> between the divergent subjects of chs. 3 and 4). It is noteworthy that in the later chapters, where there is more continuity in the flow of thought, this method of "capping" sentences rarely occurs.

Beneath the whole epistle plainly lie two pervading and strongly felt principles: (1) the hatred of sham of every kind; (2) the conviction that God and the world are incompatible as objects of men's allegiance. Neither of these principles could serve as a title to the tract, but they bind its somewhat miscellaneous contents together in a sort of unity.

These general characteristics recall the spirit of the Hellenistic diatribes, among which the Epistle of James seems to find its fittest literary classification. There, as here, the aim to pierce through appearance and pretense to reality is a leading motive, and in the first two chapters of James we read what Christian earnestness thought it worth while to say on this favourite theme of the sometimes superficial or possibly flip-pant, but commonly serious even if unconventional, Greek popular street preacher,\* while James's discussion, in his last two chapters, of the two incompatible aims of human striving also treats a familiar topic of these moralists.†

\* P. Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum*<sup>2</sup>, 1912, p. 76 (Diogenes), p. 85 (later moral preachers).

† Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 85; A. Bonhöffer, *Epiktet und das Neue Testament* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, x), 1911, pp. 351 f.



These contacts make more intelligible the structure of the epistle. Familiarity with these great discussions, which had been given in public for centuries, would cause contemporary readers to see fitness in a series of topics which to us seem incongruous, to recognise the naturalness of transitions which strike us as awkward and abrupt, and to detect a latent unity which for us is obscured by the writer's habit of making no introductory announcement of his successive themes. It must, however, be emphasised that the writer's method is hortatory, not expository (about 60 imperatives occur in the 108 verses); his goal is nowhere so definitely formulated in his mind as to forbid a swift and unexpected leap to inculcate some important object of Christian endeavour (so in ch. 5). In such cases we cannot assume completely to trace the real sequence of his thought.

The following summary of the epistle is an attempt to indicate for the several larger divisions the point of view which may have led to the grouping of the paragraphs.

# 1<sup>1</sup>. *Epistolary Salutation.*

## I. 1<sup>2</sup>-2<sup>26</sup>. ON CERTAIN RELIGIOUS REALITIES.

### (1) 1<sup>2-18</sup>. *In the formation of character.*

- (a) 1<sup>2-4</sup>. The real nature of trouble is as an aid to a well-rounded character.
- (b) 1<sup>5-8</sup>. Real prayer requires unwavering faith.
- (c) 1<sup>9-11</sup>. Poverty is real wealth.
- (d) 1<sup>12</sup>. The endurance of trouble brings the crown of life.
- (e) 1<sup>13-18</sup>. The real cause of sin is not temptation sent by God, but lies within yourself.

### (2) 1<sup>19-26</sup>. *In religious instruction and public worship.*

- (f) 1<sup>19-25</sup>. Hearing is indeed better than talking, but the real response to the word of God is not to listen only but to obey.
- (g) 1<sup>26-27</sup>. Real worship is inconsistent with reckless speech; the best worship is kindly service and inner purity.

- (h) 2<sup>1-7</sup>. To court the rich and neglect the poor in the house of worship reverses real values.
- (i) 2<sup>8-13</sup>. For such conduct it is a futile excuse to urge that the law of *love* requires it.
- (j) 2<sup>14-26</sup>. Equally futile is it to pretend in excuse that the possession of *faith* dispenses from works.

## II. 3<sup>1-18</sup>. ON THE TEACHER'S CALLING.

- (a) 3<sup>1-12</sup>. Against ambition to be teachers. The teacher is under heavier responsibility than others; yet the tongue (the teacher's organ) is as powerful as the little rudder in a great ship, as dangerous as a little fire in a great forest, and is untamable.
- (b) 3<sup>13-18</sup>. The true wise man's wisdom must be meek and peaceable; such wisdom alone comes from above, and only peaceable righteousness receives the divine reward.

## III. 4<sup>1-5</sup><sup>20</sup>. WORLDLINESS AND THE CHRISTIAN CONDUCT OF LIFE CONTRASTED.

### (I) 4<sup>1-5</sup><sup>6</sup>. *Worldliness in rivalry with God as the aim of life.*

- (a) 4<sup>1-12</sup>. The cause of the crying evils of life is the pursuit of pleasure, an aim which is in direct rivalry with God and abhorrent to him.
- (b) 4<sup>13-17</sup>. The practical neglect of God seen in the trader's presumptuous confidence in himself; and the futility of it.
- (c) 5<sup>1-6</sup>. The practical neglect of God seen in the cruelty and luxury of the rich; and the appalling issue which awaits it.

### (2) 5<sup>7-20</sup>. *Counsels for the Christian conduct of life.*

- (d) 5<sup>7-11</sup>. Constancy and forbearance; and their reward.
- (e) 5<sup>12-18</sup>. The religious expression of strong emotion; and the efficacy of prayer.
- (f) 5<sup>19, 20</sup>. The privilege of service to the erring.

## § 2. THE LITERARY TYPE OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.\*

The character of James as an epistle is given it solely by 1<sup>1</sup>, which (see note *ad loc.*) has the conventional form usual in the opening sentence of a Greek letter. But the address (however interpreted) "to the people of God, in their dispersion" (ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ) implies that what follows is a literary tract intended for any Christian into whose hands it may fall, not a proper letter sent to a definite individual or even to a definite group of persons.

With this corresponds the epistle itself. The author's treatment of his themes is plainly governed by the conditions of life with which he is familiar, but nothing implies any definite or restricted circle within the Christian church as the persons to whom the letter is sent. The terms used are in part drawn from local conditions, but the exhortations themselves could apply anywhere where there were Christians. As a letter proper would be a substitute for a conversation, so such an epistle as this corresponds to a public address prepared for delivery to an indefinite number of audiences and equally suitable for all of them. A letter proper is written to be *sent* to the person or persons addressed. A tract is, in more or less formal fashion, *published*. The same piece of writing might, indeed, be in itself fit for either use; in that case the author's purpose could be learned only from the form of the epistolary address. But in the present instance neither contents nor address indicates that the letter was ever intended to be sent to any specific church or churches.

On the history of the epistolary form in classical and Christian literature, see R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog*, 1895, esp. i, pp. 300-308, 352-358, ii, p. 8; H. Peter, *Der Brief in der römischen Litteratur* (Abhandlungen der phil.-hist. Classe der Kgl. Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften, xx), 1901; K. Dziatzko, art. "Brief," in Pauly-Wissowa, *RE*, 1899; A. Deissmann, *Bibelstudien*, 1895 (Eng. transl. 1901), art. "Epistolary Literature," in *EB*; H. Jordan, *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 1911.

\* C. F. G. Heinrici, *Der literarische Charakter der neutestamentlichen Schriften*, 1908, brings out many noteworthy points of view with regard to the various aspects of these questions, and was one of the first in recent times to call attention to their importance.

The Epistle as a form of literature, in distinction from its use as the convenient instrument of personal intercourse, seems to have its roots in the Greek literary history of the fourth and third centuries before Christ. Eminent men of a still earlier period had written letters, often long and weighty, and these had sometimes been collected. Such were those of Isocrates, of which some genuine representatives may perhaps be included in the extant collection bearing his name. Especially Aristotle, †322 B.C., wrote letters, and his tracts of counsel to Alexander and to Themison, King of Cyprus, gained by virtue of their personal dedication something of the character of letters. Epicurus, †270 B.C., sought to strengthen the fellowship of his disciples by writing letters, of some of which the addresses at least are known to us (πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ φίλους, πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Ἀσίᾳ φίλους, πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Λαμψάκῳ φίλους, πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Μυτιλήνῃ φιλοσόφους),\* and the disciples followed the master's example. Many letters of this type were by their nature of interest to others than the persons addressed, and when collected and more widely circulated became works of literature.

In the same direction led the custom of dedicating books to individuals and so giving the whole book in some sense the character of an epistle.†

The result of all this was that the epistle became a usual form for a treatise, taking a place like that held by the dialogue. The transition corresponded to the changed times and the expansion of Hellenism. Once all higher culture had been concentrated at Athens, and a group there gathered for grave conversation presented the normal relation of author and audience which the book affected to record and perpetuate. Now educated men were diffused in countless centres throughout a widely extended world of Greek civilisation, and the direct method of address was, naturally, by a letter.‡ In the Hellenistic period all the world wrote letters, and many of them were intended for publication. Philosophers (especially the Epicureans and

\* H. Usener, *Epicurea*, 1887, pp. 91, 135.

† R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog*, i, p. 173.

‡ So Hirzel, *op. cit.* i, pp. 352 f.