

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

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The Epistle of James by Augustus Neander

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AUGUSTUS NEANDER

**THE EPISTLE OF
JAMES**

THE
EPISTLE OF JAMES,

PRACTICALLY EXPLAINED,

BY

DR. AUGUSTUS NEANDER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

MRS. H. C. CONANT.

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

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1852.

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216 WILLIAM STREET, N. Y.

It is with great pleasure that the translator offers to the Christian public, the second number of Neander's Practical Expositions, believing that it will be found no less interesting than the preceding volume on the Epistle to the Philippians. It is characterized by the same masterly power of development, the same depth and fulness of Christian experience. Seed-thoughts crowd every page; and many single passages, in sublimity of moral sentiment and beauty of illustration, equal anything which Neander has written. As being more strictly practical in its character, and elucidating a portion of the Divine word less understood, it may be even more generally acceptable and useful than the former Exposition. It restores to us, so to speak, one of the lost treasures of the church; for no part of the New Testament has been more misunderstood and perverted, or suffered more general neglect, than this Epistle. Luther rejected it without ceremony, calling it "an epistle of straw;" and many more timid minds have been greatly perplexed by its apparent contrariety to the doctrines of grace. The discussion of its character and claims, hitherto confined to scholars, is here presented in a form intelligible and practically useful to common Christians.

By the light of Neander's comprehensive mind, we see in James not the opponent of Paul, or of the great doctrine of justification.

by faith alone; but the earnest expounder of that "Law of Liberty," of which justification by faith is the chief corner-stone. Paul develops the principle; James depicts its results in the life. Paul unfolds the great love of God towards us; James points out the tests, whether this love has been received into our hearts and become there the vitalizing, reigning principle. It is the tree known by its fruit, the enkindled light by the light which it imparts, the life within by the outward signs of life. In the personality of James, and the character of the churches whom he addressed, we find the true key to this Epistle. Placed side by side with the Sermon on the Mount, it is seen to be a faithful reflection of that divine original; its whole essence and intent being comprised in those words of our Saviour, which we have prefixed to this volume as its most appropriate motto: "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say!"

One opinion advanced in the author's introductory remarks, viz., that James was not an Apostle, may not gain the assent of all his readers. Neander himself formerly held,* with many other distinguished critics, that this epistle was written by the Apostle James, the son of Alphaeus and of Mary the sister of our Lord's mother; who, as being the near kinsman of the Lord, was in accordance with Jewish usage called his brother. The writer may be permitted to suggest that the practical inferences, here so skilfully traced, might be drawn, though not indeed with equal force, from the author's earlier view. James, as the Lord's own brother, or as a near kinsman, must in either case have been subject to very similar influences, arising from near earthly relationship to Christ. In the exposition itself, there is nothing at variance with

* Paulus und Jacobus, 1822.

either supposition. Nor does either view affect what Neander so truthfully says of the relations of the mother of Jesus, and of the contrast between the earthly and the spiritual; since there were, as we have every reason to believe, "brothers of the Lord" in the strictest sense.

To facilitate the use of the translation, the first part has been divided into sections with a brief statement of the contents of each, for which the translator is responsible. The quotations from the Epistle are given in the words of the English version, with the author's variations in brackets wherever they are made the basis of his view.

The third and last number of this series, the Exposition of the First Epistle of John, was prepared for the press by the author, and has been given to the public since his decease. A translation of it will follow as soon as practicable.

H. C. C.

ROOSEVELT, N. Y., Jan. 1852.



THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. Diversities in modes of religious development, and in the consequent forms of faith.

It is the remark of one of the early Church Fathers, that what Paul says of himself,—viz. that he became all things to all men, that he might win all to the Gospel,—is true in a still higher degree of Him who was in this the Apostle's pattern, of Christ himself. We see it in that manifold variety of manner, adapted to all the varieties in human character and relations, by which, both in his personal labors on earth, and in his spiritual revelations among all nations since his ascension, he has drawn men to a saving knowledge of himself. His manner, while laboring upon earth, is indeed an image of that invisible divine agency extending through all times, in which he evermore reveals