

**THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST.  
JAMES: A REVISED TEXT WITH  
TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION,  
AND NOTES CRITICAL AND  
EXEGETICAL**

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The Catholic epistle of St. James: a revised text with translation, introduction, and notes critical and exegetical by Francis Tilney Bassett

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**FRANCIS TILNEY BASSETT**

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*Rev. B. Wafield*  
*January 1881.*  
THE CATHOLIC

# EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

A REVISED TEXT.

WITH TRANSLATION, INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES,  
CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL.

BY

FRANCIS TILNEY BASSETT, M.A.,

VICAR OF DULVERTON,

AUTHOR OF "TRANSLATION OF THE PROPHET HOSEA," ETC.



Mulce terricolis linguas, celestibus unum.

LONDON:  
SAMUEL BAGSTER AND SONS,  
15, PATERNOSTER ROW.  
1876.

*Τοὺς μὲν παράκλησις  
κατορθοῖ, τοὺς δὲ ἐπιτίμησις.*

St. Greg. Nazianzen.

TO THE

REV. THOMAS DEHANY BERNARD, M.A.,

CANON RESIDENTIARY OF WELLS, AND RECTOR OF WALCOT,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE

INSCRIBED WITH GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM.

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## P R E F A C E .

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IN the midst of the multitude of commentaries, critical, exegetical, and homiletical, which swell our religious literature at the present day, an apology may seem to be the necessary prelude to introducing this small volume to the theological public.

The great uncertainty that hangs like a mist over the authorship of this Epistle, the long birth-struggle that preceded its affiliation among the canonical Scriptures, the peculiarity of its structural composition, the absence of Christian dogma, the confessed difficulty in harmonizing the treatise on justification with the doctrinal definitions of St. Paul, and other inspired writers on the same subject, may furnish sufficient ground for some further inquiry, especially as, to the writer's mind, the whole question has been treated in an unsatisfactory manner; the evidence of facts has not been fairly admitted, theories or guesses of by-gone days have been accepted without sifting their value, and these loose and unsupported conjectures of an uncritical period, leaning on the artificial aid of an unquestioning tradition, have come down to the church of our day, and been received as authoritative and reliable.

The present work proposes a system which is based in the first place on external evidence and objective facts, the only sure foundation for the student of Scripture to build upon, and this in the second place is strengthened by internal evidence and undesigned coincidences, the screws and rivets which, though small and to many invisible, have no mean office in bracing and holding together the superstructure. This system, it is believed, will account for the various perplexing phenomena both in the history and the contents of the Epistle.

The pages have not been burdened with an ever-recurring and overwhelming reference to authorities, as is too frequent in theological works; it will be enough to say that solitude in opinion has not been regarded as strength, and above all the hope has been cherished that the Spirit of God may vouchsafe to employ the feeble *ὀπρωί* of the pilot to guide the ship to the haven of truth, chap. iii. 4.

My thanks are due for many acts of courtesy and kindness to Professors Westcott, Lightfoot, Swainson, and Wright, of the University of Cambridge; and to the Rev. F. Field, late Fellow of Trinity College, and, through him, to Dr. Ceriani of the Ambrosian Library, Milan, and to Dr. Lange of the University of Bonn.

DULVERTON VICARAGE,

*February 8th, 1876.*

## THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

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### INTRODUCTION.

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#### THE AUTHORSHIP.

OPINION, almost universal, has excluded St. James, the son of Zebedee, from the authorship of this Epistle: the general verdict may be summed up in one word, "It is impossible." Whether this sentence is arrived at on enlightened and sufficient grounds is a grave question. However that may be, the honour of penning this Epistle has been conferred upon another James, who is called the brother of the Lord, and was the Bishop of Jerusalem, although no small controversy has arisen as to his identity with James the Less, or rather the Little, the son of Alphaeus, one of the twelve Apostles.

It will be sufficient for us to distinguish him at present from James the Elder, as he has been called, the brother of John and the son of Zebedee, who was one of the first called among the Apostles and one of the favoured three among them.

In entering upon the question of the authorship of this Epistle, it is necessary to premise that the whole subject is exceedingly unsettled, and that the ordinary opinion rests on very weak and uncertain foundations; and further, that there is some evidence for believing