

ever, the lessons are most important and much needed to-day.

Topical Analysis.—(1) The evil of an unbridled tongue, 1-10. (2) The spirit will be manifested by the life, 11-17.

On the *first* topic we may show how terrible may be, and have been, the utterance of angry, passionate or untruthful words. The history of the world is full of instances of what "words, idle words," have done; families have been estranged, churches broken up, disorder brought into communities, civil and foreign wars provoked by the tongue. Moses, meek man as he was, lost the earthly Canaan through his tongue. Some harsh words cost King Rehoboam the fairest half of his kingdom, and it was the blasphemous utterances of the officers of the King of Assyria that brought down the wind of death, sweeping away his mighty army as much chaff. It is a fire, fire burns, inflicts pain and suffering; so does *evil speaking*, the utterance of slander, falsehood and detraction. Fire destroys, and what can cause more moral ruin than the tongue; an insinuation, a false suggestion respecting another, will destroy his character sometimes irremediably; let it be whispered that such and such an active Christian worker is not what he should be in his family or his business, and hints that if something were told all his influence for good would be destroyed. Fire spreads. Nothing is so infectious as evil talk, passion invokes passion—slander, too frequently, grows in the mind of the man who hears it, and the next utterance of it is magnified and intensified. Show your scholars that an evil tongue has all the evils without any of the blessings of fire. Very earnestly impress upon them to "cease from anger," to bridle the tongue by God's grace; not to be easily provoked by the utterances of others, and to turn a deaf ear to all slander and falsehood.

On the *second* topic, emphasize the illustration of the Apostle, as to the impossibility of evil utterances coming forth from a good heart; that Christ can be the fountain of life in the soul, and yet all that comes forth in the life be opposed to the sweetness of His gospel. Bring out the fact that the first and constant effort of "the wisdom that is from above," or true religion, is to show in the life all the Christ-like qualities of ver. 17. Dwell on these, and ask your scholars to lay these as a measuring rod against their own lives, so that they may prove themselves to see what manner of spirit they are of, and tell them of the transforming power of the love of Jesus, that took a blaspheming, persecuting Saul, and changed him into an apostle and a martyr for the truth.

Truths and Teachings.—We are responsible for the right use of the tongue.

Be humble, meek, and wait God's leading to go forward. The tongue has power for good or evil.

He who gives way to an evil tongue will find his whole life affected by it.

The heart cannot be right with God, when the tongue is evil to man.

There is wisdom from above; God's love sown in a pure heart, and the fruit is peace.

Main Lesson.—THERE ARE LAWS FOR THE TONGUE.

- (1) A law of meekness, ver. 13—Matt. 5:44; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:23.
- (2) A law of purity, ver. 17—Phil. 1:27.
- (3) A law of sincerity, ver. 17—Psalms 34:13; Eph. 4:23; Eph. 4:29.
- (4) A law of love, ver. 17—Ecc. 10:12; Eph. 4:15.
- (5) A law of spirituality, ver. 15—1 Pet. 3:24; 77:12; 145:5; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6.

LESSON IV.

Jan. 27, } **LIVING AS IN GOD'S SIGHT.** } James 4:
1884. } 7-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up."—James 3:10.

TEACH AND WRITE.—As in last two lessons.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 7.—"Submit—therefore:" this implies something that has gone before, and the preceding two verses will tell us to what is the reference; speaking of humility, the apostle says, that he "resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble;" for that reason, that we may receive grace, we are "therefore" to "submit;" and the injunction after explaining the nature of true humility, concludes in Ver. 10: "Resist the devil:" just as you submit to God; the latter implies the former. The devil is proud, and often tempts by pride; resist, by refusing to yield to his temptations, and he "will flee," or "shall flee," for it is a promise rather than a statement.

Ver. 8. "Draw nigh—He will draw nigh:" this follows resisting the devil. How draw nigh? in prayer, in the ordinance of God's house, in conscious love and sympathy; live as in His presence; then, will you realize more sensibly that presence, and have the consciousness of His loving care. Glad teaching this. "Cleanse—hands, purify—hearts:" hands are the instruments of action, and are polluted by evil doing; see the solemn rebuke in Isa. 1:15, opposed to 1 Tim. 2:8; with clean hands we may resist the devil, with pure hearts may draw nigh to God.

Ver. 9. The double-minded are still addressed, and are taught that God will lead them to this purity through affliction, and mourning, and tears; such affliction is blessed. "Laughter:" the apostle is speaking of those who professed Christ, and yet lived lives of careless luxury and mirth, "heaviness:" it, a casting down of the eyes, a hanging of the head. See Isa. 58:5; Micah 6:8; Luke 18:13.

Ver. 10. "Humble yourselves:" take your appropriate place in the sight of God, do this, and "He will lift you up," will raise you from the depths, place you at His side, and call you His child. The parables of the Prodigal Son, and of the Pharisee and the Publican in one verse.

Ver. 11. Another warning against an unbridled tongue. "Speak not:" Rev., "against another:" so in next sentence: "He that speaketh against a brother speaketh against the law;" it will be easily seen that this change brings out the thought more clearly: it is, that he who speaks evil of another, by that very act speaks evil of the law of love, of Christian liberty, violates the teachings of the great Law-giver. Matt. 7:1-5, he that does this is "not a doer of the law, but a judge" (last mention of the law in N. T.). Those who are the readiest to condemn others are often the least careful to keep Christ's law in the spirit of the Master.

Ver. 12. "Is one," or, as Rev., "One only is the Law-giver and Judge, even He who," etc.; the Lord Jesus. He who gave the law can alone judge transgressors against it; to Him alone belongs the right and power "to save and to destroy;" "who art thou?" weak and sinful thyself. There are three things man must not judge: God's counsels, God's word, and men's hearts.

Ver. 13, 14. "Go to now:" a strong expressive phrase to arrest attention. "Into such a city:" the mode of doing trade in the East largely to this day; not remaining in one place as the Westerns; one says "to-day," another "to-morrow," as if they had a free choice, and the decision only rested with themselves. "A year," lit. one year; they would go on to arrange for other years as well. "Know not what on the morrow:" their own wise King had old them the same truth hundreds of years before. Prov. 27:1. "A vapour:" Rev., "ye are a vapour:" lit., a puff of vapour, and as yourselves, so all your purposes and plans: they thus appear with the rising sun, and leave no trace behind. So Shakespeare's famous lines:

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all that it inherit, shall dissolve, [vision,
Fade quite away; and, like the useless fabric of a
Leave not a rack behind."