

stricter account will be required of such. They will be tried by the standard of their professions.

Ver. 2. "Many things—offended:" or, all—offend—REV. "in many things all stumble:" this liability to error is great in all, but especially in those who set up for public teachers, and who have therefore to say much. "Bridle the whole body:" that is if a man is able to restrain, check, control the use of the tongue, he will be able also to control his whole body." As if the apostle had said that it is easier to keep from gluttony and drunkenness than from a misuse of the tongue, and that he who can effectively do this last will be able to do the first also, "a perfect man," in that sense.

Ver. 3. "We put bits:" REV. is better, making the argument continuous—"Now, if we put the horses bridles into their mouths—we turn," etc. The mention of bridling and the position of the tongue where the bridle is placed, introduces this similitude. "Turn—whole body:" just as the bridle governs and turns the horse, he who can control his tongue can govern his whole body; or so the tongue of a persuasive speaker will turn a man, an assembly, and sway the fate of nations—both ideas are true.

Ver. 4. Another illustration, "ships—helm:" the rudder is small compared to the size of the ship; the winds that beat upon it drive it about, yet, superior in power is the "small helm" (in those days shaped like an oar). "Turned whither the impulse of the steersman willeth." So REV. "listeth:" old English for willeth, or desireth.

Ver. 5. We now get the application—as the bit to the horse, or the rudder to the ship, is the tongue to the body—small but all important; the tongue may boast of its power, and such it does possess. "How great a matter:" the Greek word means wood, so it is correctly rendered in REV., lit. what an immense fire a spark may kindle; there are plenty of proofs of this truth to hand.

Ver. 6. "Tongue—a fire:" what does it not sometimes set in a blaze. "Defileth:" thus it is a world of iniquity. "Course of nature:" or the orb, or wheel of creation. The idea seems to be that the tongue has the power, as we say, to set the world on fire, to bring an universal disorder and violence. "Setteth—set on fire:" from the active to the passive. "Hell:" fire is connected with our idea of hell; the course of an evil tongue begins there, and has the spirit which reigns there. The very word "devil" in the original means traducer or slanderer.

Ver. 7, 8. There is nothing so fierce as fire and what it represents, the tongue, for "every kind of beasts," etc. "By mankind:" hath been brought into tame subjection by the nature of man—even beast nature is subject to human nature. "But the tongue—no man:" not that it cannot be tamed, but that man cannot do it; beasts cannot tame beasts, but the superior nature of man can, so God, and He alone, can control all the passions of man. "Unruly evil:" incapable of restraint, may, though nature hath placed before it a double barrier, the lips and the teeth, it bursts forth to spread disorder and ruin. "Poison:" worse than the poison of serpents is the poison of an evil tongue, slander and spite.

Ver. 9, 10. "Therewith," twice "blessed:" REV. "the Lord and Father:" but while some use the tongue for that purpose, others use it for cursing man, the child and image of God; or if, as some suppose, the writer is alluding to the unbelieving Jews who, as we are told, in their religious services solemnly cursed the followers of Jesus, the contrast is still more striking.

Ver. 11, 12. "Ought not to be:" the wrong of this is evident. God and the devil cannot dwell in the same heart. By four impossible things the apostle shows how true blessing and cursing cannot come from the same tongue, that it is unnatural. In God's creation there is harmony; there are no contradictions in nature such as this. No fig-tree can

"bear olive berries," neither "a vine figs." It would be opposed to the whole course of God's law written upon His works "Fountain:" the heart, the opening of the fountain is the mouth; the image is appropriate to Palestine, where salt and bitter springs are found. A "sweet" spring may be near, but "sweet and bitter" never flow from the same opening. Only grace can change the bitter Marah waters of the heart, so that what it sends forth shall be sweet.

Ver. 13. "Who is a wise man:" all wish to appear so, unhappily all are not so. "Let him show out of a good conversation:" REV. "by his good life:" conversation is a scriptural phrase for the whole life and actions. (1 Pet. 2: 12.) "Meekness of wisdom:" true wisdom is meek, it is only ignorance that is conceited and proud. *Hamilton* says, "meekness is love at school—at the Saviour's school," a very beautiful thought. Happy the scholar who learns from such a teacher. This very evidently refers to those who undertake the work of public teaching, the idea with which the chapter opens.

Ver. 14. "Envyng—strife," these things among professing Christians? Alas! yes, now as then; there is an emulation that is holy, but it is not a bitter factious jealousy. "Glory not:" it is rather a matter of shame. "Lie not:" to claim to be the servants of Jesus, and especially to assume to be teachers, and yet to show such conduct is to be against the gospel, which is truth and righteousness.

Ver. 15, 16. "Not from above:" in contrast with close of verse, he who acts thus is not inspired by God; his inspiration is "earthly," not heavenly, "sensual," or animal, not spiritual, for that is from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2: 14), the middle term between "earthly" and "devilish," there is a wisdom, a knowledge, yea, a belief in God, which devils have. (Ch. 2: 19.) "Envyng and strife," or "jealousy and faction," as REV., the characteristics of the wisdom which is not from above, for it brings forth confusion; "the experience of men everywhere testifies to the truth that a spirit of envy and strife brings about confusion and "every evil work."

Ver. 17, 18. The apostle now gives the opposite picture, there is a "wisdom—from above," and its "fruits are "pure." First and foremost, there is no defilement in that wisdom, it is "first pure" because that is its essence; then follow its manifestations—"peaceable," opposed to strife and contentions, as ver. 14; "gentle," not harsh in our judgment of others, bearing with their infirmities and forgiving injuries, judging all by the law of love. "Easy," etc., not stiff, stern, obstinate, unyielding, especially with reference to an offence; "mercy—good fruits," feeling for others, full of the fruits of the spirit. (Gal. 5: 22, 23.) Two of these fruits are mentioned, "without partiality," not esteeming one better than another (ch. 2: 1); or, without doubting, free from every kind of duplicity or uncertainty, "without hypocrisy," no pretence, dissimulation or flattery, continuing the idea of the previous clause. Here are seven qualities of wisdom, seven colours of the Divine rainbow—all blended into the one "Light of the world." "Fruit of righteousness—peace:" righteousness is peaceful, "peace" is fruitful; he who sows peace, whose course is peace, shall find an abundant fruition, a harvest of peace.

#### HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Prefatory.—There is little doubt that the admonitions and scathing rebukes of this lesson were drawn forth by a crying evil in the church; there was a desire to teach by men who were ignorant of the true principles of Christ's religion. Of the change of heart which brings with it a change of life, they knew nothing, and so, while professing to teach others, they did not illustrate the pure and peaceable influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; they were utterly unqualified in heart and life. Apart from this, how-