

infuriate Othello, that he would not even listen to his wife's defence of herself. In his passion of wrath he killed her. Iago poisoned Othello's mind. And the poisoners are busy everywhere, separating friends, breaking up families, splitting churches in two, making trouble in business, politics and society. And other people, who don't stop to think what they are doing, help to distribute the poison.

The tongue can no man tame, v. 8. God is always requiring of us impossible things. The tongue must be tamed if one is to become a perfect man; and yet, "the **Dressed In Steel tongue can no man tame.**"

But impossible tasks ought never to discourage us when they are commanded of God. For with every bidding of His comes the strength to perform it. Before He sends us out to the duty to which no human power is equal, He permits us to touch His all-conquering Hand, and then hindrances melt away like snow before the suns of spring. Spurgeon once said, "I have read of those who bathe in certain baths of Germany which are much impregnated with iron, that they have felt after bathing, as if

they were made of iron and were able in the sun to cast off heat as though they were dressed in steel. Happy indeed are they who bathe in the bath of such a promise as this: 'I am with thee.' Put your whole self into that promise, and you will feel your strength renewed, so that you can bear troubles which before would have overburdened you."

Lesson Points

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, D.D.

Those who would teach others, must not forget to teach themselves. v. 1.

Humility is the first step to excellence. v. 2.

With Jesus at the helm we shall voyage safely through life. v. 4.

The world needs doers, but it can get on very well without boasters. v. 5.

Corruptio optimi fit pessima—the best, when perverted, becomes the worst. v. 6.

Only He who made the tongue can keep it under control. v. 8.

"The praise of God is not seasonable in the mouth of one who reviles God's children." v. 10.

All nature rebukes the tongue that is given to evil speaking. vs. 11, 12.

TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

For Teachers of the Older Scholars and Bible Classes

By Rev. W. H. Smith, Ph.D., Fredericton, N.B.

There was a strong tendency amongst the members of the early church to assume the office of teacher. The work, however, was by many viewed lightly, merely as an opportunity for talking. James warns his readers against this offence, by reminding them that words carry moral responsibility. This leads him to deal with the tongue. His thought is fixed upon two main propositions:

1. *The supreme place of the tongue in personal life*, vs. 1-8. Note the three facts: (a) The tongue becomes a test of character. Perfect self-control in speech is an evidence of perfect self-mastery of the whole body. The tongue is viewed as the most easily tempted and hardest to control of all the members of the body. Wise silence keeps the powers of mind and body under self-direction.

Once a word is spoken thoughtlessly, we are not only at its mercy, but it may also give occasion for angry controversy. It is a commonplace, that one word leads to another, and passion is inflamed by wrathful speech.

(b) The tongue controls life. Study the two illustrations, the bridle and the helm, both guiding in their purpose. Many great men have lost their golden opportunity by hasty words. Many have been ruined by gossip. The reckless tongue has driven many otherwise noble ones to wretchedness and misery. (c) It is inherently malignant. Note the change of figure, and the abundance of illustrations and pictures James uses to enforce his thought. Study the imagery which represents the tongue as: (1) inflaming the worst passions of life (How vice is spread by filthy words and suggestions!); (2) fed by hell; (3) naturally unmanageable; (4) poisonous. The teacher should bring out the full force of these expressions.

2. *The evil consequences*, vs. 9-12. The uncontrolled tongue leads to moral chaos.