

James 3 : 1-12—Memory Verses, 8-10.

Golden Text—Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.
—Proverbs 21 : 23.



1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth !

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is

an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same time sweet water and bitter ?

12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries ? either a vine, figs ? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

THE LESSON RETOLD

At the time when James lived, any one in the congregation who wished might rise up and begin to teach the people. Some persons, however, were very anxious to be teachers, who themselves knew very little and greatly needed to be taught.

James, in his letter, warned these people not to be so eager to become teachers. "Those who wished to teach others", he said, "must themselves try to be wise and good. No one should seek to be a teacher, unless he is sure that he is fit for the work. For, one day, they would have all to give a strict account to God of what they had said and taught."

And then James went on to tell what a wonderful power there is in the tiny tongue: it can do a great deal of good, if the heart is right, or a great deal of harm, if the heart is

evil. All should be very, very careful of the words they speak.

"It is very hard", James says, "to keep the tongue back from speaking wrongly, for it is very strong. It is like the small bit in the horse's mouth, which turns about his whole body; or like the small rudder, which makes the mighty ship move this way or that, as the captain wishes. If we can keep our tongues from evil words, we shall be able also to keep ourselves from doing evil in other ways.

"A very little fire will grow into a great blaze. A few words from a little tongue is like a fire. There is in it a whole world of evil. Who can tell the harm that may come from the wicked stories, the falsehoods, the angry words, that some tongues speak? A wicked tongue does harm to the one who