

ing has its dangers. Let all take care that they are qualified to instruct before they desire to teach. If a man is able to control his speech it is a sign that he has reached a high standard of christian living. Indeed if he can bridle his tongue, he has power to bridle his whole body, and to resist the temptations that come to him through the senses.

Ver. 3. Horses through bits are used by men, and are thus forced to do as their drivers wish. Through a little instrument applied in a right way much good results.

Ver. 4. Ships great and, when out of the waters, most unwieldy, can be easily turned and controlled by little helms. And so the importance of the controlling of the little member of the tongue, is great. In the government of the body the power of using the tongue aright is all important.

Ver. 5. The tongue is apt to run to evil. If not put to right uses, it is sure to become a fruitful source of evil. As a little fire kindles a great conflagration, so the fire of the tongue may spread to all the members.

Ver. 6. In itself the tongue is a fire, is a world of iniquity. It utters all evil thoughts and desires, and is the direct and indirect cause of much of the sin to be found in the world. This evil member brings the spots of defilement on the whole body. The wheel of life, which begins to roll at birth and rolls on till death, is set on fire through the wickedness of the tongue. Nay as the tongue can only be cleansed by the fire from heaven, so it is often actually consumed by the fire of hell. The term hell refers to the evil influences that play on the sinful and come from the unseen world.

Ver. 7. This verse shows how man has tamed the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea. Rats, wasps, and lions have been tamed; and man is constantly humanising all things.

Ver. 8. But to tame the unruly tongue is not in man's power, and can only be done by God's. The passion of sin is in the tongue, and this makes it a death bringing member.

Ver. 9. How inconsistent are the uses of the tongue? At one time it is used to praise God for what He is, and has done for men; at another to curse men, to express the desire to injure a brother, a brother made in God's image, and dear to the heart of God, as His child.

Ver. 10. In the 10th verse James con-

demns this two-fold use of the tongue, thus blessing God and cursing man.

Ver. 11. The mixing of good and evil is not found in nature. When the water gushes out of the rock it is of one kind. You do not find sweet water this moment, and bitter the next.

In Palestine many of the springs are far from fresh. Indeed those on the eastern slopes of Judah and Benjamin are brackish. But they are constant in the quality of their waters. When man is good he ought to speak the words of truth and of right, and in love. It is wrong to sing to the Lord one minute, and the next lie and blaspheme, as so many do.

Ver. 12. James here asks a pointed question. In Palestine around every court yard, and almost every house, figs and vines grow most luxuriantly. Then in such places as the Mount of Olives, the olive trees are found in abundance. But in no case did the one kind of tree bear the fruit natural to another. Each tree bore its own peculiar fruit, and no other. In thus limiting itself man has an illustration of what he ought to do in his speech. Made for God the tongue should praise him; made to aid man it ought to bless a brother, and curse not.

Then James goes back to the idea of springs. A salt spring yields salt water, and not fresh. If blessing comes from lips tainted with cursing, then it is in the end transformed into a curse. The twofold power of the tongue is only in appearance; for all is bad. "The prayers and praises of the hypocrite who cherishes hatred in his heart, are worse than worthless"—they are wicked.

Ver. 13. This text shows us the wise man of the New Testament. The term "wise" lays the emphasis on the moral side and the term "endued with knowledge" on the intellectual. If a man would have the qualifications of a true teacher, he must have moral and spiritual qualities, such as were found in Christ; and to these must be added knowledge. God's children should be like their Father, living in light in which there is no darkness. Having these two graces the true christian is to show by his conversation, or rather by his life, his works of faith and his labours of love. He is not only to be good, but his goodness is to be of the noblest type. And in thus bearing the christian fruit, the ideal wise man will be meek—free from the