

contentious spirit, Christ-like. (Matt. 11 : 29.) "Engrafted." REV. "Implanted:" the allusion is, perhaps, to the parable of the sower, and it is the implanted, or sown; word which, received into the soul, is to spring up a plant of righteousness. "Able to save:" mighty power of the incorrupted seed. (1 Pet. 1 : 23.)

Ver. 22. "Doers:" *Alford* says, "not only do, but he does." It carries an enduring, a sort of official force with it; "let this be your occupation." "Deceiving," as alas many do in this very fashion—so did some of old. (Rom. 2 : 13.)

Ver. 23, 24. The writer now gives an illustration. A man beholds his face in a glass, so the hearer beholds his natural moral face in God's Word. "Glass:" REV. "mirror:" these in ancient times were generally made of polished plates of metal; he contemplates himself, then straightway forgets, or, as has been said, if it were possible for him to go down the street and meet himself, he would not recognize by his memory of the likeness; so, after hearing the truth, and coming in some degree to a knowledge of himself, the man turns away to the world and worldly things, and forgets all that he has heard of his own sinfulness; but forgetfulness is no excuse.

Ver. 25. "Whoso looketh:" the word means more than simply looking, it implies a search after something hidden, looking beneath the surface. "Perfect law of liberty:" the Gospel of Christ, it is God's law to us, but it is freedom. "Perfect:" as distinguished from the Jewish law, which was imperfect. (See Matt. 5 : 21-48.) "Continued:" does not go away as in preceding verses. Omit "therein," it is supplied by the translators and spoils the sense. "Blessed in his:" REV. "doing," that is the correct idea, the fulfilling of the Word of God brings blessedness with it. A life of obedience is a life of blessedness. (Psa. 19 : 11.)

Ver. 26. The idea of ver. 19, 20, repeated with emphasis. "Seemeth:" makes an external profession of religion. "Bridleth:" a metaphor he uses again (ch. 3 : 3-5); a very fitting word, how many are the sins of the tongue. "Deceiveth:" by thinking that he is religious, when he is only a formalist. So all religious forms are vain, unless they influence a man's speech and actions.

Ver. 27. "Pure religion:" that is the outward manifestation of it. "Before God:" such as he approves, that religion is pure which has in it no admixture of self-deceit or hypocrisy. "Is this:" or results in this. "Fatherless, widows:" the most needy generally, named as types of all who should be helped. "Unspotted:" God's people dwell in a world of pollution and are constantly liable to be soiled by it; hence the admonition. They must keep themselves from it by the help of God. (1 Tim. 6 : 14.)

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Prefatory.—A few words to your class about this epistle may not be amiss; it has been much misunderstood, considered as setting forth salvation by works, instead of by grace through faith, and as a consequence some as Luther, would go so far as to expunge it from the Scriptures. This arises from an imperfect understanding of the object of the writer; he was writing to the Jews who had embraced Christianity, too many of them as it would appear, looking upon it as a mere modification of Judaism, and that obedience to forms and ceremonies was all that was needed. James would show these that Christianity was a *life*, something more than correct opinions or exact observances, and that those who had faith would manifest it by their works. Taking that as the key, and remembering that James uses the words "faith and works" in a different sense to Paul, it is easy to see that James is not only not opposed to Paul, but is his complement; the two writers show us the Christian character, rounded and complete.

Topical Analysis.—(1) God not the author of evil, but the source of all good (vs. 16-18). (2) The manifestation

of the religion of the heart (vs. 19-27). On the *first* topic we may show what an anchor of the soul this truth is; we are surrounded by sin in the world, by confusion and error, but this is not from God. God made things good (Gen. 1 : 10, 13, 18, 21, 23, 31), everything fitted for its purpose, everything to bring happiness to His creatures. Not only were they good in themselves, but *the end* for which they were made was good; it is man that has perverted and turned to evil. The tongue, to which James more especially refers, was made to give forth words of truth and blessing; it is man that has made it a fountain of anger, bitterness, wrath and lying; and especially should we think of this in connection with the work of salvation. It was God's love that gave us the good news of a Saviour; "God so loved the world." Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us; and so on, again and again, God's purposes from eternity have been good for man, and not evil. And God is unchangeable; no variability, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Show how His promises have all been "yea and amen" to His people, and impress deeply the lesson that "this God is our God for ever and ever."

On the *second* Topic teach the great truth that a change of heart must bring a change of life; you can get your scholars to tell you that if a drunken, swearing man, becomes a Christian, he will leave off his bad habits; then dwell upon the "why"—not alone because it would be inconsistent with his new profession, but because his heart, the fountain of his desires, thoughts, actions, is changed,—he cannot willingly do as he has done before. (1 John 3 : 9.) A Christian may be betrayed into hasty words, into wrong acts, but they are opposed to his new nature, and he cannot continue in what is wrong. Show that the life is the fruit, that as a tree is known by its fruits, so the heart is known by the life. It would be well to read in connection with this lesson the first Epistle of John; it is full of confirmatory truths, some of which you may quote to your scholars. Let, however, the opposite truth be insisted on, that there must be a change of heart if the life is to be acceptable to God.

Truths and Teachings.—Gratitude—the recognition of God's mercies should draw our souls to love Him.

Our righteousness should follow the pattern of the righteousness of God.

If a man rests in hearing the Word, he is self-deceived.

God is good, and only good comes from Him.

God in Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever."

Unhallowed ways of working for God do not help His cause.

God's service is a law, but a law of liberty.

Main Lessons.—Service, which is form only, is not acceptable to God Prov. 30 : 12, 13, in connection with. Isa. 28 : 17-20; Isa. 1 : 11-15; Matt. 5 : 20.

But service from the heart, however weak, will be accepted Matt. 10 : 42; Mark 12 : 41-44; Mark 14 : 16-18.

LESSON III.

Jan. 20, 1884. } **THE POWER OF THE TONGUE.** { James 3 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"By thy words thou shalt be judged, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."—Matt 12 : 37.

TIME AND WRITER.—As in last lesson.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 1. "My brethren:" the writer is speaking to his fellow-believers. "Many masters:" REV. "teachers." At first all were allowed to teach in turn. Inspired as some were, yet their gifts were liable to abuse; much more would it be with those self-constituted teachers who had no gifts. "Greater condemnation:" REV. "heavier judgment;" the idea is that a