

Yielded Bodies

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE TONGUE OF THE HUMAN BODY

**"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"**
(James 3:2).

**"If any man among you seem to be religious,
and bridleth not his tongue,
but deceiveth his own heart,
this man's religion is vain"**
(James 1:26).

**"Death and life are in the power of the tongue:
and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof"**
(Proverbs 18:21).

When we read the Bible -- Book above and beyond all books as a river is beyond a rill in reach, Book beyond all books as the sun is beyond a tallow dip in brightness -- we find that in commanding the obedience of mankind, it speaks much of the human body and its members. And now a few words but many words do we read within its sacred pages of the tongue. Lines wherein mention the tongue and its usages are found and as plentiful as flowers in a spring garden, as various in description of the tongue as fishes found in seven seas, as strong as the devils in the Gadarene demoniac. Yes, often is the tongue the topic of the Bible -- that Book which is divine in authorship, human in penmanship, universal in scope, infallible in authority, validated and confirmed by the HOLY SPIRIT with a divine certainty that is incomunicable by reason and impervious to the assaults of doubt, the miracle book of diversity in unity. While some topics are dealt with in comprehensive brevity, the loose tongue has a whole chapter given to it in the Epistle of James.

The human tongue is made up of many muscles turning and intertwining astonishingly. Paley writes: "It is worth any man's while to watch the agility of his tongue; the wonderful promptitude with which it executes change of position, and the perfect exactness. Each syllable of articulated sound requires for its utterance a specific action of the tongue, and of the parts adjacent to it. The disposition and configuration of the mouth for every letter and word is not only peculiar, but if nicely and accurately attended to, perceptible to the sight! . . . How instantaneously are these

positions assumed and dismissed! How numerous are the permutations, how various, yet how infallible!

Unless the tongue be yielded to GOD as an instrument of righteousness, it will be a

TERRIBLE TONGUE

The terror of an unrighteous tongue is shown in strikingly descriptive Biblical words, is shown by the indictment passed upon the tongue by sacred writers. Note:

"The tongue is a fire."

"The tongue is full of deadly poison."

"The tongue is a little member [of the body]and boastest great things."

"The tongue is an unruly evil."

"The tongue is a world of iniquity."

"The tongue defileth the whole body."

"The tongue setteth on fire the course of nature."

"The tongue can no man tame."

Job spoke of the tongue as a *scourge*.

"Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh" (Job 5:21).

The Psalmist indicted the tongue as an instrument of unrighteousness in these words:

"For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue" (Psalm 5:9).

"The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things" (Psalm 12:3).

The Apostle Peter, recalling some Old Testament wisdom, wrote:

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (I Peter 3:10).

The terror of the unrighteous tongue is set forth in words closely akin -- written by the Psalmist and the author of Proverbs:

"The tongue deviseth mischiefs, like a sharp razor, working deceitfully" (Psalm 52:2).

"There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword" (Proverbs 12:18).

And GOD in His Holy hatred of evil finds equally guilty the liar's devilish tongue, and the murderer's bloody hands.

"A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood" (Proverbs 6:17).

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21).

The tongue is a trouble producer for the soul. This is shown in these words:

"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles" (Proverbs 21:23).

Paul, in the third chapter of Romans, is as a prosecutor giving a summary against man. Out of six counts having to do with man's body, four implicate and indict the tongue:

"Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Romans 3:13-14).

The terror of the unruly tongue is set forth in these words -- sober words which we should seriously and penitently, with humility and humiliation, ponder:

"His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity" (Psalm 10:7).

"The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things" (Psalm 12:3).

And how great is GOD's goodness shown in these words: **"Thou shalt keep them . . . from the strife of tongues"** (Psalm 31:20).

What a terror the tongue is when it transgresses the laws of GOD for the tongue. How we need to pray that GOD will keep our tongues from evil and our lips from speaking guile.

Now let us think of the

TORMENTING TONGUE

There are many things that torment us. The filthy fly, carrying disease, making the butter the landing place for his dirty feet or the glass of milk his swimming pool -- and finding no place to land, when we seek sleep, except the tip of the nose or the bald place on our heads -- is a great tormentor.

The rat, purveyor of plague, gnawing annoyingly in the still hours of the night, robbing us of sleep and destroying valuable treasures and using the velvet of the piano for the making of his bed, is a sly tormentor.

The drip of the leaky water faucet -- "oft in the stilly night" -- dropping our comfort into the chasm of its irritable persistence, is a tormentor indeed.

The bed bug, despicable in the way he makes his living, impudent in his uncultured invasion into our bed areas, together with the pillows thereof, is a great tormentor.

An aching tooth, pounding every nerve with the invisible fists of pain, is a tormentor indeed. The aching ear, acting as though it would fain remove its habitation from the head, gives torment which is not to be desired.

Cigarette smoke, blown north, south, east, west by those who care not whom it irritates, is, by all hay fever victims, a tormentor indeed.

The mosquito, with a solo flight that holds a hum that harasses like the whine of a Scotch bagpipe, as alien to melody as poison to health, filing his maw with man's blood and then, in base ingratitude, giving him a hypodermic of malaria, is a tormentor indeed. Writing of the malicious mosquito, someone has said that the rattlesnake strikes to defend himself, the skunk will not distribute his perfumery unless he is in danger, the lions kill for food, hunger and its young governs the predatory eagle, the fox robs the hen roost because he has a stomach to feed, even man -- the most relentless and successful in sin and wrong -- kills cattle for provender and to get leather for his shoes, and shoots quail ostensibly to adorn his table. The tornado may be the only way of restoring the equilibrium of the air, the volcanic eruption may be due to some sort of terrestrial indigestion (judging from the sulphuric belches it emits); but the mosquito makes us think of the purely malicious in life.

Then this same writer (I am sorry I cannot remember his name) says that it appears to be the unavoidable truth that some folks are just plain mean. In children we sometimes see it, because even the most angelic of them take pleasure at times in causing pain. Most of them happily get over this. Some do not. Some men take pleasure in tormenting their wives. Some folks are so full of petty spite that they go out of their way to do some one an evil turn. Some thugs there are who beat men for the pleasure of the exercise. Some teamsters there are who lash horses to see them suffer. Some boys there are who torment cats to hear their cries of agony. Some pranksters there are who tie strings across side walks and laugh to see people stumble and fall. Some people there are who like to put flies in someone's ointment.

People who say there is no personal devil should explain about the someone or the somewhat that gets into men and women and dehumanizes them -- makes them hurt people and have little regret as to wounds made. What tormentors are people whose tongues know no more about putting down a period than a monkey knows about trigonometry! What tormentors can people be whose talkative tongues find no more rest than "old man river who jes' keeps rollin' along" -- no more rest than the rasping jaws of the mouse disturbing more than occasional thunder. Surely there is no torment so ruinous, so mean, so malicious as the torment of the tongue which never observes the law of kindness.

I think Joseph was tormented more by the lying tongue of Potiphar's wife than by the depths of the dungeon and the jail bars. I am sure Moses was tormented more by the murmurings and complaining of the people than by the plagues of frogs and flies and lice and boils and blain and blood in Egypt, because we read.

"And they said unto Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" (Exodus 14:11).

"And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: and the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did

eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Exodus 16:2-3).

"And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" (Exodus 17:3).

More tormenting to Moses than the hardships of the wilderness wanderings were the tongues of Miriam and Aaron who spoke "**against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married**" (Numbers 12:1). When GOD's anger was kindled against the seditious two, when GOD asked, "**Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?**" -- and then "**Miriam became leprous, white as snow.**"

More tormenting to Samson than the young lion who met him out of the vineyards of Timnath, the lion which "**he rent as he would have rent a kid,**" was the tongue of Samson's wife, who wept before him, saying, "**Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me**" (Judges 14:16). More tormenting than the Philistines to Samson was the tongue of Delilah who sought to find wherein his great strength lay:

"And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth" (Judges 16:15).

More tormenting to David than Goliath's size and armor was the tongue of Goliath, for 'tis written: "**And the Philistine cursed David by his gods**" (I Samuel 17:43).

More tormenting to David than the stones cast at him and at all the servants of King David by Shimei was the cursing tongue of Shimei: "**And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial**" (II Samuel 16:7).

More tormenting to David than his hunger and thirst and weariness in the wilderness was the tongue of Absalom which stole the hearts of many from love and loyalty to the King.

More tormenting to JESUS than the pangs of hunger and thirst and weariness in the wilderness was the tongue of Satan in the wilderness, and the tongues of those who falsely accused Him.

More tormenting, too, to Paul than the many stripes laid on him in Philippi were the tongues of "**certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks,**" who "**encountered him. And some said, what will this babbler say? . . . And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked**" (Acts 17:18, 32).

What a tormentor the tongue has been in the world. It has been a dagger to stab the hearts of loved ones with its sharp thrust of pain. It has been a scourge to torture the lives of those who live nearest us. It has been a whetted sword. It has been a mortar out of which has sped the bomb that has exploded and rent asunder whole communities. It has been a razor wielded as by a madman on a children's playground. It has been a battering ram that drives its way through walls

of communities and breaks down society. It has been a thunderbolt that crashes the organ with force into splinters and leaves it without shape or tone. It has been an instrument of giving all conceivable pain to men.

I read the other day that the Spanish in Cuba before the war between Spain and the United States were wont to put their pitiable Cuban victims to torture by pouring into the ear molten lead from the hot crucibles and thus give them excruciating pain. But how much more poignant anguish has been given by means of the tongue as it has poured into the ears of men the words red hot with malignant hatred and with ridicule and sacrilegious sarcasm and with folly and shameful wrong. I think the tongue may be indicted as the worst criminal in the world with all the guilt of the Devil, since by blasphemy of GOD and by blasting human life with its devastating power, it is a satanic mischief.

Better, for the welfare of mankind, the tongue should be torpid, as a toad in marble than the tormenting tongue which, like the dart of death, spares neither sex nor age.

But I would have us think now of the

TONGUE AS A TORCH

"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 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 is set on fire of hell" (James 3:5-6).

How sobering these words! Hell has more to do in promoting the fire of the tongue than men believe. An uncontrolled tongue, set on fire of hell, is mischievous beyond words. It produces hatred, anger, rage, contentions and those evil things which serve the purpose of the Devil. We should dread the evils of the careless and evil tongue as we dread fire, because "*a careless word may kindle strife; a cruel word may wreck a life; a bitter word may hate instill, a brutal word may smite and kill.*"

The tongue can be a fagot of hell. The tongue is as dangerous as fire when fire is the master. As a spark can set a forest on fire, as one little lighted match can start a conflagration in a city, so the tongue kindles the whole nature into flame.

Recently the Associated Press reported that an Air Force officer said that the atomic bomb is the size of a golf ball and is equal to 5,400,000 pounds of TNT. Lt. Col. William R. Stark, member of a five-man team from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, puts it this way: "The atomic bomb, the size of one golf ball, would be the equivalent of a 270 ten-ton TNT bombs. The damage of such a bomb comes from three sources -- blast, flash heat and radioactivity." But the tongue, itself set on fire of hell, is more of a devilish torch than the atomic bomb.

Sometimes Death chooses pestilence or flames,
Hot avalanches of the molten sand,
Or lightning bolts hurled recklessly thro' space,
Or famine stalking hungrily the land.

Sometimes titanic mounds of glacial ice
The instruments come to blot out life,
The mighty earth may quiver -- break apart,
Or nation slaughter nation in war's strife.

A cloud of vapor, poisonous and rank,
Makes shrouds for thousands, checking life and breath.
All these and more gigantic forces serve
As the command of the destroyer Death.
But the warmest love may die perchance
From bitter word or hostile glance.

Thus we are made to think of the tongue, a deadly evil, which does more hurt than catastrophes of earth, because it "**setteth on fire the course of nature.**"

Better for mankind -- for young, for old, for all -- the talkless tongue than the tongue which is a torch -- like the incendiary's flambeau.

Better -- for others -- for folks to be "speechless as a mummy" than to have tongues such as Joseph Hale spoke of who said: "His tongue, like the tails of Samson's foxes, carried firebrands, and is enough to set the whole field of the world on a flame."

I think, too, I prefer the mouth that has a speechless tongue to the mouth with a tongue thus described: "His tongue is like a Bagpipe Drone, that has no stop, but makes a continuous noise, as long as he can squeeze any wind out of himself."

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2).

But think with me of the

TRADUCING TONGUE

To traduce means to misrepresent willfully the character or conduct of someone. It means to defame, to slander, to calumniate. Roger Williams said: "The weak and peaceable are traduced as rivals."

The traducing tongue is indeed "a world of iniquity." The tongue that slanders is a traducing tongue. It is like a hidden assassin who shoots his arrows in the dark. No wonder Plautus said: "Those who carry about, and those who listen to slander, should, if I could have my way, all be hanged -- the tattlers by the tongue, the listeners by their ears."

"A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue"
(Proverbs 17:4).

"He that hath a froward heart findeth no good: and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth

into mischief" (Proverbs 17:20).

Tennyson said of Vivien, who contributed not a little to the breaking up of King Arthur's Round Table:

She let her tongue
Rage like a fire among the noblest names,
Polluting and imputing the whole self,
Defaming and defacing till she left
Not even Lancelot brave nor Galahad clean.

And Shakespeare said:

'Tis slander
Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world; kings, queens and states,
Maids, matrons -- nay, the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters.

The traducing tongue steals a good name which is rather to be chosen than great riches. A man's name is himself. To rob him of his good name is fundamentally to violate the eighth commandment. Truly did Shakespeare write:

Who steals my purse, steals trash,
But he who filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which enriches not him
And makes me poor indeed.

To traduce one's good name is like stealing bread from the hungry with no better purpose than to throw it in the sewer. The traducing tongue of slander and gossip is yet the cancer of the social body, the leprosy of the community, the pestilence that walketh at noonday, the destruction that wasteth at midnight, the hailstorm beating with icy hammers, the flood sweeping away sacred things, the fire that burns to ashes and the cold that freezes to the marrow.

A traducing tongue is an assassin of character, a purveyor of moral poison, a viper that stings to death the reputation of others, a vulture that lives off the carrion of lies, a hyena that digs into the graves of the departed that it may drag forth the corpse of some wrong act, a scavenger that drives its cart through every community.

The traducing tongue is the climax of meanness, the apotheosis of the absurd, sackcloth at a wedding, bones at a banquet, sarcastic laughter at a funeral. And gossip, another product of the traducing tongue, is a humming bird with eagle wings and a voice like a foghorn. It can be heard from Dan to Beersheba, and has caused more trouble and heartache than the world will know until the universe shuts up and begins the final invoice.

George Meredith said: "Gossip is a beast of prey that does not wait for the death of the creature it devours."

In the words of another, "A bitter word dropped from our lips against a brother is like a pistol fired amongst mountains. The sharp report is caught up and intensified and echoed by rocks and caves, till it emulates the thunder. So a thoughtless, unkind word in passing from mouth to mouth receives progressive exaggerations, and, snowball-like, increases as it rolls."

Gossip mongers are persons who tear the bandages from social wounds, and prevent their healing; they are persons who bring flint and steel, and acid and alkali together, and are justly chargeable with all the fire and ebullition. A whispered word of slander is like that fox with a fire brand tied to its tail that Samson sent among the standing corn of the Philistines. A gossip in a village, or anywhere, is like a viper in a bed.

At the close of a talkative ladies aid session at which the ladies had over-indulged in gossiping comments about various members of the community, a young woman who had attended for the first time proceeded to call the group the "Ladies Raid Society." Nor would she stand correction. "Raid Society!" she exploded. "You have raided homes and good names and reputations plenty this afternoon. Good day!" The society at once underwent a radical change.

The lying tongue that traduces, GOD lists along with the most evil of evildoers:

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

The lying tongue has caused wars between nations, separations of husbands and wives, barriers between brothers and sisters, father and son, mother and daughter, friends and neighbors.

Lying tongues have produced feuds that have lasted for decades, even centuries.

Lying tongues have blackened the reputations of young girls, beardless boys, happy ambitious matrons who are rearing families, and old men whose lives are almost spent.

Lying tongues have split churches, hindered Christian progress, and planted the germ of bitterness and hatred in the hearts of millions of people, and this germ has passed on from generation to generation.

If all the tears that lying and unruly tongues have caused to be shed were put in one place, they would make a river. The traducing tongue has caused enough sighs to create the moan of a perpetual storm -- and has been the source of enough misery and despondency to wipe every smile from every pair of human lips. Satanic the traducing tongue that is a trader in scandal and evil gossip.

I would think now of the

TAR TONGUE

I mean by that the tongue which, in several ways, gives people a coat of tar and feathers. The backbiter has a tongue of tar. In Psalm 15 the citizen of Zion is described as one who "**backbiteth not with his tongue.**" He says nothing that might hurt his neighbor in his character, person, property. He is the author of no slander. He insinuates nothing by which his neighbor may be injured.

Dr. Adam Clarke said: "The word 'backbite' was intended to convey the treble sense of knavishness, cowardice and brutality. He is a knave who would rob you of your good name, a coward who would speak of you in your absence what he dared not do in your presence -- and only an ill-conditioned dog would fly at and bite your back when your face was turned. Hence, the backbiter's tongue is the tongue of a knave, a coward, a dog."

Backbiters are classed in the Bible with an awful crowd. They are classed with those who do not like to retain GOD in their knowledge:

"Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hatred of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:29-32).

The tongue that smears with tar is a talebearing tongue. The talebearer is a slanderer, a busybody; one who takes up a reproach against his neighbor and spreads it abroad. There is a "shalt not" with respect to this matter, and it is just as binding on us from the Divine point of view as "**Thou shalt not kill;**" "**Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people**" (Leviticus 19:16). In the name of GOD and holy religion, let every one who reads these lines covenant with GOD, and with one another, that we will forever quit such business.

Well, you say, "But it is the truth; and the truth hurts no one." That may be true, but the repeating of it is *evil speaking* and GOD condemns evil speaking. The wisest of men, Solomon, has said in Proverbs.

"A talebearer revealeth secrets" (11:13).

"He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends" (17:9).

"The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly" (18:8).

"He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips" (20:19).

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth" (26:20).

The tongue that spreads tar is a faultfinding tongue. It takes no brains to find fault. A buzzard can always find a carcass. A fly can always find a sore. A hog can always find a place to wallow.

A butcher bird can always find a thorn or a spike on which to impale its victim. Tennyson spoke of those:

Who hath each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite
And pinch their brethren in the throng,
And scratch the very dead for spite.

We tell, we are told. And mythology tells us that when Jupiter -- years and years and years ago -- made man, he, impelled by his generosity and wisdom, gave man two bags -- a large one and a small one -- for man to carry about with him wherever he should go or should not go. One of these bags was for man's neighbor's faults. And the other was for the man's own faults. What did man do? Which bag did he select for his neighbor's faults? Which for his own faults? And how did he carry the bags? Listen!

The man took one bag, the larger one, and fastened it securely to one end of a cord. He took the other bag, the small one, and tied it tightly to the other end of the same cord. Then, no one to compel him or to ask him to do otherwise, he flung the cord joining the bags over his shoulder in such a manner and with such dexterity that the larger bag rested on his chest and the smaller bag between his shoulders. The larger bag, the one for his neighbor's faults, was in front of the man, right before his eyes, never out of his sight, never forgotten. And, holding a neighbor's faults, it was full and overflowing.

The smaller bag, the one for the man's own faults, was behind him, right between his shoulder blades, seldom seen, usually forgotten. And this bag, this wee small bag, was always empty. All the wrong he himself did went unnoticed and was unremembered.

There are many folks today who are, by inclination and practice and training, like this man with whom Jupiter had to do. Living in glass houses, they throw stones. Imperfect themselves, they see and bitterly condemn the imperfection of others. Themselves carnal-minded, they deplore and censure the lack of spirituality in others. Humped themselves, they ridicule the humped. Crooked themselves, they laugh at the crooked. Mockers themselves, they mock the mockers. Wrong themselves, they condemn others who are wrong. Feed them meat, they want bread. Give them bread, they want meat. Give them tea, they want coffee; give them coffee, they want ale; give them ale, they prefer wine. Offer praise, and praise is improper. Render rebuke, and rebuke is not necessary. If they do a thing that is praiseworthy, they praise themselves. If others do the same thing, it is, according to these pick-a-faults, all wrong. Picking fault with those they see on the street, picking fault with the neighbors whom they meet, picking fault at work, picking fault at play, picking fault because they cannot have their own way, picking fault with the preacher, picking fault with the pew, picking fault with as many as differ in view, picking fault with foe, picking fault with friend, until we all wish their picking fault would end. All this they do -- the pick-a-faults!

They are always finding something bad in all good, something ugly in the beautiful, something false in the true.

How we need to pray: "**Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile**" (Psalm

34:13). GOD keep us from having the tongue that "speaketh proud things," that "frameth deceit," that "deviseth mischiefs like a razor," that is "bent like a bow for lies," that is as "an arrow shot out," that "boasteth great things."

In connection with the tongue we have the

TASK TRANSCENDANT

What is that task? It is the task of taming the tongue. The writer of the Epistle of James says the task is a most difficult one.

"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: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (Jam. 3:7-10).

We can, with the help of GOD, tame the tongue so that it will speak in tenderness and not in anger, not speaking "**grievous words that stir up anger**," but giving the "**soft answer that turneth away wrath**."

The tongue can be tamed to give forth "golden gossip" that blesses rather than black gossip that wreaks havoc and brings blight.

The tongue can be helpful rather than hurtful,
can bring balm rather than blisters,
can enrich rather than impoverish,
can be pure rather than putrid,
can be restraining rather than ruinous,
can be faithful rather than flatterous,
can be truthful rather than false,
can place smiles rather than frowns on human faces,
can bless GOD rather than blaspheme GOD,
can be prayerful rather than promiscuous,
can be as health rather than pestilence.

The tongue is the greater power for good in the world.
It electrifies the mind by its declarations of truth.
It creates enthusiasm with its eloquent words of love.
It is the bugle, ringing out its clarion call to duty;
It is the lute, with its soft, sweet melodies of love.

The tongue is the compass needle swinging truly between the two poles -- and pointing out the pathway of eternal hope.

Wonderful blessing the tamed tongue can bring to so many, speaking words that GOD approves. The tamed tongue has the power of life rather than death in it. It will bless GOD and not curse

men. While the man with an unbridled tongue is an agent of misery and confusion, he can so tame his tongue as to be a blessing to the community, the church, the home. Such a man will know how to be silent, too, when others are hectic and frantic, having a virtuous tongue rather than a vicious tongue.

The tongue can be filled with honey, rather than being full of deadly poison. These truths are authenticated by these words:

"The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth" (Proverbs 10:20).

"The tongue of the wise is health" (Proverbs 12:18).

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned " (Isaiah 50:4).

"The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness . . . A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (Proverbs 15:2, 4).

"In her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26).

Peter had a tongue that once spoke foolishly and cursed and denied JESUS. But that tongue was so tamed and empowered by the HOLY SPIRIT that, at Pentecost, it was GOD's agent in helping to bring three thousand to their knees.

Paul had a vitriolic tongue -- malicious and murderous -- which spoke against CHRIST and commented with pleasure, no doubt, upon the death of Stephen. But, tamed by the HOLY GHOST, it spoke so as to make Felix tremble.

John Knox had a tongue that was once out of GOD's keeping, but GOD so tamed it and empowered it that, in prayer, it became more alarming to a wicked queen than the bayonets of ten thousand men.

Mel Trotter once had a tongue foul and filthy, wicked and wild, which spewed out vile epithets. But this same tongue, losing half its vocabulary in conversion, became a tongue of holy fire for GOD.

While the untamed tongue is a world of iniquity and a deadly poison and a fagot of hell, the tamed tongue will be a tongue that prays for a soul beset by sin, that speaks peace when tempests rage, that praises GOD. While there is the untamed tongue that twists truths into abominable exaggerations, there is the tamed tongue that is always truthful. While there is the raucous tongue that speaks evil of others and besmirches fair names with its innuendoes of wrong and rancor, there is the tongue which, to use Milton's words, drops manna. There is the lecherous tongue with its suggestions of sensuality and its delight in foul stories, but there is also the tongue described in the words:

Adding once more the music of the tongue
To the sweet speech of her alluring eyes.

Though there is the untamed tongue which spreads firebrands that sets whole communities ablaze, there is the tongue, tamed of GOD, which is a tongue of infinite graciousness. Though there is the stammering tongue, there is also the eloquent tongue.

Hutchings tells us how the power of the eloquent tongue guided by a sincere heart has given the world immeasurable blessings. The tongue of Abraham Lincoln spoke three minutes at Gettysburg with such logical and emotional power that not a single cheer arose from the massive audience. His words, like a silver bell, will ring in the hearts of men to the end of time. The tongue of Henry Grady, stilled by untimely death when he was yet young and vigorous with ambition and hope, spoke words that brought the North and South closer together than any words that have come from human lips, before or since. So eloquent was the tongue of this young statesman that John Temple Graves said at Grady's funeral, "He sprang from a banquet hall into national fame and died, literally loving the nation back together." The tongue of Cordell Hull helped to turn the tide of suspicion in South America to trust, confidence and friendly relations toward North America. The tongue of Winston Churchill inspired patriotism, courage and fortitude in all the allied nations of the world in the darkness of the darkest days of the last world war.

What shall I more say? Nothing more say I except to beg you by the tongue of JESUS that spake words of tenderness, of righteousness, of holy and scathing denunciation, of praise, of commendation of right and condemnation of wrong, of comfort, of purity, of truth -- by the use He made of His tongue, I beg you to yield your tongue to GOD as an instrument of righteousness.

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

~ end of chapter 5 ~
