

Study for the Month of February, 2009

BIBLICAL PERFECTION

Part IX

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We will resume where we left off last month in our simulated interview with Daniel T. Bourdeau in this lengthy study on Biblical Perfection. We now focus our attention on the topic of:

The Appetites

NF: Where did man get his appetites, and are they all necessarily evil?

DB: “The all-wise Creator has implanted in our nature certain appetites, and it is evident that they were designed to help in perpetuating our existence, in promoting our well-being, and in carrying out the great object for which we were made. As the appetites are peculiar to the body, it is clear that they were made to be governed by reason. Their very nature forbids the idea of their leading the man, and shows that they should be in subjection to the higher faculties of our beings. But in consequence of the fall and the inroads that sin has made in the children of men, the appetites are naturally inclined to go beyond the limits assigned to them, and usurp the authority of the higher faculties.”

NF: What then brings these fallen appetites under control?

DB: Sanctification brings the appetites within their proper limits---under the direction and control of enlightened reason. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God. Now to do this, we must, as far as possible, eat and drink that which is sanitary, and avoid intemperance. We should consult the stomach and the state of the health more than the appetites; for it is not always what suits the appetite the best, that is most conducive to the health of the body. We should select for the appetites, and cultivate and cherish a taste for healthy food. We should eat and drink more for need than pleasure. If pleasure is the great end we have in view, then we do not eat and drink to the glory of God, but to the glory of our appetites. Then eating and drinking becomes an inordinate action, because it is not in the way to the end for which it was designed.”

NF: The “Food Network” on channel TV features hosts such as Bert Zimmern in “Bizarre Foods,” and Anthony Bourdain in “No Reservations,” etc., who boldly glorify gorging on things expressly forbidden in the Bible and making it as attractive and entertaining as possible, graphically fulfilling what Jesus described as both prevailing on the earth in the days of Noah, and just before His second coming. “They will eat and drink,

marrying and giving in marriage. . .” We know this was prophesied to happen. Are these alone to blame? What about the examples set by parents even in Christian homes?

DB: “In view of these principles what shall we conclude concerning those parents who are almost constantly humoring their children in satisfying their appetites with so many niceties which injure the health and undermine the constitution? Are they not guilty of creating in them unsanctified appetites? Would it not be better for those parents to select good, plain, wholesome food for their children, and feed them only when they really need food, though it may not suit the taste so well at first?”

NF: In what other areas of appetite is the whole world enslaved to?

DB: “And what shall we say of the appetite for spirituous liquors which dethrones reason, degrades the body and the mind, and has brought so many to an untimely grave? Are those who possess this appetite sanctified? And shall we overlook the appetites for [regular] tea and tobacco? Were these articles made to be used as they are now used? No candid person who has given this subject a careful perusal will say they were. These herbs, like all other stimulants, nerve up the system and leave a depression behind. Besides, tobacco is a rank poison, as it has been often proved; and the poisonous ingredients in which tea is often prepared, add to the impropriety to using it as a beverage. But we are to cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh [2 Cor. 7:1], as we have seen, and if the common use of tobacco does not produce filthiness of the flesh, what does? But if the appetite for tea, tobacco, and spirituous liquors should be overcome because they injure the health, should not the appetites for unhealthy meats or other hurtful articles be overcome for the same reason?”

Note: This was written and printed in 1864. Since then the health-destroying properties and effects of tobacco, including the danger of third hand smoke have been well documented and addressed. History of Tobacco Lawsuits (see web) says that “there has been a long history of lawsuits against tobacco companies since the 1950’s. In 1994 Mississippi filed the first lawsuit by a state for damages related to smoking. Several other states soon filed their own lawsuits. In 1998, 46 states agreed to a settlement in which the tobacco companies agreed to pay about \$ 25 billion over 25 years.” The emergence of the worldwide drug menace, as well as abuse of prescription drugs has more than replaced the reduction of deaths caused by smoking. Governments are addressing staggering drug and substance abuse of psychoactive drugs or performance-enhancing drugs which include alcohol, amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cocaine, methaqualone, and opium alkaloids. The U.S. Drug War started by Nixon, according to the Drug Action Network, is a failure. Alcohol, in fact, kills more people than all drugs, both illegal and legal, combined.

DB: “The Savior, while giving a description of the last days, days, ‘As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.’ Luke 17: 26, 27. It was not wrong for the Antediluvians to eat and drink to maintain their existence; and marriage was as sacred and honorable in the days of Noah as it was when God instituted it in Eden.”

NF: What was wrong then?

DB: “The great sin of the Antediluvians consisted in going to excess in these things. And is it not so with the masses at the present time? Look at the excess in eating and drinking. Look at those persons of good health whose exquisite taste accepts only the nicest of foods, and often causes much perplexity to those who are called upon to satisfy

it. Look at the pains taken and the means expended, and worse than thrown away, to suit the taste of the palate, as though the great object of life was to eat and drink and enjoy the pleasures of the appetites. The Scriptures are very clear on the importance of governing the appetites. Our first parents fell, in lusting after and eating the forbidden fruit. The Israelites were not satisfied with the plain, wholesome manna: they loathed this bread from Heaven, longed for flesh, and murmured against God, and awful consequences followed. And we are told 'these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.' 1 Cor. 10:6."

NF: Was this particular sin only confined to the people, or did the spiritual guardians of the people become guilty of it?

DB: "The sons of Eli [both priests] were not satisfied with sodden or boiled flesh: they wanted raw flesh, that they might roast it with fire. It was not unlawful to desire to have meat roasted, but when it was appointed [by God] to be boiled, they refused it, thus evincing intemperance and a nice palate. 'Wherefore,' says the record, 'the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord; for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.' 1 Sam. 2: 12-17; Prov. 23: 1, 2. 'When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee; and put a knife thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite;' or as the French translation reads, 'else thou shalt put a knife to thy throat, if thy appetite rules thee.' And what can be the meaning of this wonderful proverb, unless it is this, that he who sits to eat with a ruler (before 'dainties' or 'deceitful meat,' v. 3), and suffers unsanctified appetite to control him, is guilty of the same crime that he would if he literally cut his throat with his knife? That is, he is self-murdered [equivalent to suicide]. He must feel the effects of his excess sooner or later."

NF: What about in the time of Christ?

DB: "Some followed Christ for the loaves and fishes; but He said to them. 'Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life.' John 6: 27, NKJV. We are admonished to be not like *Esau*, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. Heb. 12: 16. We should take heed lest we lose eternal life and the rich blessings connected with it, for the gratification of unsanctified appetites. Christ is a [the] pattern for self-denial. 'And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.' Matt. 4: 2. 'Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' Verse 3. How trying this must have been to the Son of God. How refreshing was a morsel of bread would have been to Him in His exhausted condition. But did He yield? No: it was forbidden fruit. He answered, 'It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' V. 4; [cf. Deut. 8:3].

Note: "Many look on this conflict between Christ and Satan as having no special bearing on their own life; and for them it has little interest. But within the domain of every human heart this controversy is repeated. Never does one leave the ranks of evil for the service of God without encountering the assaults of Satan. The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find it so difficult to withstand. They were urged upon Him in as much greater degree as His character is superior to ours. With the terrible weight of the sins of the world upon Him, Christ withstood the test of appetite, upon the love of the world, and upon the love of display which leads to presumption. These were the temptations that overcame Adam and Eve, and that so readily overcomes us."- *Desire of Ages*, pp. 116-7, "The Temptation" chapter.

DB: “When the time of famine comes on the earth according to the word of the Lord, Joel 1: 14-20 [cf. Amos 8: 11, 12], many articles [of food, drink, clothing, decors, etc.] that are now used will have to be dispensed with, and is it not consistent to deny ourselves now and overcome those appetites that injure the body and the mind, and prevent many from desiring and appreciating the lasting pleasures enjoyed in the service of God? Shall we be prepared to meet the Lord if we are slaves to lust [or unsanctified desires]?”

THE WORKING FACULTIES

NF: Through God’s messenger the light of progressive health reform which began to be revealed 5 years after the Great Disappointment, which she calls “the right arm of the gospel but not the body itself” comprehends the eight laws of health. Physical exercise is one of them. Can you elucidate on this?

DB: “As God does nothing in vain, it is reasonable to believe that these faculties were made to be exercised. The Sacred Record informs us that when the Creator had formed man, He took him and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress and keep it. Gen. 2:15. Physical labor was appointed before the fall, and must have been designed to meet the wants of men. The organization [constitution] of man is such that he needs to exercise his working faculties; and he cannot neglect to do this without sustaining a loss. It does not require a labored argument to prove this. Reason, common sense, and experience teach that the digestive organs demand the exercise of the working powers, and that proper physical exercise helps in conveying the nutritive properties of food into the different parts of the system, and in implanting vigor, strength, and health to the body and the mind. Hence as a general thing, the laboring classes, especially those who exercise out of doors, are stronger physically, and enjoy better health, than persons of sedentary habits.”

NF: Does this awareness translate into manual labor being viewed as not only necessary but desirable?

DB: “But notwithstanding this, it is a lamentable fact that there is in the masses of the present age, and inclination to shun physical labor. It is by many considered a disgrace to engage in manual labor or other physical exercise. Many would be ashamed to be seen working with their hands as old-fashioned people used to do. And strange to say in many instances even those who have labored hard to get above want [or poverty], will partake of this spirit and encourage the same in their children. Under this influence children think they cannot be gentlemen and ladies if they work physically, and they will either spend their time in idleness, and grow up as it were in the shade, without getting the power of endurance, and without obtaining the experience they so much need, and which would prove a blessing to themselves and to others; or they will select a vacation that does not require physical exertion, but calls into exercise mental faculties.”

Note: It is a well known fact that migrant labor has become necessary because it is the financially-strapped of people, specially across the border and of South America who are willing to perform back-breaking labor, accept low-paying wages, and general stigma unfairly attached to such agriculture work---that local citizens shy away from. But Farm Bureau research concludes that up to 1/3 of the U.S. fruit and vegetable sector would disappear if new immigration reform laws fail to include a guest-worker program. Between \$ 5 billion and \$9 billion in U.S. production would likely be lost—outsourced to foreign producers. And net farm income for the rest of the agriculture would decline by as much as \$5 billion annually.

DB: “Some of these delicate children are encouraged to engage in literary pursuits. They are perhaps told that it would be better for their health. They engage in their studies, overtax the mind, and are very careful to exercise as little as possible with their physical powers. The result is that some die before they have completed their studies, and not a few of those who gain their object are left with shattered nerves and ruined constitution. And how much benefit and comfort can they derive from all their knowledge? It is of but little use to them, and they lack the very thing they need to communicate it to others, viz., vigor and strength of body and mind.”

Note: While childhood and teen obesity are at an all-time high today, aggressive programs by the Department of Health, Center for Disease Control, and various privately-funded national programs for awareness of these national diseases by promoting physical fitness through losing weight through exercises, sports and healthier food. Loma Linda Medical Center is on the forefront of the medical community in promoting and pioneering body and mind health programs.

NF: How aggressive should Christian families and the church at large be towards this problem?

DB: “In the name of reason and Scripture, we [must] enter our protest against such a spirit and such a course. We would not lightly esteem knowledge, or discourage in others a desire to pursue proper studies. Let useful knowledge be eagerly pursued and cherished. But the most useful knowledge is that which pertains to our duty and we cannot understand our whole duty unless we have a certain knowledge of the nature and functions of the *prominent faculties* of our beings and the relations they sustain to each other. Let the mind be cultivated, but let not the body be neglected. In order that we may excel in the study of any subject and advance in knowledge, it is necessary that we possess health and vigor of mind. Now the health of the mind depends much on that of the body, and physical exercise assists in promoting the health of the body. Hence the greatest and most useful of men that have lived have been careful to cultivate and exercise their physical faculties. Ashamed to labor physically, while physical labor is appointed by the Creator, and is so beneficial to man! It would be far better to be ashamed of the least inclination to shun physical labor, and of the shameful consequences resulting from idleness. Better be ashamed of leaving the way marked out by God and approved by reason and experience, to pursue a course opposed to God, reason, and common sense, and destructive of health and happiness.

NF: What do you say to those who think it is a disgrace somehow to work with their hands? What do the Scriptures say?

DB: “Those who think it is a disgrace to labor with their hands would doubtless be ashamed of Christ, and many holy men and women spoken of in the Scriptures; for they engaged in manual labor. Christ was a carpenter, and we understand that this was one of the reasons why the Jews were offended at Him. They said, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? And they were offended at Him.” Mark 6:3. The great apostle to the Gentiles was a tent-maker, and was not ashamed to work with his hands. Physical labor was not a hindrance to him in his work, but rather made him more successful in advancing the cause of truth. As he labored with his hands, or traveled on foot in imitation of the example of his divine Master before him, he showed that he was actuated by unselfish principles, set an example to his brethren to follow, and had the satisfaction that did what he could do to supply his wants and the wants of others. He could say, I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. Yes, ye yourselves know that these

hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' 'For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail; for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.' 'Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day that we might not be chargeable to any of you: not because we had not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.' Acts 20:33-35; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3: 8, 9, KJV."

NF: Wasn't hard physical labor a part of the curse of sin?

DB: "When man had fallen, God cursed the earth, thus making it necessary for man to labor more to maintain his existence. The solemn mandate from God was, '*Cursed is the earth for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it, all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground.*' Gen. 3: 17-19, KJV. This judgment was *mixed* with mercy. It was a blessing to man that God *added* to his labor after he sinned.'

NF: In what sense was this added labor *after* he sinned a blessing when in fact *before* he sinned God told him to work "by tending and keeping" the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2: 15)?

DB: "As man labored in the sweat of his face, he would be more apt to remember his shameful fall, and would be less inclined to devise and practice wickedness. On the same principle it is wiser for people now to labor than to remain in idleness. If children generally were taught to delight more in manual labor, their minds would not be so liable to wander from the path of virtue, and they would be more easily kept from pursuing a course that has ruined thousands of promising children and youth, and brought so many parents and guardians to shame. And would not the same principle work well with older persons who do not love industrious labor? Think of the base and enormous crimes which are practiced in this generation to avoid labor."

NF: Can you be more specific?

DB: "Think of the extremes to which many go in speculation [gambling, get-rich-quick schemes, robbery, extortion, even murder-for-hire, etc]. To many of this class the following good advice of Paul would apply well: 'Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labor working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.' Eph. 4: 28. Idleness and effeminacy [quality of being effeminate] are forbidden, while labor and industry are encouraged, by the word of God. Paul exhorted his brethren not to slothful in business, to learn to maintain good works (or profess honest trades, *margin*,) that they may not be unfruitful, and commanded that if any man would not work neither should he eat. Rom. 12: 11; Titus 3: 14; 2 Thess. 3: 10. He also declared that no *effeminate* shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 6:9."

NF: Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1942 edition defines *effeminate* as: "to make a woman of. Having marked womanlike traits of character; wanting in manly strength or force; especially marked by weakness, softness, and love of ease; as, an *effeminate* civilization."

DB: “Says Solomon, ‘He who deals with a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes one rich. He who gathers in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame.’ Prov. 10: 4, 5. ‘The soul of a sluggard desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.’ Prov. 13:4. ‘Slothfulness casts one into a deep sleep, an idle person will suffer hunger.’ Prov. 19:15. ‘The sluggard will not plow because of winter; therefore he will beg during the harvest and have nothing.’ Prov. 20:4. ‘I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; and there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with nettles; its stone wall was broken down. When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction: a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest; so your poverty will come like a prowler, and your want like an armed man.’ Prov. 24:30-34.”

NF: What is God’s practical advice through Solomon for the idle and sluggards?

DB: “Solomon’s advice to the sluggard is as follows: ‘Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest. How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? Prov. 6:6-9. ‘Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: she and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.” Eze. 16: 49, 50. This Scripture supports the oft-repeated saying that a lazy person cannot be a Christian.”

NF: Does this mean that the more industrious and physically hard-working the person is the more of a Christian he is? Does the principle of temperance also apply to even to necessary physical industry and work?

DB: “He that is indolent and slack in temporal matters is liable to be so in spiritual matters. He is not fully prepared to plow through the hardships connected with the Christian warfare, and cannot be successful in overcoming. It is a source of encouragement to those who labor with their hands that they can with industrious labor act an important part in advancing the cause of their Master. *But pains should be taken not to overtax the body.* While proper physical exercise is strengthening and invigorating to the body and the mind, excessive physical labor exhausts the physical and mental energies and unfits us to engage in the worship of God. The idea that we are living near the end does not constitute a sufficient reason to refrain from labor, as some have contended. It is rather a strong motive to induce us to do that which is conducive to the present well being, and helps forward the cause of truth. We should not labor and plan to lay up treasures on earth; but we should labor and plan with reference to the end near, and to push forward the solemn work of the last message. Is health a blessing to be prized, and is it our duty to do what we can to preserve it? Then we should exercise our working faculties. Will the saints in the future state possess literal bodies and strong physical powers to be used in performing delightful [labor] and is it a fact that the future state is soon to be ushered in? Then it is reasonable and consistent to cherish physical labor, and exercise the working faculties here.”

NF: What is the next of the working faculties that we need to discuss?

The Tongue

DB: ‘The tongue,’ says James, ‘is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great 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 it is set on fire of hell.’ James 3: 5, 6, K.J.V. This is said of an unsanctified tongue, and shows that though the tongue is a small member yet it exerts a mighty influence. It sustains a relation to and exerts an influence over the whole body. It is compared to bits that we put in the horses’ mouth and by which we turn about the whole body; and to a helm by which the mighty ships are turned withersoever the governor listeth. Vs. 3, 4. Such is the importance that James attaches to governing the tongue that he declares, ‘If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body.’ V. 2. ‘If any among you seem to religious, and bridleth not his own tongue but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is in vain.’ James 1:26. And Solomon must have been forcibly struck with the necessity of the tongue when he wrote, ‘Life and death are in the power of the tongue.’ Prov. 18: 21.”

NF: Since we are living in the most talkative generation, what with all the talk shows, and the phone companies encouraging people to talk even more in order to sell their products and services, how far reaching is the need for the sanctification of the tongue?

DB: “The tongue, as an instrument of speech, is one of those prerogatives which *exalt* man above the beast, and was designed by the Creator to express holy and virtuous thoughts. It is an index to the heart; ‘for out of the abundance of the heart,’ says the Savior, ‘the mouth speaketh.’ Matt. 12: 35. The use that is made of the tongue indicates the moral condition of the heart, and consequently the character of the whole man; and there are as many ways in which men sin with their tongues as there are in which they sin with their thoughts, tempers, and actions. It is readily seen that the sanctification of the tongue is a vast subject. But we will confine ourselves with some leading principles and thoughts, and to some of the many Biblical instructions on the subject. First, the tongue is rightly used in speaking of addressing the Creator with reverence, according to His holy and exalted perfections and our dependence upon Him. If we do this from the heart we shall not be guilty of taking God’s holy name in vain. We shall realize His goodness and love, and will not be inclined to murmur against Him, but will be grateful to Him for His dealings with us, and for the least blessing we receive at His hand.”

NF: What does the Bible say regarding praising God while also cursing others whom we think are “evil” people ? Is such praise acceptable to Him?

DB: “But while the tongue is properly used in speaking of, and addressing God in a manner compatible with His holy perfections and our dependence upon Him, it should speak of, and address *others*, with respect, according to the relations they sustain to us and the Creator. In speaking of the wrong use of the tongue, James says, ‘With it we bless our God our Father, and with it we curse men, who have been in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be so.’ James 3: 9, 10, N.K.J.V. It is not a small matter to curse others with the tongue. If we curse our fellow creatures who are made in the image of God and have God for their Father, we offend God, and are not in a condition to bless or exalt Him, and He cannot accept a blessing from us, indeed, He cannot look on anything that we can say to exalt Him as a blessing. What we say of Him proceeds from the same heart that leads us

to curse those whom He has created, and over whom His care, love, and mercy are extended. This is clearly illustrated in the following verses: “Does a spring send forth fresh sweet water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives? Or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring can yield both salt water and fresh.’ Vs. 11, 12.

NF: Does this mean therefore that all who have or do curse—not God—but bad people or maybe their unfortunate lot in life are no longer Christians and therefore belong to the class of the ungodly? Are there other forms of cursing aside from the obvious use of “cuss” words so prevalent in society today?

DB: “Cursing is the opposite of blessing, and we can curse others in various ways. And the ungodly are not the only ones that are guilty here. James is here admonishing and correcting his ‘brethren.’ We curse others with the tongue in *slandering and backbiting*. The unsanctified tongue is full of deadly poison, and its deadly and poisoned influences is felt by others. It would be considered a heinous crime to put a poison of strychnine or arsenic into food prepared for others; but many consider it a light thing to poison the character of others, and injure their feelings by slandering, backbiting, or *tale-bearing*. *By these, thousands of innocent characters have been shamefully and maliciously martyred. Many professed Christians are not guarded enough, and fail on this point.*”

Note: *Webster’ Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, 1943*, provides the following definitions: **Slander:** “Defamation, oral or written, specifically *Law*, a false report maliciously uttered and tending to injure the reputation of another. Synonymous with: Belie, malign, derogate, libel.” **Backbite:** “To speak evil of (one absent); to slander.” **Tale bearer:** “(also tale carrier, tale monger). One who spreads gossip.” **Gossip:** “An idle tattler; a newsmonger; a gossip’s tattle; groundless rumor; also chatter.”

NF: Does character-assassination through slander, backbiting, tale-bearing and gossiping, which sadly take place even among professed Christians, stay only within Christian circles?

DB: “If they are tried with a brother or sister, and see or hear any thing unfavorable about them, they are sure to tell it to others, and perhaps in their tried condition they will put a wrong construction on what they have learned; and if their remarks take [others] and they are not checked, they will tell it to others, and then to others, and so on; and some are not satisfied till they have spread their slanderous reports among the *enemies of truth*. And then the poor, blinded, deceived souls may think they have done a noble work. But what have they done? They have got the sympathy of some, who will *perish with them* unless they repent.

NF: That is a fearful thing! How bad can this become, and why?

DB: “They have blown on and fed the fire of *hatred* which they in weakness allowed Satan to kindle in their breasts, till it has grown and kindled a great matter, and others have been set on fire of hell. They perhaps have discouraged the weak and well-meaning brethren, who have not sufficient experience to meet their influence, and some of whom may never recover from the shock they have received. They have caused the good way to be evil spoken of, and some may have been shut out of the kingdom. The Holy Spirit and lovers of peace have been grieved, and Satan and his contentious hosts rejoice!”

It is not strange that those who know not God, and the power of His truth, should indulge in slandering and backbiting; but for those who profess God and know His truth, for professed followers of Jesus Christ, to backbite and slander, *is shameful and criminal in the extreme*. But thank God, those sins need not exist in the church of God—if gospel order and discipline are carried out. Says Christ, ‘Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between thee and him alone,’ etc., Matt. 18: 15-17. Here is the proper course marked out by the Savior. First go and tell him his fault between him and you alone. Christ does not say, go and tell his fault to everybody in the church and to everybody in the world. Those who do this err, and need to be immediately labored with themselves. If those who are tried with their brethren would go directly to them with their grievances, they would not have so much to say, and much trouble might be saved.”

NF: But some will here say, if ever wisdom is needed, it is doing this duty.

DB: “This is true. But James says, ‘If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him;’ James 1:5; and then he describes heavenly wisdom as follows: ‘The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.’ James 3: 17. If every trait of this wisdom were fully examined, and strictly followed, this would be an easy duty to perform.”

NF: What strong Scriptural evidences, both from the Old and New Testaments can you share with those who think this is but a light matter where their readiness for eternal life is concerned?

DB: “The following Scriptures show how God looks upon slandering, backbiting, and tale bearing: ‘He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander is a fool.’ Prov. 10: 18. “Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thy own mother’s son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou’ thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.’ Ps. 50: 19-21. ‘Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off.’ Ps. 101:5. ‘For I fear, lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults.’ 2 Cor. 12: 20. ‘Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people. . . . I am the Lord.’ Lev. 19: 16. ‘He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth (or enticeth, *margin*) with his lips.’ Prov. 20:19. ‘Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.’ Prov. 26:20 [see also verses 21-28].

NF: These sins of the tongue are evidently some of the oldest and deadliest of sins, aren’t they? How far back do they go to?

DB: “One of those sins of backslidden Israel over which Jeremiah grieved, and which ripened Israel to receive the lingering wrath of Jehovah, was slandering. Jer. 9:1-4. And when David undertakes to describe the man who will abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, and dwell in His holy hill, among other things he says, ‘He that backbiteth not with his tongue.’ Ps. 15:1-3. We should guard against bearing false witness. *This is often done unintentionally by exaggerating*. It is better not to say about the faults of others, than to speak of them in a manner to defame the character.”

NF: Then how do we treat the injunction, “Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.”? Isn’t it true that in particular situations silence means consent—particularly in a religious crisis?

DB: “When it becomes necessary to speak of the sins of our fellow creatures, we should show that while we hate sin, we love and pity the sinner. When we are about to speak concerning the faults of others, we should [first] ask ourselves questions like these: *Will what I am about to say benefit anyone? Will it be rightly handled? Will it benefit the cause? Am I going to speak as I would like to have others speak of me if I were in the same condition?* Evil-speaking is strictly and repeatedly prohibited by the Scriptures; and under the head of evil-speaking, is speaking evil of dignities. Jude 8. The evil of this sin is not realized by all.”

NF: What is exactly meant by the warning against “speaking evil of dignities”?

DB: “They are liable to overlook the sacred position of those whom God calls to help in leading out His people toward the rest that remains for the children of God. [See Heb. 4: 1-11]. Like ancient Israel they look upon these agents as though the work with which they are connected was merely a human work, and speak accordingly. Some like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and a host of others, not realizing the weight and responsibilities of this work, will envy the position of those who are called to it. (See Numbers 16). They think they are of consequence and that the servants of God take too much upon themselves. They despise dominion, attribute the cause of their trials to dignities, and murmur when they are corrected for their sins. By pursuing this course they despise God, and murmur against Him.’ He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth He that sent Me.’ Luke 10: 16. The fate of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the punishment of others of in the Scriptures, are sufficient to teach us how God regard this sin. But besides this, we have in the backsliding and fall of many within our own recollection, a clear demonstration of God’s disapprobation for their sin, and of the necessity of guarding against it.”

NF: In what other ways do we curse others—of which many are not aware of?

DB: “We curse others with the tongue in speaking angry words, in fretting and scolding. No good has ever resulted from doing so. Angry words, fretting and scolding, have never benefited any one. On the other hand they have often proved a curse and a source of much evil. They may overpower and intimidate the fearful for the time being; but they will never reform them. They are destructive of peace, affection, and happiness. Peace and angry words do not exist together, and who can love habitual fretters and scolders with a love of approbation? Such are more dreaded than loved. Even the meek will feel an uneasiness while in the society of such. Though they may bear with, and pity them, they will feel as if among nestles and thistles.”

NF: In what other particular areas of human society is this evil most felt and yet remains largely unsolved to this very time, and in fact has become even much worse?

DB: “Thousands of families are made miserable and unhappy by irritating words. In many instances, parents fail here. Instead of speaking kindly and cheerful words; they complain and fret and scold. *As they do this, they are shut up to each others’ faults.* The husband sees no virtue in his wife, and the wife sees no virtue in her husband. Separation often follows. Many a husband has been driven to the tavern by a fretful and peevish wife, and many a wife has been discouraged and made miserable by a fretful and complaining husband.

But the evil is not confined to the heads of families: the *children* generally imitate their parents. They do not obey them through love, but through fear and dread, and perhaps to not be annoyed by their fretting and scolding. Some children will conceal from their parents important matters, and tell falsehoods to avoid a scolding. Home has not attractions to such children; and many in discouragement will leave their parents. [Such as runaways often listed as “missing children”]. ‘There is one that speaks like the piercing of the sword, but the tongue of the wise promotes health.’ Prov. 12: 18.

NF: By what evidences or “fruits” can we know that one has an unsanctified tongue? How about the sanctified one?

DB: “While the unsanctified tongue causes discord, sorrow, gloom, discouragement, and death, the sanctified tongue brings peace, joy, light, courage, health and life to those who use it, and to those who eat of its fruit. It is quite an easy matter to speak pleasant and cheerful words to the meek, to those who always bless us; but it is more difficult to speak words of pleasantness to those who address us with angry words, to such as curse and revile us. But we are expressly commanded to bless them that curse us (Luke 6:28), to bless and curse not (Rom. 12: 14), not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing (1 Pet. 3:9). ‘For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow in His steps: who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously.’ 1 Pet. 2: 21-23. ‘A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.’ Prov. 15:1. In our intercourse with our fellow-creatures, a spoonful of oil is better than a quart of vinegar. *By taking revenge of an injury we are only even to our enemy; but by passing it over we are superior. And a more glorious victory cannot be obtained over another than to return injury with kindness.*”

NF: Indeed! The principles of Christ’s kingdom of righteousness are exactly opposite that of the kingdoms and nations of our world who assert their superiority over their national enemies or impose their ideas of a superior form of national government with financial embargos or by unleashing their deadly military might. By declaring war or taking supposed self-justified revenge or “pre-emptive” strikes with their vastly superior military armaments they are only even to their enemies! And blood begets blood—never peace--for he who takes by the sword will also die by the sword. In shining example Jesus instructed and showed how His true followers are to deal with those who malign their character or even inflict physical injury upon them. Paul, himself a living example and emulator of this heavenly virtue in his life of suffering, expressed it in these words that will put to shame nations who claim to be Christians: “Therefore, if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. Do not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Rom. 12: 20, 21.

DB: “Those who give way to anger and speak angry words, manifest real weakness of soul. They may at times think they gain victory over their own enemies; but they are overcome by Satan and their own corrupt propensity. For they are apt to say things that they would be ashamed of *if they were in their right mind!* For instance how liable some are to call others fools, devils, etc., when they were angry with them. But Christ shows in what light he views these rash and irritating expressions when He says, ‘But I say unto you that whoever is *angry* with his brother without a [just] cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be in danger of the council. But whosoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.’ (Matt. 5: 22).”

NF: **May I just add here that the word *raca* is a transliteration of the Greek *rhaka*, which is turn in a transliteration of the Aramaic *reqa*, ‘fool,’ ‘empty-head.’ *Reqa* was an exclamation of strong contempt used by the Jews in the time of Christ. The RSV translates the term as “You fool.” This of course isn’t the same as those whom God deservingly calls fools, who call others like them as fools! We also see here that an unnumbered host of Christians who, out of habit, express words of strong contempt that come in various forms will have these words stand up against them in their judgment—unless they speedily repent and turn from this evil habit.**

DB: “Christ pronounces a blessing upon peace-makers. He says, ‘They shall be called the children of God.’ Matt. 5:9. In striving to make peace they imitate their Creator, who has done so much to bring peace into this revolted province [world], and to reconcile us to Himself. God sacrificed His dearly beloved Son for this object, and can we not deny ourselves a little, by not *indulging* in angry expressions? Can we not encourage and *enforce* the principles of peace by a meek and godly conversation?”

NF: **I certainly appreciate you adding the all-important principle God’s way of enforcing truth—not by manipulative schemes, or deadly religious force such as that employed for centuries by the papacy in interdicts and papal bulls declaring all those who refuse to accept their doctrines as “heretics” worthy of execration and the worst forms of persecution and torture—but by a Christlike “meek and godly conversation.” Conversation here as used in the KJV (1 Pet. 1: 15; 2 Pet. 3: 11, for e.g.) is the Greek *anastrophe* which means *behavior*, or as the NKJV has it, “holy conduct and godliness.” Where does lying come into the picture?**

DB: “The tongue is wrongly used in lying, and should be employed in telling the truth. The Lord has spoken clearly and repeatedly on this point, both in the Old and New Testaments, showing the evil that is caused by lying, and setting forth the awful consequences that await liars, and the advantages and blessings that result from telling the truth. Lying originated with the Devil, who is the father of lies, and a liar from the beginning [John 8: 44]. He lied to Eve and beguiled her, and since then lying has been practiced in many ways, and for various purposes. [Gen. 3: 1-6; cf. 2 Tim. 2:14]. But the lying tongue cannot be relied upon. It is ever looked upon with suspicion by the prudent. But it is considered safe to confide in those who are always known to tell the truth. He that sets out to tell a lie is not sensible of the task he undertakes; for he may be forced to invent many more ways to support it.”

NF: Where is lying most often practiced in since the fall of man?

DB: “Lying is often practiced to get gain. This is seen in buying and selling. It has almost become a universal custom for those who sell to speak too highly of the articles they hold out for sale, and to say little or nothing about their defects, thus making an impression that these articles are worth more than they really are; and those who buy to undervalue the articles they wish to buy, and to say little or nothing about their qualities, thus conveying the idea that they are worth less than they are in reality.”

NF: Can you cite a more specific example of this in the Bible?

DB: “And just here we would notice the case of Ananias and Sapphira. [See Acts 5: 1-11]. They sold their possession, and kept back part of the price, and brought a certain part and laid at the apostles’ feet. *They lied in trying to convey the idea that they had brought the whole price.* But what language was used this false idea? Peter said to Sapphira, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?’ And she said, ‘Yes, for so much.’ And the fate of Ananias and Sapphira is known to all Bible students. Doubtless if many *at the present time* were in the condition of Ananias and Sapphira, and were permitted to live and speak for themselves, they would justify themselves somewhat as follows: Why, I did not lie: I said I sold it for so much. I did sell it for that *and something else.* But would such be more justified than were Ananias and Sapphira? And when will not the punishment of such be as certain as was theirs?”

NF: What is another common way lying is practiced by false prophets, teachers, and religions?

DB: “One common way of lying is to attempt uphold error by the Word of the Lord. Those who do this knowingly, or ignorantly when they might have known but refused to know, may be classed among liars. In order to give force to what they say, and make their remarks appear truthful, they must intimate or affirm that the Lord has spoken when He has not spoken; that the Bible says thus and so when it does not.

Cases of lying spoken of in the Bible are sometimes referred to, to prove that guile may be used on certain occasions to bring about a good end; and falsehoods are often told to cover sin. But the Bible nowhere justifies lying. It teaches that we should not do evil that good may come. None of those who used guile [deceitful cunning, craft and treachery-*Webster*] in Bible times were blessed of God for lying; but such as were blessed of God, were blessed for good traits that they possessed; and their lives would shine brighter in the heavenly records if they had not spoken guile. No consideration should lead us to practice deceit. It is better to frankly confess our sins than to tell falsehoods to cover them, and to lose by telling the truth, than to gain by using guile. Of the holy Pattern we read, ‘Who committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth’ [Isa. 53:9].’ 1 Pet. 1: 22. And of the last church it is written, [Zeph. 3:13; Rev. 14: 5 quoted].

“The tongue is wrongly used in speaking *vain and idle words.* [Matt. 12: 36, 37 quoted]. If all were duly impressed with the truthfulness of this solemn declaration of the Savior, vain and idle words would be fewer than they now are. But men will have to give account for their idle words in the Day of Judgment, whether they realize it or not. By our words we will either be justified or condemned in that day. ‘How careful then ought we to live, with what religious fear, who such a strict account must give of our behavior there.’

NF: What about jesting and joking? Is there any place for such in our Christian experience and preparation for heaven?

DB: “We should not *indulge* in foolish talking nor coarse jesting, which, as Paul says, ‘which are not fitting.’ Eph. 5:4. Again he says, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers.” Eph. 4: 29. “Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer each one.” Col. 4: 6.

NF: What is a good remedy or substitute for foolish talking and coarse jesting—a wise use of the tongue?

DB: “A good remedy for foolish talking and jesting is, giving thanks to the Lord. Foolish talking, jesting and joking are generally indulged in, when the mind is cheerful and feels well; and cheerfulness is good *if it is rightly used*. If anyone has reason to be cheerful it is the Christian; and how appropriate it is to thank the Lord when we feel well. To do this would keep our minds on the Lord and prevent us from talking foolishly. Says James, ‘Is anyone cheerful, sing psalms.’ James 5: 13. Singing psalms [or hymns] and giving thanks unto the Lord, and speaking with grace, and in a manner to edify, would be more profitable and would leave a greater and more lasting satisfaction than to engage in vain, empty, filthy and foolish conversation. Many have had to weep over foolish and trifling expressions; but no rational person was ever known to weep over a pure, elevating, graceful and instructive conversation.”

NF: Since an increasing knowledge of truth is indispensable to Christian perfection—and we are instructed to seek it with all our heart—what should we careful about?

DB: “The tongue should be employed in exalting and defending the truth, and in giving a reason of our hope. In doing this in a *proper* manner, we can be a blessing to ourselves and to others. ‘A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth’ Prov. 12: 14. ‘The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.’ Prov. 10: 11. It invigorates, refreshes, and gladdens the hearts of many. ‘A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.’ Prov. 15: 4. ‘The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the fool does not do so.’ Prov. 15:7. ‘The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for want of wisdom.’ Prov. 10:21. *But the tongue should use knowledge aright.* Prov. 15:2. *To use knowledge aright, we must speak right words at the right time, in the right manner, with the right spirit and actuated by the right motives.* ‘The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little.’ Prov. 10:20. Its words are choice words. They are well chosen.

NF: In what ways are we in danger of bringing these truths into disrepute, or dishonor—even as we seek and acquire it?

DB: “Among the many things that could be said on different occasions, we must speak the proper things,— the things that are needed and that can be understood and appreciated; the things that will glorify God and do others good. Those who speak promiscuously [indiscriminately] , and say all they know on every occasion, cannot be said to use knowledge aright, and must injure and be a disgrace to any honorable cause in which they may engage. *In this way the cause of truth has often been brought into disrepute [dishonor] by its professed friend.* ‘A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.’ Prov. 29:11. ‘He who has knowledge spares his words, and a man of understanding is of a calm spirit. Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.’ Prov. 17: 27, 28. He is swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. James 1:10. ‘In the multitude of words sin is not

lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.’ Prov. 10:19 quoted. See also Prov. 29:20; Eccl. 5:1-7.

NF: It is quite obvious that it is not merely the amount of truth that is said or written on a given occasion—because Jesus and His apostles gave long discourses in certain occasions and instances, even as this particular study and discussion is taking. So how did Jesus explain this matter more clearly?

DB: “Said Christ on a certain occasion, ‘I have yet many things to say to you; but you cannot bear them *now*.’ John 16:12. We are so weak and our minds are so limited, that we cannot bear the *whole truth* at once. We must first learn the alphabet of truth, and then we are prepared to understand and learn more truth and more difficult portions of truth. And we should learn from our own weakness and experience and from the dealings of the Lord with us, *how we ought to deal out knowledge to others*. To deal out *difficult* portions of truth at first, and to present *many ideas at once*, would clog and confuse the minds of our hearers, and perhaps make them conclude that we have a confused mass of ideas, and give them an unfavorable opinion of the truths we advocate. ‘A word fitly spoken is life apples of gold in pictures of silver.’ Prov. 25:11.

“It often operates like a good medicine administered at the right time and in a proper manner. A physician, who would be successful in his line of business, must first consider the physical condition of his patients and the nature of their diseases, and then he is prepared to administer unto them the proper kind of medicine. So he, who would be successful in doctoring sin-sick souls, should first consider *the moral condition of his patients and the nature of their moral diseases*, and then he can tell what portion of truths are adapted to their respective cases, and at what time and manner they should be presented. And wise and successful is the person that can give to each a portion of truth in due season [see Luke 12: 42].”

NF: This is such a practical and excellent explanation of the essential steps in imparting spiritual knowledge that we are learning to others! This includes knowing when to speak and when to keep silent, doesn’t it?

DB: “Some are not prepared to bear the same portions of truth that others can. Some can receive at one time and under certain circumstances, what they cannot receive at a different time and under different circumstances. Some need to be cheered and encouraged; others need to be checked. Some cases and circumstances call for sharp yet meek rebukes; others for moderate rebukes. Some call for open reproofs; others for secret reproofs. But every truth and every case should be handled with love. There is a time to speak and a time to keep silence. ‘Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise. And he that shuts his lips is esteemed as a man of understanding.’ Prov. 17:28. There are many seasons when we ought to keep silence; and in many instances by speaking when we ought not to speak, we use knowledge wrong.”

NF: Can you be more specific? What bears more weight—knowing and sharing the truth or living it out in the life?

DB: “We use knowledge wrong when we speak much of the truth, and yet obey not the truth. It would be wiser to talk less and live better. Those who have much to say about the truth, but whose *lives* do not agree with their profession, may be compared to a farmer who extols the qualities of a certain apple tree in his orchard, and immediately presents a basket of miserable apples to those that hear him. If his hearers are not acquainted with him or with the tree he extols, they will say, the tree is bad and his taste is perverted; or he knows the tree is bad and wishes to deceive us. Many, not having an

understanding of the truth because they have not examined it, will judge the truth by the fruit that those bear who profess it; and if the fruit is bad, they will conclude that the profession or theory is also bad. True, this is not a logical conclusion. But we see how necessary it is for those who talk the truth to live out the truth!

NF: How much and how long should we urge truth upon others?

DB: “Knowledge is used wrong when the truth is constantly urged upon others, as though all success depended on much urging. In this way, many are wearied and disgusted, and made to feel that *too much of one thing is good for nothing*. Let us remember that God has something to do in enforcing the truth that we cannot do. We should give God a chance to work by His Spirit and good angels, and should not get in the way and retard the progress of truth by *overacting* and going beyond the limits assigned unto us. If a clear presentation of truth, backed up by a consistent life and the spirit of truth, will not convince the honest, and lead them to action, what will?”

NF: In what other ways do we use knowledge wrongly?

DB: “Knowledge is used wrong when the truth is used as a *club*, and to get the ascendancy over others. By this course, honest souls are driven away from the truth and oppose it, who would otherwise ponder and receive it. We must not feel like a certain class whom David represents a saying, ‘With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?’ Ps. 12: 4. It is not those who whip and drive souls who are accounted wise. The wisest of man says, ‘He that *wins* souls is wise.’

“Knowledge is used wrong when the truth is spoken from *selfish* motives, to get worldly gain, or to receive the praise of men, etc. Those who speak the truth from such motives, and with such objects in view, may prosper with those who love *smooth things*, as long as they keep in a *popular channel*, and dwell upon truths that are generally acknowledged, and that have *no special cross* connected with them; but let them leave this popular channel, and speak the whole truth, with the glory of God and the good of souls in view, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear (refuse) [Eze. 2: 1-8; 3: 11], and many will lose their worldly support and the praise and honor of men, to receive the salary of those who have not shunned to declare the *whole counsel of God*; viz., persecution, reproach, want, privation, the honor and praise that come from God, with the promise of eternal life in the world to come. Doubtless if all who now profess to preach the truth were shut up to this salary, not a few would leave off his preaching to adopt some other avocation.”

Note: This helps explain the fairly-recent phenomenon called “mega-churches.” Their apparent success is coveted and their messages, doctrinal interpretations, and methods adopted even by some in the remnant church—when their ministers and evangelists do not even mention the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14! While much truth is given in powerfully-delivered messages they clearly skirt the testing truths for these last days, such as that the investigative judgment is currently taking place in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary and that only those who overcome all their sins through the blood of Christ will inherit eternal life, etc!

DB: “Those who have undue anxiety to fill the places of teachers while they overlook the necessary qualifications to teach the truth would do well to consider the following injunction of James. [James 3: 1; Prov. 16: 23 quoted]. If we are careful to think before speaking, and with reference to speaking, we shall have more knowledge and know how to use it. We shall know when to keep silence, and when, what and how to speak, and will keep our souls from troubles. [Prov. 21: 23; 1 Pet 3:10 quoted]. Dear reader, if so much depends on the right use of the tongue; let us see to it that we weigh our words. Let us keep our mouths as with a bridle, and take heed to our ways that we sin not with our tongues.”

(To be continued next month).

