

Thursday, June 18, 1981

**BIBLICAL MUSINGS**

by Garry L. Barton



This week, let us ponder the fate of an unbridled tongue.

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

Indeed, idle words spoken, be they truth or lies, have the same negative effect; they attack our already suspicious and thereby vulnerable minds, planting that seed of doubt. Much like

of a mustard seed moving a mountain, a little seed of doubt, deposited by an unbridled tongue, can topple or destroy that same mountain.

James 3:5 says as much—"The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" Here, to better understand, liken an unbridled tongue to a tiny and unassuming kitchen match that has the ability to destroy whole forests at a

time. James continues: "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 3:6.

Consider your body to be a forest made up of a number of trees (let the trees represent the various members of your body). Then consider the fact that a kitchen match (your tongue) is capable of destroying the whole forest (your body). Remember, the scripture says: "...and setteth on fire the course of nature..." The natural course of nature (or the world) is straight for hell. One important thing we need to remember: after a forest here on earth is burnt up, the fire goes out. In order to have a fire here on earth you need 3 sources--fuel, oxygen and a source of heat. When the forest is burnt up you no longer have fuel; therefore the fire extinguishes itself. But in hell, the fire is everlasting.

So, we see we need to keep a bridle on, or a check on our loose tongues. "Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body." James 3:3. Indeed we are warned about this in Psalm 32:9. "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle..." It may seem inappropriate to say so, but nevertheless I have seen many stubborn jackasses (donkeys) who need to be turned out to pasture in God's Word. They need to eat a "bit" of the Word. They would not be as apt to argue God's Word then.

As a matter of fact, Jesus told the Pharisees (He was talking to you and me also)—"But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by the words thou shalt be condemned." Matthew 12:36, 37.

Yes, indeed! There are all too many judges in our time. Like a preacher once expressed in my presence: "I

thank God, God ain't like man."

We need remember what Jesus said in His parable found in Matthew 13:31, 32—"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

It is my contention that too many of us would rather be a proud and stately Oak Tree, with our backs so straight and stiff we can't see how to kneel down to humble ourselves before God. Again, we need remember: All trees are vulnerable to fire (except, of course, for the Mustard Tree in this instance).

It might also be interesting to note why God led the children of Israel in the wilderness for 40 years. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to

know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." Deuteronomy 8:2. Simply put, there were too many Oak Trees and not enough Mustard Trees.

It seems the world today has the same problem as did "Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and other women that were with them, which told..." the eleven disciples about Jesus rising from the dead. "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." Luke 24:10, 11.

It's strange but true: you tell someone a lie and they will believe you quicker than they would if you told them the truth.

Another interesting fact just came to me. Take the word "TRUE." Take the "U" (signifying you) out and replace it with an "E" (signifying Eternity) and you have the word "TREE." The message here is that everyone has access to the "Tree of Life." But first they need to learn how to submit themselves to and humble themselves be-

fore God.

In light (Jesus is the Light) of all this, I can understand why preachers exhort us that if we must wag our tongues, to let our conversations center around Jesus.

Perhaps most people are like me; many times I open my mouth hoping to impress people with my intelligence. But, alas! More times than not the only thing that gets through to them is my bad breath and I therefore achieve the opposite affect.

Indeed, we will be rewarded if we bridle our tongues.

"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." 1 Peter 3:10. This is repeated in Psalms 34:12, 13.

There is an old adage that, although it is not Bible, seems appropriate: "It is better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak up and remove all doubt." I say, "Amen!" to that.

Continue to love and pray for one another.

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**Father's Day "pomp and..."**  
For you trivia fans, which came first? Father's, or Mother's Day? You guessed it — Mother's Day. It's for this precise reason we even celebrate Father's Day — that having put Mom first, poor ol' Dad wouldn't feel left out!

In the noble words of Senator Margaret Chase Smith, "Let's honor both parents, or desist from honoring either." Fifteen years later, in 1972, President Nixon signed Congressional approval correcting the "most grievous insult imaginable" — oversight of our honorable and worthy fathers.

So, be it resolved: Honor Dad with the "... ceremony" he richly deserves!

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**Proposed Teacher Tenure Study blasted by NCAE**

A bill directing that a study be conducted of the so-called teacher tenure statute before the October meeting of the General Assembly is a "backdoor attempt to destroy job security for the state's public school educators," the president of the North Carolina Association of Educators said today.

Mrs. Loretta M. Martin, a Thomasville teacher serving as NCAE president, said Senate Bill 621 "is an unfair attempt by the State School Boards Association to do by study commission what it cannot do by legislation."

Mrs. Martin said the North Carolina School Boards Association has been promising all this session of the General Assembly that it would sponsor legislation to replace the present Fair Employment and Dismissal Statute with a five-year renewable tenure statute.

That proposal, said Mrs. Martin, was recognized by members of the General Assembly for what it was—"a bold attempt to give school boards a hunting license on all educators every five years."

She said passage of such legislation "would immediately turn teachers and principals into timid individuals afraid to speak out on anything for fear their names would go on the list for the time when their personal hunting season approached." Support for such legislation was lacking, she said.

Mrs. Martin said the School Boards Association has prevailed upon powerful members of the General Assembly to introduce legislation calling for a study of the Fair Employment and Dismissal Statute.

The study is to be conducted by the Legislative Research Commission and the Personnel Administration Commission and reported

back to the General Assembly by the October special session.

"It looks to us as if what is planned is a quick endorsement of the peculiar philosophy that has been espoused by some leaders of the School Boards Association recently," Mrs. Martin said.

She said the so-called tenure statute came into being because of "abuses in the hiring and firing of teachers, abuses so flagrant the General Assembly itself demanded that something be done."

She said in some counties teachers were required to contribute to a particular political party in order to keep their jobs, that principals were often summarily dismissed by school boards and even school committees, and that in one particularly flagrant case a school board fired a female English teacher solely because it was firing her husband and expected both to leave the county.

"With what is happening in our society right now with the Moral Majority and the New Right, can you just imagine what a state of chaos will exist in our schools if we take away the minor job security teachers and principals now have?" she asked.

She said NCAE believes the present Fair Employment and Dismissal Statute, which list 12 reasons school boards may use to dismiss a teacher or principal, has worked well over a fairly long period of time since it was adopted in 1971.

She said NCAE will fight the attempt to send the statute to a study commission.

"The statute doesn't need studying. What needs studying is why some people are so hell bent on destroying any job security for the state's public school educators," she added.

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