filled up in ver. 2: “be not many teachers,  
for in such office there is great danger of  
failing, and if we teachers fail, our condemnation will be greater”).

**2.] For**  
(see above: this supplies the ellipsis) **oftentimes we all** (without exception: the  
original word implies this) **offend** (to be  
taken in the widest moral sense, as an  
axiom applying to our whole conduct. It  
is in the next clause limited to the subject  
in hand, viz. the tongue). **If any man  
offendeth not in word** (in speaking: and  
therefore the hypothesis is applicable to  
these many who set up for teachers, seeing  
that thus their chances of offence would be  
multiplied many fold), **he [is] a perfect  
man** (explained by what follows), **able to  
bridle the whole body also** (thi sense runs  
thus: We all oftentimes offend: and of  
those frequent offences, sins of the tongue  
are so weighty a part and so constant a  
cause, that he who is free from them may  
be said to be perfect, inasmuch as he is  
able to rule every other minor cause of  
offence: ‘the whole body’ standing for all  
those other members by which, as by the  
tongue, sin may be committed: which may  
be *instruments of unrighteousness for sin*,  
or, *instruments of righteousness for God*,  
Rom. vi. 13).

**3–6.]** *The importance and depravity  
of the tongue, so small a member, is illustrated by comparisons:* 1) *with the small  
instrument, the horse-bit*, ver. 3: 2) *with  
the small instrument, the ship-rudder*, ver.  
4: 3) *with a small fire burning a great  
forest*, vv. 5, 6.

**3.]** This mention  
of *bridling*, and the situation of the  
tongue where the *bridle* also is placed,  
introduce this similitude: *bridle* and  
*mouth* being ideas already given by the  
context. **But** (transitional) **if** (as we do:  
in our vernacular, *‘when*,’ ‘*as often as*’)  
**in the mouths of horses we put bits** (literally, **the bits**: i.e. which are in common  
use: the bits, of which every one knows),  
**in order to their obeying us** (thus shewing, by the expression of this purpose, that  
we recognize the principle of turning the  
whole body by the tongue—now comes  
the result after the **if**: see below); **we  
turn about also** (in turning the bit one  
way or the other) **their whole body**.

**4.]** *The second comparison* takes up, not  
the supposition with its “*if,*” but only the  
result foregoing. **Behold even** (or *also*)  
**the ships, though so great, and driven by  
fierce winds** (Bede interprets this as having  
a meaning respecting ourselves, the winds  
being the appetites and passions. But it  
is not likely that the Apostle had any such  
meaning), **are turned about by a very small  
rudder, whithersoever the desire of the  
steersman** (him who actually handles the  
tiller) **may wish.**

**5.]** *Application of  
the comparison*. **Thus also the tongue is  
a little member, and boasteth great things**  
(vaunts great words, which bring about  
great acts of mischief). **Behold** (rendering  
the sentence literally:—for the purpose of