**nature** (not, the great skill; **nature** means,  
as before, natural generic character) **of  
man:**

**8.]** **but** (exception) **the tongue**  
**no one of men can tame** (the assertion is  
absolute, not to be weakened by “*without  
great labour*,” as some have done. The  
word in the original means, *even to tame*,  
even once: not, to tame habitually. Now  
we see fully the meaning of ver. 2):  
**it is a restless mischief, [it is]** (compare “adders’ poison is under their lips,”  
Ps. cxl. 3; the characteristic following refers not to the word **mischief**,  
but back to **the tongue**. It is therefore  
necessary to repeat “*it is*”) **full of death-bringing poison.**

**9, 10.]** *Exemplification of the* **restless mischief,** *by the  
inconsistent use of the tongue*. The first  
person is used of mankind in general, considered as one agent. **Therewith bless we**  
(i.e. as applied to God, “praise we”) **the  
Lord and Father** (an unusual connexion  
to designate God: see ch. i. 27, where we  
have the more usual one, found also here  
in the ordinary text. Both terms are  
to be taken of the Father: the former,  
on the side of His Power: the latter,  
on that of His Love); **and therewith  
curse we men, which** (not, *who*, which  
would personally designate *certain men*  
thus made; but *which*, generic. This distinction, which some modern philologists  
are striving to obliterate, is very important  
in the rendering of Scripture, and has been  
accurately observed by our English translators) **have been created** (and are still, as  
the perfect tense shews. See below) **after**  
**the likeness of God** (which remains in us,  
marred indeed, but not, as is sometimes  
carelessly said, destroyed. This likeness  
we ought to revere, in ourselves and in  
others: and he who curses, despises it.  
Not man’s original state, but man’s present  
state is here under consideration: and on  
that consideration depends the force of the  
Apostle’s argument).

**10.]** **Out of  
the same mouth cometh forth blessing  
and cursing** (by this resuming and collocation of the two opposite acts, the inconsistency is further shewn). **These  
things, my brethren, ought not so to  
take place.**

**11.]** *Illustration from nature, that  
such conduct is unnatural.* **Doth a fountain out of the same chink** (hole, from  
which the water flows, in a rock, or in  
the earth) **send forth the sweet and  
the bitter** (water, of course: but there  
is no need to supply any thing: the contrast is in the contrary nature of the  
two)?

**12.]** Shews further, that *natural organizations do not bring forth things  
opposite to or inconsistent with their usual  
fruits*, but each one has one result, and  
that always. **Can, my brethren, a fig  
tree bring forth** (see on the whole, Matt. vii.  
16 ff. De Wette is wrong, when he says that  
thistles or the like would be here, as there,  
more agreeable to the similitude. For the  
reasoning is not here, that we must not look  
for good fruit from a bad tree: but that no  
tree can bring forth fruit inconsistent with  
its own nature) **olives, or a vine, figs?** **nor**