

Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame
 When once it is within thee; but before
 May'st rule it as thou list: and pour the shame
 Which it will pour to thee upon the floor.
 It is most just to throw that on the ground,
 Which would throw me there, if I kept the round.

He that is drunken, may his mother kill,
 Lie with his sister: he hath lost the reins;
 Is outlaw'd by himself; all kind of ill
 Did with the liquor slide into the veins.
 The drunkard forfeits man, and doth divest
 All worldly right, save what he has by beast.

Shall I, to please another's wine-sprung mind,
 Lose all my own? God has given me a measure
 Short of his Can, and body; must I find
 A pain in that wherein he finds a pleasure?
 Stay at the third glass; if thou lose thy hold,
 Then thou art modest, but the wine grows bold,

If reason move not gallants quit the room,
 (All in a shipwreck shift their several way.)
 Let not a common ruin thee intomb:
 Be not a beast in courtesies; but stay,
 Stay at the third glass, or forego the place:
 Wine, above all things, doth God's stamp deface.

CAUTION II.

THE second evil I shall deal with is the evil of the tongue, which as St. James saith, is full of deadly poison, oaths, curses, blasphemies; and this poison it scatters up and down the world in all places; an untamed member that none can rule, Jam. iii. 7, 8. The fiercest of beasts have been tamed by man, as the apostle there observes, which is a relic of his old superiority and dominion over them; but this is an unruly member that none can tame but he that made it; no beast so fierce and crabbed as this is. It may be, I may be bitten by it for my labour and endeavours to put a restraint upon it: but I shall adventure it. My design is not to dishonour, or exasperate you; but if my faithfulness to God and you should accidentally do so, I cannot help that.

Friends, Providence oftentimes confines many of you together within the narrow limits of a ship, where you have time enough, and if your hearts were sanctified, many choice advantages of edifying one another. O what transcendent subjects doth Providence daily present you with, to take up your discourses! How many experiences of extraordinary mercies and preservations have you to relate to one another, and bless the Lord for! Also, how many works of wonder

do you daily behold, who go down into the deeps? O what heavenly employment is here for your tongues! how should they be talking of all his wonders? How should you call upon each other, as David did, Psal. lxi. 16. "Come hither, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul," at such a time, in such an extremity? How should you call upon one another to pay "the vows your lips have uttered in your distress?" Thus should one provoke another in this angelic work, as one lively bird sets the whole flock a chirping.

But tell me, Sirs, should a man come aboard you at sea, and ask of you as Christ did of those two disciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 17. "What manner of communication is this that ye have by the way?" O what a sad account would he have from most of you! It may be he should find one *jesting*, and another *swearing*, a third *reviling* godliness, and the professors of it; so that it would be a little hell for a serious Christian to be confined to your society. This is not, I am confident, the manner of all. We have a company of more sober seamen, and blessed be God for them; but surely thus stands the case with most of you. O what stuff is here from persons professing Christianity, and bordering close upon the confines of eternity as you do?

It is not my purpose to write of all the diseases of the tongue; that would fill a volume, and is inconsistent with my intended brevity. Who can recount the evils of the tongue? The apostle saith, "It is a world of iniquity," Jam. iii. 6. And if there be a world of sin in one member, who can number the sins of all the members? Laurentius reckons as many sins of the tongue as there are letters in the alphabet. And it is an observable note that one hath upon Rom. iii. 13, 14. That when Paul anatomizeth the natural man there, he insisteth longer upon the organs of speech, than all the other members; "Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit: the poison of asps is under their lips, their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

But, to be short, we find the Spirit of God in scripture comparing the tongue to a tree, Prov. xv. 4. "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life." And words are the fruit of the tree, Isa. lvii. 12. "I create the fruit of the lips." Some of these trees bear precious fruits, and it is a lovely sight to behold them laden with them in their seasons, Prov. xxv. 11. "A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Such a tongue is a tree of life. Others of these trees bear evil fruit, grapes of Sodom, and clusters of Gomorrah. I shall only insist upon two sorts of these fruits, viz. (1.) Withered, sapless fruit; I mean idle and unprofitable words. (2.) Rotten and corrupt fruit; I mean, profane oaths, and profanations of the sacred name of God. No fruit in the world so apt to corrupt and taint as the fruit of the lips. When it is so, the scripture calls it *σαπρος λογος*, corrupt or rotten communication, Eph. iv. 29. To prevent this the

Spirit of God prescribes an excellent way to season our words, and keep them sweet and sound, that they may neither wither nor become idle and sapless, or putrify and become rotten, as profane words are, Col. iv. 6. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer every man." Oh! if the salt of grace were once cast into the fountain, the heart-streams must needs become more savoury and pleasant, as the waters of Marah when they were healed. My present work is to attempt the cure of this double evil of *idle words* and *profane oaths*, whereof thousands among you are deeply guilty. I shall begin with the first, viz.

I. IDLE WORDS. That is, useless chat, unprofitable talk, that is not referred any way to the glory of God. This is a common evil, and little regarded by most men; but yet a sin of severer aggravations than the most imagine: light words weigh heavy in God's balance.

Arg. 1. For, first, The evil of them is exceedingly aggravated by this: they abuse and pervert the tongue, that noble member, from that employment and use which God by the law of creation designed it to. God gave not to man the organs and power of speech, (which is his excellency above the beasts) to serve a passion or vain humour, to vent the froth and vanity of his spirit; but to extol the Creator, and render him the praise of all his admirable and glorious works. For though the creation be a curious well-tuned instrument, yet man is the musician that must touch it, and make the melody. This was the end of God in forming those instruments and organs: but now hereby they are subject to Satan and lust, and employed to the dishonour of God who made them. God is pleased to suspend the power of speech (as we see in children) until reason begins to bud in them: they have not the liberty of one, until they have the use of the other; which plainly shews, that God is not willing to have our words run waste.

Arg. 2. It is a sinful wasting of our precious time; and that puts a further aggravation upon it. Consider, sirs, the time of life is but a little spot betwixt two eternities. The long-suffering God wheels about those glorious celestial bodies over your heads in a constant revolution to beget time for you; and the preciousness of every minute thereof results from its use and end: it is intended and afforded as a space to you to repent in, Rev. ii. 21. And therefore great things depend upon it: no less than your eternal happiness or misery hangs upon those precious opportunities. Every minute of it hath an influence into eternity. How would the damned value one hour of it if they might enjoy it! The business you have to do in it is of unspeakable weight and concernment: this great work, this soul-work, and eternity-work, lies upon your hands; you are cast into straits of time about it: and, if so, O what an evil is it in you to waste it away thus to no purpose!

Arg. 3. It is a sin that few are sensible of as they are of other sins, and therefore the more dangerous. It is commonly committed, and that without checks of conscience. Other sins, as murder and adultery, though they be horrid sins, yet are but seldom committed, and when they are, conscience is startled at the horridness of them; few, except they be prodigious wretches indeed, dare make light of them. But now for idle and vain words, there are innumerable swarms of these every day, and few regard them. The intercourse betwixt the heart and tongue is quick; they are quickly committed, and as easily forgotten.

Arg. 4. And then, 4thly, They have mischievous effects upon others. How long doth an idle word, or foolish jest, stick in men's minds, and become an occasion of much sin to them? The froth and vanity of thy spirit, which thy tongue so freely vents among thy vain companions, may be working in their minds when thou art in the dust, and so be transmitted from one to another; for unto that no more is requisite than an *objective existence* of those vain words in their memories. And thus mayest thou be sinning in the persons of thy companions, when thou art turned into dust. And this is one reason that Suarez gives for a general judgment, after men have passed their particular judgment immediately after their death, 'Because (saith he) after this, multitudes of sins by their means will be committed in the world, for which they must yet be judged to a fuller measure of wrath.' So that look as many of the precious servants of God, now in glory, have left many weighty and holy sayings behind them, by which many thousands of souls have been benefited, and God glorified on earth, after they had left it: so thou leavest that vanity upon the minds of others behind thee, by which he may be dishonoured to many generations. And then,

II. For PROFANE OATHS, the corrupt fruit of a graceless heart; oh! how common are these among you? Yea, the habit of swearing is so strengthened in some, that they have lost all sense and conscience of the sin. Now, oh! that I might prevail with you to repent of this wickedness, and break the force of this customary evil among you! will you but give me the reading of a few pages more, and weigh with the reason of men, what you read? If you will not hearken to counsel, it is a fatal sign, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. and you shall mourn for this obstinacy hereafter, Prov. v. 12, 13. Desperate is that evil that scorns the remedy. And if you have patience to read it, the Lord give you an heart to consider what you read, and obey the counsels of God; or else it were better thine eyes had never seen these lines. Well, then, I beseech you consider,

Arg. 1. That profane oaths are an high abuse of the dreadful and sacred name of God, which should neither be spoken or thought of without the deepest awe and reverence. It is the taking of that sacred name in vain, Exod. xx. 7. Now God is exceeding tender and jealous over his name; it is dear to him; his name is dreadful and

glorious; Mal. i. 14. "I am a great king, and my name is dreadful among the Heathen." The heathens would not ordinarily mention the names of such as they revered. Suetonius saith, that Augustus prohibited the common use of his name: he thought it an indignity to have his name tossed up and down in every one's mouth. Yea, says Dr. Willet on Exod. xx. it was an use among them to keep secret such names as they would have in reverence. They durst not mention the name of Demogorgon, whom they held to be the first god: they thought when he was named, the earth would tremble. Also the name of Mercurius Tresmegistus, was very sparingly used, because of that reverence the people had for him. Now, consider, shall poor worms be so tender of preserving the reverence of their names! Shall not heathens dare to use the names of their idols; and shall the sacred and dreadful name of the true God be thus bandied up and down by tongues of his own creatures? Will not God be avenged for these abuses of his name? Be confident, it shall one day be sanctified upon you in judgment, because ye did not sanctify it according to your duty.

Arg. 2. Swearing is a part of the worship of God; and therefore profane swearing can be no less than the profanation of his worship, and robbing him of all the glory he has thereby; Deut. vi. 13. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name." So Jer. iv. 2. "Thou shalt swear the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness." If a man swear by God after this manner, God is exceedingly glorified thereby. Now, that you may see what revenue of glory God hath from this part of his worship, and how it becomes a part of Divine worship, you must know then an oath is nothing else but the *asking or desiring a Divine testimony, for the confirmation of the truth of our testimony*: Heb. vi. 16. "For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for [confirmation] is to them an end of all strife." The corruption of human nature by the fall has made man such a false and fickle creature, that his single testimony cannot be sufficient security for another especially in weighty cases, to rest upon; and therefore in swearing, he calleth God for a witness of the truth of what he affirms, or promiseth: I say, calleth God to be a witness of the truth of what he saith, because he is *truth* itself, and cannot lie, Heb. vi. 18. Now this calling for, or asking of a testimony from God, makes an oath become a part of God's worship, and gives him a great deal of glory and honour; for hereby he that sweareth acknowledgeth his *omniscieny and infallible truth and righteousness*. His *omniscieny* is acknowledged: for by this appeal to him, we imply and acknowledge him to be the *Searcher of the heart and reins*; that he knows the secret intents and meaning of our spirits. His *supreme and infallible truth* is also acknowledged; for this is manifestly carried in an oath, that though I am a false and deceitful creature, and my affirmation cannot obtain universal and full credence, yet he that is **greater than**

I, by whose name I swear, cannot deceive. And, lastly, his *righteousness* is acknowledged in an oath: for he that sweareth doth, either *expressly* or *implicitly*, put himself under the curse and wrath of God, if he swear falsely. Every oath hath an execration or imprecation in it, Neh. x. 29. "They entered into a curse, and an oath, to walk in God's law." And so 2 Cor. i. 23. "I call God for a record upon my soul." And the usual form in the Old Testament was, "The Lord do so to me, and more also." Now hereby God hath the glory of his righteousness and justice given him by the creature, and therefore it is a choice part of the Divine worship, or of that homage which a creature oweth to his God. And if this be so, then how easily may the sin of rash and profane oaths be hence argued and aggravated? The more excellent any thing is by an institution of God, by so much more horrid and abominable is the abuse thereof. O how often is the dreadful Majesty of heaven and earth called to witness to frivolous things! and oft to be a witness of our rage and fury! as 1 Sam. xiv. 39. Is it a light thing to rob him of his peculiar glory, and subject poor souls to his curse and wrath, who has said, "He will be a swift witness against you?" Mal. iii. 5. Your tongues are nimble in committing this sin, and God will be swift in punishing it.

Arg. 3. It is a sin which God hath severely threatened to punish, and that with temporal and corporal plagues: "For by reason of oaths, the land mourns," Hos. iv. 2, 3. That is, it brings the heavy judgment of God upon whole nations, under which they shall mourn. And in Zech. v. 2, 3, 4. You have there a *roll of curses*; i. e. a catalogue of judgments and woes, *the length thereof twenty cubits*; (i. e. ten yards) to set out the multitude of woes contained in it: it is a long catalogue, and a *flying roll*, to denote the *swiftness* of it: it flies towards the house of the swearer; it makes haste. The judgments that are written in it linger not, but are even in pain to be delivered. And this flying roll, full of dreadful woes, flies and enters into the house of the swearer; *and it shall therein remain*, saith the Lord; it shall cleave to his family; none shall claw off these woes from him: and it shall consume the timber thereof, and the stones thereof, i. e. bring utter subversion, ruin, and desolation to his house. O dreadful sin! what a desolation doth it make! your mouths are full of oaths, and your houses shall be full of curses. Woe to that wretched family, into which this flying roll shall enter! Woe, I say, to the wretched inhabitants thereof! "The curse of the Lord (saith Solomon) is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the [habitation] of the just," Prov. iii. 33. *Tuguriolum*, i. e. (saith Mercer) *his poor little tenement or cottage*. There is a blessing, the promises, like clouds of blessing, dwell over it, and drop mercies on it; but a curse in the house of the wicked. Ah! how many stately mansions are there, in which little other language but oaths and curses are heard! and these are as so much gun-powder

laid under the foundation of them, which, when justice shall set fire to, O what work will it make! woe to the inhabitants thereof! Well then, break off this sin by repentance, unless you intend to ruin your families, and bring all the curses of God into your houses. If you have no pity for yourselves, yet pity your posterity; have mercy for your wives and children; do not ruin all for the indulgence of a lust.

Arg. 4. But that is not all; it brings soul-judgments and spiritual plagues upon you: it brings hell along with it. And if thou be not afraid to sin, yet methinks, thou shouldst be afraid to *burn*: if the love of God can work nothing upon thy brawny heart, yet, methinks, the terrors of the Lord should startle and affright it. To this purpose, I beseech you to weigh these scriptures; and methinks, unless God hath lost all his authority with you, and hell all its terrors, it should startle you. The first is that dreadful scripture, James v. 12. "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into [condemnation.]" O view this text seriously! methinks it should be like the fingers that came forth and wrote upon the wall that dreadful sentence that changed the countenance of a king, and that in the height of a frolic humour, and made his knees smite together. Mark, [*above all things*] a form of vehemency and earnestness, like that, Eph. vi. 16. "But above all, taking the shield of faith." As faith hath a prelation there before all the graces, so swearing here before all other vices. [*Swear not,*] i. e. *vainly, rashly, profanely*; for otherwise it is a lawful thing, and a part of God's worship, as I have shewed: but swear not vain oaths, by the creatures, heaven, or earth, &c. which is to advance the creature into the room of God: a sin to which the Jews were much addicted. But, "let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay;" i. e. accustom yourselves to short and plain affirmations and negations, to a simple and candid expression of your minds. And the thundering argument that backs it, is this, [*lest ye fall into condemnation;*] i. e. lest for these things the Judge of heaven and earth pass a sentence of condemnation to hell upon you. O sirs! dare you touch with this hot iron? Dare you from henceforth commit that sin, that you know will bring you under the condemnation and judgment of God? Do you know what it is for a soul to be cast at God's bar? Did you never see a poor malefactor tried at the assizes, and observe how his face gathers paleness, how his legs tremble, and death displays its colours in his cheeks, when sentence is given upon him? But what is that to God's condemnation? What is a gallows to hell? Another text I would recommend to your consideration is that, Exod. xx. 7. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain;" where vain oaths are especially included. Now, what doth God mean, when he saith, he will not hold him guiltless? The meaning is plain, his sins shall be reckoned and imputed to him; they shall lie upon his soul; he shall be bound

over to answer to God for them. O terrible sentence! what soul can bear it, or stand before it! "Blessed is the man (saith David) to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity:" Surely then, cursed is that man to whom God will impute them: and to the swearer they shall all be imputed, if he break not off his sin by repentance, and get a Christ the sooner. Oh, how darest thou think of going before the Lord with the guilt of all thy sins upon thee? When Christ would administer the very spirit of joy into one sentence to a poor sinner, Mat. ix. 2. He said, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven." And when God would contract the sum of all misery into one word, he saith, "His sins shall lie down with him in the dust," Job xx. 11. Ah, soul! one of these days thou shalt be laid on thy death-bed, or see the waves that shall entomb thee, leaping and roaring upon every side; and then thou wilt surely have other thoughts of the happiness that lies in remission of sin than thou hast now. Observe the most incorrigible sinner then; hark, how he sighs and groans, and cries, Ah, Lord! and must I die? And then see how the tears trickle down his cheeks, and his heart ready to burst within him. Why, what is the matter? Oh! the Lord will not pardon him, he holds him guilty! If he were sure his sins were forgiven, then he could die: but, oh! to appear before the Lord in them, appals him, daunts him, kills the very heart of him! he would fain cry for mercy, but conscience stops his mouth. O, saith conscience, how canst thou move that tongue to God in prayer for mercy, that hath so often rent and torn his glorious name, by oaths and curses? Sirs, I pray you do not make light of these things; they will look wishfully upon you one of these days, except ye prevent it by sound conversion.

Arg. 5. And then, lastly, to name no more, I pray you consider, that a custom of vain words and profane oaths, is as plain an indication and discovery of an unregenerate soul, as any in the world: this is a sure sign thou art none of Christ's, nor hast any thing to do with the promises and privileges of his people; for by this the scripture distinguisheth the state of saints and sinners, Eccl. ix. 2. "There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner: and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath." Mark, he that sweareth, and he that feareth an oath, do as manifestly distinguish the children of God from wicked men, as clean and unclean, righteous and wicked, sacrificing and not sacrificing. The fruit of the tongue plainly shews what the tree is that bears it; Isa. ii. 6. "The vile person will speak villany; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." *Loquere, ut videam*, said one; Speak, that I may see what you are. Look, what is in the heart, that is vented by the tongue; where the treasures of grace are in the heart, words ministering grace will be in the lips; Psal. xxxvii. 30. "The mouth of the righteous speaketh

“wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment; for the law of the Lord is in his heart.” To this sense we must understand that scripture, Mat. xii. 37. “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Certainly justification and condemnation, in the day of judgment shall not pass upon us merely for the good or bad words we have spoken; but according to the state of the person and frame of the heart. But the meaning is, that our words shall justify or condemn us in that day, as evidence of the state and frame of the soul. We use to say, such witnesses hang-ed a man; the meaning is, the evidence they gave cast and condemned him. O think seriously of this; if words evidence the state of the soul, what a woful state must thy soul needs be in, whose mouth overflows with oaths and curses! How many witnesses will be brought in, to cast thee in the great day? “Your own tongue shall then fall upon you,” as the expression is, Psal. lxiv. 8. And out of your own mouth God will fetch abundant evidence to condemn you. And thus I have opened unto you the evil of vain words and profane oaths; and presented to your view their several aggravations. If by these things there be a relenting pang upon thine heart, and a serious resolution of reformation, then I shall recommend these few helps or means to thy perusal, and conclude this head: And the first help is this,

Help 1. Seriously fix in thy thoughts that scripture, Mat. xii. 36. “But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.” O let it sound in thine ears day and night! O ponder them in thy heart! [*I say unto you*] I that have always been in the Father’s bosom, and do fully know his mind, that I am constituted the Judge of quick and dead, and do fully understand the rule of judgment, and the whole process thereof, I say, and do assure you, that [*every idle word that men shall speak,*] i. e. every word that hath not a tendency and reference to the glory of God, though there be no other obliquity of evil in them than this, that they want a good end: how much more then, scurrilous words, bloody oaths, and blasphemies? [*Men shall give an account thereof;*] that is, shall be cast and condemned to suffer the wrath of God for them; as appears by that parallel scripture, 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5. For as the learned observe, there is plainly a *metalepsis* in these words; the *antecedent to give an account*, is put for the *consequent*, punishment, and condemnation to hell-fire: the certainty whereof admits but of this one exception, viz. intervenient repentance, or pardon obtained through the blood of Christ here before you be presented at that judgment-seat. O then, what a bridle should this text be to thy extravagant tongue! I remember Hierom was wont to say, ‘Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, methinks I still hear the sound of these words in mine ear, Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.’ O that the sound of these words may be always in your ears!

Help 2. Consider before you speak, and be not rash to utter words without knowledge. He that speaks what he thinks not, speaks *hypocritically*; and he that thinks not what to speak, speaks *inconsiderately*. You have cause to weigh your words before you deliver them by your tongue; for whether you do, or do not, the Lord *pondereth* them: records are kept of them, else you could not be called to an account for them, as I shewed you, you must.

Help 3. Resign up your tongue to God every day, and beg him to guide and keep it. So did David, Psal. cxli. 3. "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep thou the door of my lips." Beg him to keep you from provocations and temptations; or, if you fall into them, intreat him for strength to rule your spirits in them, that you may not be conquered by temptations.

Help 4. But above all, labour to get your souls cleansed and purified by faith, possessed with saving and gracious principles: all other means will be ineffectual without this. O see the vileness of thy nature, and the necessity of a change to pass upon it! First make the tree good, and then his fruit good: a new nature will produce new words and actions. To bind your souls with vows and resolutions, while you are strangers to a regenerate work, is to bind Samson with green withs, whilst his locks remain upon his head. I will shut up this with the advice of that divine poet, Mr. George Herbert; it may be, it may affect thee, and run in thy thoughts when thou art alone.

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain;
 It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.
 Lust and wine plead a pleasure; avarice gain:
 But the cheap swearer, through his open sluice,
 Lets his soul run nought, as little fearing.
 Were I an Epicure, I could hate swearing.

When thou dost tell another's jest, therein
 Omit the oaths which true wit cannot need:
 Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sin.
 He pares the apple that will cleanly feed.
 Play not away the virtue of that name,
 Which is thy best stake when grief makes thee tame.

The cheapest sins most dearly punish'd are,
 Because to shun them also is so cheap;
 For we have wit to mark them, and to spare.
 O crumble not away thy soul's fair heap.
 If thou wilt die, the gates of hell are broad,
 Pride and full sins have made the way a road.