

To shut our lips when they should not speak, is only the Lord's work also. It is Christ that casts out the talking devil; he shuts the wicket of our mouth against unsavoury speeches. We may think it a high office (and worthy even David's ambition) to be a "doorkeeper in God's house" (Psal. lxxxiv. 10), when God vouchsafes to be a doorkeeper in our house.

Thus all is from God. Man is but a lock; God's Spirit the key "that openeth, and no man shutteth; that shutteth, and no man openeth," Rev. iii. 7. He opens, and no man shuts. I must speak though I die, said Jeremiah; "his word is like fire in my bones," Jer. xx. 9; and will make me weary of forbearing. He shuts, and no man opens; so Zacharias goes dumb from the altar, and could not speak, Luke i. 22.

Away, then, with arrogation of works, if not of words. When a man hath a good thought, it is *gratia infusa* (grace infused); when a good word, it is *gratia effusa* (grace effused); when a good work, it is *gratia diffusa* (grace diffused). If then man cannot produce words to praise God, much less can he procure his works to please God. If he cannot tune his tongue, he can never turn his heart. Two useful benefits may be made hereof.

1. It is taught us, whether we have recourse to tame our tongues. He that made the tongue can tame the tongue. He that gave man a tongue to speak, can give him a tongue to speak well. He that placed that unruly member in his mouth, can give him a mouth to rule it. He can give psalms for carols; the songs of Zion for the ballads of hell. Man hath no bridle, no cage of brass, nor bars of iron to tame it; God can. Let us move our tongues to entreat help for our tongues; and, according to their office, let us set them on work to speak for themselves.

2. We must not be idle ourselves; the difficulty must spur us to more earnest contention. As thou wouldst keep thy house from thieves, thy garments from moths, thy gold from rust, so carefully preserve thy tongue from unruliness. "As the Lord doth set a watch before thy mouth, and