

is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few." We have two ears and two eyes, but only one tongue. 5 "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

(2) By using profane language. The person who thus habitually breaks the third commandment has not the spirit of Christ. The person who speaks lightly of God, or treats his word, ordinances, works, or servants with dishonor, can neither have true love to Christ nor the freedom of God's children, but must be a slave to Satan.

(3) By using abusive language in a fit of passion—language that would not be used in sober moments. The licentious person, the drunkard, the thief and the murderer are carried away with their lusts and passions which rule them. The passionate person, who hurls darts and poisonous arrows in words to the right and left, is also a slave. He does not bridle the tongue, and the tongue runs away with him.

(4) By lying—declaring what is known to be not true for the purpose of deceiving. This is practiced daily in business. Some professing Christians will give a loose rein to their tongues, and lie for five cents, and then try and soothe their consciences with the thought that it is a common thing, or that business cannot be carried on without it. Such persons might be answered with the words, heaven cannot be reached with it. God's word that declares, 6 that the drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God, plainly says: 7 "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

(5) By flattering. Fools relish flattery as a sweet morsel but it is a poisonous and very dangerous morsel. 8 "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet." 9 "A flattering mouth worketh ruin." Whitefield when flattered was wont to say, "Take care of fire: I carry powder about me." Flattery is a greater evil than many imagine. We are plainly told that: 10 "the Lord shall cut off all flattering lips."

(6) By railing and slandering. The flatterer, who knowingly gives undue praise, will just as readily give unmerited blame, and thus rail and slander. By lying in business, parties may be robbed of money; but through slanderous lying, people are robbed of what is far more valuable. The reviler or slanderer is, 11, classed with the idolaters, adulterers and thieves, who shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But this leads us to consider,

#### II. The evils of an unbridled tongue.

Our words may seem to us to be of small importance. We may regard them as trifling; but they are not so in God's sight. He makes our words a condition of us having a blessed life here. 12 "What man is he that desireth life and loveth many days that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." He also makes them a condition of happiness hereafter. 13 "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor." 14 "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" and 15 for every idle word we must give an account.

But in chap. 3: 5-8, let us see more particularly the evils of an unbridled tongue.

(1) The unbridled tongue injures the person who has it, and also his companions. "It defileth the whole body." An unbridled tongue may lead a whole body into sin, just as the bit may be made to turn out of the way, the horse and buggy with all in it. The rudder on the ship may be used to turn the whole company on board upon the sands or rocks; so one unbridled tongue may lead a great company astray. We have seen magnificent bodies thus led into the mire, and most foully defiled. 16 "The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips." In the snare which he set for others he and his companions are caught. 17 The enemies of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were themselves slain by the fire which they kindled for others. 18 Daniel's enemies suffered death by what they designed to be the means of Daniel's death. 19 The malicious words of unbridled tongues, which are as sharp swords drawn out against others, will come back and pierce their own hearts. 20 God protects his own people from lying lips, and 21 takes hold of the wicked words of the ungodly to punish themselves; so there is much wisdom in the Persian proverb. "Take care lest your tongue should cut off your head."

(2) An unbridled tongue is injurious to others. "It sets on fire the course (or wheel) of nature." One spark may set a great city on flames. One word may set a large congregation on fire. The slanderer injures others by robbing them of what is more precious than money. The man who robs another of a cow or a horse would probably if discovered be sent to prison; but the slanderer may do a hundred times worse than that, and yet escape the law of the land. To rob a man of his character, or friends, is surely worse than robbing a man of his cows or horses, or even burning his house. Shakespeare represents a character as dropping poison into an ear. That is the work of the slanderer. His tongue is full of deadly poison. He drops it into the ears of others, in the form of lying or insinuating words. He drops it into their eyes, in the form of insinuating looks or actions. We are told that the deadliest poisons in nature are those for which no test is known. One drop of those insinuated into the veins produces death in three seconds; and yet, no chemical science can separate the poison from the blood, and say—this is the poison. So the most hurtful slander may be that of which no hold can be taken. It may be produced by a shrug of the shoulder, a nod of the head, a glance of the eye, or by silence when duty demands speech. In such and other ways, the unbridled tongue may rob of character, and in a short time poison dear friends, thus making them as if they were dead to each other. It thus transgresses the sixth, the eighth, and the ninth commandments. If the thief, the burglar, the incendiary, or the murderer is wicked, need we hesitate in saying, that the slanderer with his unbridled tongue is a wicked and dangerous character.

(3) The evil of an unbridled tongue is also seen in its uncontrollable nature. "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind. But the tongue no man tames." The unbridled

slandering tongue may be punished; but no mortal power can keep it from its work of delight in acting as the devil's servant. 22 As the sow returns to wallow in the mire, so the slanderer returns with relish to his thievish, spiteful, murderous attacks, in insinuating poison into ears, thrusting venomous daggers into hearts, and robbing individuals of their most valuable possessions. It is very difficult to arrest a slanderous report. The slandered person may disprove the calumny. To the righteous his character may shine forth tenfold more brightly, through the reproaches cast upon him; yet there are always fools who will give forth the principle, that when two quarrel there is often fault on both sides, and will persist in adding the illogical conclusion—he must have done some wrong. Such would hardly dare interpret scripture in this fashion, and argue, that: 23 John the Baptist must have done some wrong in telling Herod that he should not have his brother's wife—24 if Paul had only conducted himself aright, he would not have had to endure such persecutions: 25 if John the loving Apostle had only acted in a right manner, Diotrefes would not turn so bitter against him,—26 yea, if Christ had treated Judas rightly he would not have betrayed him, 27 and if he had conducted himself properly among Jews and Gentiles they would not have united in crucifying him. So far from both parties being always in the fault, one of the parties may be slandered in that very point in which he most resembles the Lord Jesus, as Rutherford teaches,—

"Where God His seal set fairest,  
They've stamped their foulest brand."

Of the 28 great John the Baptist they said: 29 "He hath a devil;" while of the 30 "Spotless Son of God, 31 who ever did not his own will but the will of the Father, they said, 32 Behold a gluttonous wine-bibber, and it is still true that "a lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it."

(4) The unbridled tongue manifests that the heart is false, just as bad fruit declares that the tree is bad.

The fig tree cannot bear olive berries, or the vine figs. A fountain cannot send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter; no more can the slanderous tongue have a loving heart. The person who persists in spitting his venom, and bespattering the fairest characters with his vile slime, may profess to have the spirit of Christ, but it is all a delusion. A spring that sends forth such bitter foul water cannot be pure. The slanderer cannot have a pure heart.

(5) The evil of an unbridled tongue is further seen in its devilish character. "It is set on fire of hell." It is the devil's instrument, and does the devil's work. The meaning of diabolus, the Greek word for devil, is calumniator or slanderer. He began his work very early. It was through slandering that he made the great breach between God and man in the fall of our first parents. He spoke falsely of God to Eve. He maligned his character. He made Eve believe that it was through envy that God commanded them not to eat of the forbidden fruit, when it was through love. So Eve distrusted God, and was alienated from Him. The devil is still at this iniquitous work through every unbridled tongue, causing people to distrust the good and the true, scattering discord among brethren, hurling firebrands from hell into peaceable homes and societies, and alluring silly souls from following their true guides, to become his own dupes and followers of the blind. Pollok's words set forth more clearly than any I can use, the terrible evils and the devilish nature of an unbridled tongue:

"'Twas slander filled her mouth with lying words;  
Slander the foulest whelp of sin: the man  
In whom this spirit entered was undone.  
His tongue was set on fire of hell; his heart  
Was black as death; his legs were faint with haste,  
To propagate the lie his soul had framed;  
His pillow was the peace of families  
Destroyed, the sigh of innocence reproached  
Broken friendship, and the strife of brotherhoods;  
Yet did he spare his sleep, and hear the clock  
Number the midnight watches on his bed  
Devising mischief more; and early rose,  
And made hellish meals of good men names,  
From door to door you might have seen him, speed,  
Or placed amid a group of gaping fools,  
And whispering in their ears with foul lies,  
Peace fled the neighborhood in which he made  
His haunts, and, like a moral pestilence,  
Before his breath the healthy shoots and bloom  
Of social joy and happiness decayed.  
Fools only in his company were seen,  
And those forsaken of God, and to themselves,  
Given up: the prudent shunned him and his house,  
As one who had a deadly moral plague."

In conclusion, let me give some words of warning and advice.

(1) I would most solemnly warn any one who may have an unbridled tongue. Cry to God for mercy. Ask him for a new heart that your tongue may become an instrument of righteousness.

(2) A few words to anyone who may be the slanderer's victim. Keep Cool—KEEP COOL! Be in no hurry to clear yourself. It is not well to brush off fresh mud from your clothes: let it first dry. Persevere in the path of duty. Trust in God, and sooner or later, He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. As you shun a person with a contagious disease, keep aloof from the vile slanderer with his unbridled tongue.

1 Prov. 10: 29 9 Prov. 26: 28 17 Dan. 3: 22 25 III. Jno. 9: 10  
2 Prov. 29: 11 10 Ps. 12: 3 18 Dan. 6: 24 26 Matt. 26: 48  
3 Prov. 17: 2 11 I. Cor. 6: 9-10 19 Ps. 64 27 Matt. 97  
4 Ecc. 5: 1-2 12 Ps. 34: 12-13 20 Ps. 31: 10-20 28 Matt. 11: 11  
5 Jas. 1: 19 13 Ps. 15: 1-3 21 Ps. 27: 14-15 20 Matt. 11: 18  
6 I. Cor. 6: 10 14 Prov. 18: 21 22 II. Peter 2: 29-30 Matt. 3: 17  
7 Rev. 21: 8 15 Matt. 12: 36 23 Matt. 11: 4-10 31 Jno. 5: 30  
8 Prov. 28: 9 16 Prov. 12: 13 24 II. Cor. 11: 23-32 Matt. 11: 19