

The Little Foxes

Lesson 2 - The Little Fox of Sinful Speech

Song of Solomon 2:15 KJV Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines *have* tender grapes.

Ephesians 4:29 KJV Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Ephesians 4:29 ESV Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Ephesians 4:29 MSG Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift.

Ephesians 4:29 NASB Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Ephesians 4:29 Moffatt NT Let no bad word pass your lips, but only such speech as is good for edification, as occasion may require, words that are gracious and a means of grace to those who hear them.

Ephesians 4:29 J B Phillips Let there be no more foul language, but good words instead—words suitable for the occasion, which God can use to help other people.

Ephesians 4:29 NLT Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

I. INTRODUCTION—SINFUL SPEECH

Thomas Manton—The tongue had need to be restrained with force and watchfulness, for it is quick and ready to bring forth every wicked conception. You must not only watch over it, but bridle it; it is good to break the force of these constraints within us, and to suffocate and choke them in the first conception.

Bishop Stevens—You can sooner make the condor of the Andes perch upon your wrist; you can sooner make leviathan sport with you in the cresting surf; you can sooner make the boa-constrictor coil harmlessly around your neck; you can sooner make the lion so gentle that a little child can lead him, tame the tongue; for the “tongue can no man tame.”

A. Biblical References to Sinful Speech in Proverbs

The Bible is full of exhortations and admonitions concerning the tongue. In the book of Proverbs there are around sixty warnings and instructions of various kinds concerning the tongue. We find in Proverbs some of the following descriptions of the tongue and words in general:

- A lying tongue—Proverbs 6:17; 12:19; 21:6; 26:28
 - A tongue of flattery—Proverbs 6:24; 28:23
 - The tongue of the just—Proverbs 10:20
 - A froward (disobedient; opposing) tongue—Proverbs 10:31
 - The tongue of the wise—Proverbs 12:18; 15:2
 - A wholesome tongue—Proverbs 15:4
 - A naughty tongue—Proverbs 17:4
 - A perverse tongue—Proverbs 17:20
 - The tongue is powerful—Proverbs 18:21
 - A kept tongue—Proverbs 21:23
 - A soft tongue—Proverbs 25:15
 - A backbiting (mean; spiteful) tongue—Proverbs 25:23
 - A kind tongue—Proverbs 31:26
 - There is deceptive speech—Proverbs 7:21
 - There is excellent speech—Proverbs 17:7
 - Words of understanding—Proverbs 1:2
 - Words of the wise—Proverbs 1:2; 22:17
 - Flattering words—Proverbs 2:16
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- Words that snare—Proverbs 6:2
- Righteous words—Proverbs 8:8
- Grievous words—Proverbs 15:1
- Pure and pleasant words—Proverbs 15:26; 16:24
- Words of a talebearer—Proverbs 18:8; 26:22
- Words of knowledge—Proverbs 19:27; 23:12
- Words of truth—Proverbs 22:21
- Hasty words—Proverbs 29:20

From these few references we can see how important the tongue and the patterns of our speech are.

B. Jesus and the Impact of Careless Words

Matthew 12:36-37 KJV But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. **[37]** For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Passages like this are good at assisting us in our walk in holiness. Passages like this should trouble us to the extent that we are willing to let the Holy Ghost guide and direct us in correct direction of life. We are going to be accountable for the words that we speak and there will be a great accounting at the day of judgment.

Idle words are those words that come from pride and deceit. The proud words are those that are perceived as boastings of a vain fellow. The deceitful words are those cunning words that work toward deceiving someone so that an ill-gotten gain may be enjoyed. Idle words can be those words that are heard as they report various kinds of misinformation that maims the reputation of another person. Idle words are those words of an idle mind and come forth as impure and polluted with lust. Idle words can be useless and insignificant themes of a mindless nature. The reality of the matter is that our words are a very clear reflection of our heart.

Another way to describe idle words would be careless words. John MacArthur in his commentary on this verse gives it in this manner:



The basic meaning of careless is useless, barren, unproductive, or otherwise worthless. Such words include those that are flippant, irresponsible, or in any way inappropriate. Hypocritical words are among the most careless and worthless that men speak and are, unfortunately, among the most common. When men self-consciously keep their vocabulary orthodox, moral, and evangelically acceptable while among fellow Christians—for the sake of impressing them or to keep from embarrassing ourselves—those words are careless and worthless in God’s sight, and He will render them against their account. The calculated hypocrisy of such “holy talk” is a stench in His nostrils. (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 8-15; p. 320)

Idleness of speech opens the heart up to begin to use words that are even more destructively evil. Words that express lust (Prov. 5:3-4); deceit (Jer. 9:8); cursing and oppression (Psalm 10:7); lying (Prov. 6:12; 12:22); destruction (Prov. 11:11); vanity (2 Peter 2:18); flattery (Prov. 26:28); foolishness (Prov. 15:2); verbosity (Eccles. 10:14); falsehood (Titus 1:11); pride (Job 35:12); vulgarity (Col. 3:8); hatred (Psalm 109:3); and gossip (Prov. 26:20).

C. A Mouth-Guard—Psalm 141:3

Psalms 141:3 KJV Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

We briefly noted what the Proverbs and Jesus had to say about the way of speech. Before progressing to the text in Ephesians, one last reference to what David said about the mouth is helpful.

If you read Psalm 141:4 also, you discover David that also wrote of the heart of man. His mouth and his heart are very closely related. David wanted the Lord to set a watch on his mouth so that when his heart was overwhelmed, he would not falter. Often emotional and unadvised words leap from our mouth when we are under the pressure of outward circumstances, especially that of persecution. David desired for the Lord to help him to guard his tongue when he entered into these kinds of situations. He wanted to be very careful that he did

not dishonor God in the eyes of others who had confidence in him. David had gleaned a great principle of life in that he could not prevent the attack of evil outsiders that would provoke him to impatience or hastily answer in the heat of the moment. But David could ask the Lord to set a watch on his mouth so that he would not let those hurtful and angry words pour out of his mouth.

David knew the importance of this prayerful request because in another reference in Psalm 19:14 he had prayed that the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart be acceptable in the sight of God. He was concerned again with the heart as well as the mouth. This is an effective prayer that we can also interject into our Christian walk to help us to fully honor and obey God.

II. EPHESIANS 4:29—DON'T LET UNWHOLESOME WORDS EXIT YOUR MOUTH

The words that are spoken give great revelation to the state of the heart. Sinful speech can fall into disgraces against God and those against man. Those against God can be rash swearing in the name of God, irreverence toward God in light conversation, using Scripture in a jesting or scoffing manner, mocking the church and those who are serious about their walk with God, reasoning against the doctrines of the church to defend sinful practices or opinions, and murmuring and complaining. Speech against man can fall into areas such as idle speaking with words that add no value, coarse jesting that has worldly undertones or innuendo, lying, wounding the reputation of others even if the words may be true, slander or spiteful speech that raises a false report. Our speech needs to affirm both God and man.

Most likely when you read the title of the lesson about sinful speech, your mind probably went immediately to a couple of categories. Cursing would probably top the list and then it would be followed by gossip because this is perhaps the only categories we may have thought of.

The passage from Ephesians 4:29 actually covers a much broader category than just cursing and gossip.

A. A Greek Word Study

When we look at the Greek word “corrupt” it opens up some insight into what further describes for us the little fox of sinful speech. It is from the word **σαπρός** (sapro) which means rotten or worthless both literally and morally. Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines the word as rotten, putrefied; corrupted by one and no longer fit for use, worn out; and of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless. The word also could give the indication of rotten fruit, vegetables and spoiled food that has been left out too long. All of these, if ingested can cause a serious illness to occur. The same holds true for the condition of our soul!

To further give indication as to the whole of this word we can look at the Greek root words to get an even clearer picture. It comes from the root word **πονηρός** (ponēros), which means hurtful, evil (properly in effect or influence). Figuratively it can mean calamitous; ill, that is, diseased; especially morally culpable. It is speech that is derelict, vicious, and filled with mischief, malice, or guilt. It is literally speech of the devil or of sinners. Other descriptions would be bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, and wicked. This kind of speech is to be removed from our vocabulary. There are kinds of speech that fall into this category of sinful speech.

B. Gossip, Talebearing, & Slander

Gossip is probably the most common kind of wrong speech that immediately comes to mind. It is defined as idle talk or rumor about the personal or private affairs of others. David Bernard in his book, *In Search of Holiness, 25th Anniversary Edition, Revised and Updated*, writes:

Gossip is a vicious sin. It is Satan’s primary tool for destroying the church from within. It can destroy confidence in people, harm the innocent, and hinder the repentant. It splits churches, discourages saints, and disillusions new converts. The Bible teaches us to speak evil of no one, especially our brothers and sisters in the Lord (Titus 3:2; James 4:11).

The danger about gossip is that it is empowering to us which caters to a sense of self-exaltation. The person who is “in the know” can actually rationalize their own shortcomings by embellishing the struggles of another. The trap of gossip is that it can furnish a sense of self-righteousness. Be careful that gossip

does not take on the form of a prayer request. If you come into contact with negative information about someone it is best to keep it to yourself and spend time in private prayer about. Furthermore, always consider that there are two sides to every rumor that goes around.

Gossip by the very nature of its activity opens one up to another failure called talebearing. A talebearer is a person who actively spreads gossip or secrets about another that damages their reputation by causing them trouble or harm.

Leviticus 19:16 KJV Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the LORD.

Psalms 50:20 KJV Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

Proverbs 11:13 KJV A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Proverbs 20:19 KJV He that goeth about *as* a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Ezekiel 22:9 KJV In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.

Talebearing can actually devolve into slander. Slander is the act of defaming one's character by using false and malicious statements that causes misrepresentation to take place. Some might raise the objection and say that the information is true. Understand that a slanderers tongue wounds people in such a way that even a physician can heal them because of the damaging words that have been uttered. Sometimes slander can take place because of silence.

Slander can take place in the church when a man who is known to give financially being accused of doing it for false motives. It can take place when we give a prudent man the label of being miserly or selfish. Slander is accusing a man who is very actively involved in a church as having a spirit of pre-eminence. There

are times that men who are known as being spiritual and godly men slandered as hypocrites.

Slander is often used in the job market to help people to climb the ladder for promotions and other advantages over others. This has become quite commonplace and accepted in the business world and is often looked upon as being assertive and self-motivated. The problem is that there is a damaged litter of people left in the wake of this kind of behavior. The sad thing is that this behavior is sometimes seen to take place among the church especially in political positions.

However, we have to take Paul's admonition in Ephesians 4:29 and work toward allowing our speech to be wholesome and productive. We should constantly seek places where that our own words are used for the edification and encouragement of other believers who are seeking to go to heaven.

C. Lying

Another little fox of sinful speech is that of lying. Lying is a false statement made with the deliberate intent to deceive. It is a falsehood that is inaccurate. A lie is told with the obvious intent of making an impression that otherwise would not be made if the truth were told. Consider Proverbs 6:16-19 for what God considers to be an abomination:

Proverbs 6:16-19 KJV These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: **[17]** A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, **[18]** An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, **[19]** A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

It is clear to notice that three of the things that God considers as an abomination has to do with the work of the tongue. A lying tongue (v. 17), a false witness (v. 19), and one who sows discord has to work with his tongue (v. 19). We should constantly seek to be truthful!

Jesus stated that the devil was the father of lies (John 8:44). The first sin was caused by the deceptive lies of the devil to Eve in Genesis 3. He accused

Job's motives for serving the Lord (Job 1:9-10; 2:4-5). He expressed false hopes and promises to Jesus during the temptation (Matt. 4:8-9; Luke 4:6-7). Because of these attachments to the devil it should motivate us to do everything possible to not fall into the trap of lying.

Throughout the Bible there are multiple examples of lying:

- Adam and Eve—Gen. 3:12-13
- Cain—Gen. 4:9
- Abraham—Gen. 12:11-19; 20:2
- Sarah—Gen. 18:15; 20:5; 20:16
- Isaac—Gen. 26:7-10; 27:6-24; 27:46
- Jacob's sons—Gen. 34
- Joseph's brothers—Gen. 37
- Potiphar's wife—Gen. 39:14-17
- Pharaoh—Ex. 7-12
- Aaron—Ex. 32:1-24
- Saul—1 Sam. 15:1-26; 22:11-16
- David—1 Sam. 21:1-15; 27:8-12; 2 Sam. 15:34-37
- The old prophet of Bethel—1 Kings 13:11-22
- Jeroboam's wife—1 Kings 14:5-7

These are just a few of the examples of lying in the Bible and with each of them, there invariably were challenging circumstances that had to be dealt with because of it. The Bible has some admonitions for us to tell the truth.

Colossians 3:9 KJV Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

Ephesians 4:25 KJV Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Ephesians 4:15 KJV But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

Proverbs 8:7 KJV For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness *is* an abomination to my lips.

Proverbs 12:17 KJV *He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.*

Zechariah 8:16 KJV *These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:*

D. Filthy Communication

Colossians 3:8 KJV *But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

This section ought to cause all of our souls to literally ache! Paul was telling the new converts in Colossae to get rid of their filthy speech. Various translations note this word to be dirty talk, filthy talk, abusive speech, filthy language, and other similar expressions. One commentator (Lightfoot) said this word could be translated as “foul-mouthed abuse.”

This sinful speech can fit into the category of coarse jesting, bathroom “humor,” dirty jokes, and speech given to sexual innuendo. We should be very uncomfortable when we get around this kind of communication no matter what environment that it may be in.

John MacArthur in his commentary on Ephesians (pp. 200-201) has this to say:

. . . They should never be guilty of filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting. Filthiness has to do with general obscenity, any talk that is degrading and disgraceful. It comes from the same Greek root as “disgraceful” in verse 12 where Paul says that such vile things should not even be mentioned, much less participated in, and is related to the term in Colossians 3:8 meaning “dirty speech.”

. . . Coarse jesting, on the other hand, refers to talk that is more pointed and determined. It carries the idea of quickly turning something that is said or done—no matter how innocent—into that which is obscene or suggestive. It is the

filthy talk of a person who uses every word and circumstance to display his immoral wit. It is the stock-in-trade of the clever talk-show host who is never at a loss for sexual innuendo. But the low obscenity of silly talk and the “high” obscenity of coarse jesting come from the same kind of heart, the heart given over to moral filthiness.

In light of such clear teaching of God’s Word, it is strange that so many Christians not only discuss but also laugh and joke with impunity about almost every form of sexual intimacy, corruption, and perversion. But God’s standard is clear: there must be no filthiness or silly talk, or coarse jesting that is not fitting.

This is particularly grievous behavior when we are in mixed company.

E. Miscellaneous Forms of Speech to Consider

Obviously there are multiple other forms of speech that we can allow to creep into our lives that can cripple our testimony for the Lord and open us up to the influence of the enemy. We should be ever vigilant to ask the Lord to put a guard over our mouth (Psalm 141:3-4).

A listing for consideration for what we need to watch for:

- Critical Speech—Negative comments about people that do not need to be said.
 - Cursing & Swearing
 - Taking the Lord’s Name in Vain
 - Slang Words
 - Reviling—Angry and abusive language patterns.
 - Hasty Speech—Speaking and giving a judgment before all of the details of a matter is known.
 - Vain/Proud Speech—Concerned with the state of life one may enjoy.
 - Boasting
 - Flattery—Insincere praise or accolades given to someone for ulterior means.
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- Murmuring/Complaining
- Scoffing or Scornful

III. CONCLUSION—RICHARD BAXTER—A CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY

Richard Baxter wrote a book that was primarily intended for the people in the church he pastored in Kidderminster in the 1600's. He called it *A Christian Directory* and in that book he noted that there were thirty sins of the tongue to avoid.

They are listed as a conclusion.

Understand and remember what the sins of the tongue to be avoided are. And they are very many, and many of them very great: the most observable are these:

1. *The first among all sins of commission is that of blasphemy, which is the reproaching of God:* to speak contemptuously of God, or to vilify him, or dishonor him, by the denying of his perfections, and to debase him, by false titles, doctrines, images, resemblances, as likening him to man in any of our imperfections; anything that is a reproaching of God is blasphemy.

2. *Another sin of the tongue is, false doctrine, or teaching things false and dangerous as from God.* If any falsely say, he had such or such a point by divine inspiration, vision, or revelation, that makes him a false prophet. But if he only says falsely, that this or that doctrine is contained in the Scripture, or delivered by tradition to the church, this is but to be a false teacher.

3. *Another of the sins of the tongue is, an opposing of godliness indirectly, by false application of true doctrine, and an opposing of godly persons for the sake of godliness, and objecting for no good reason against particular truths and duties of religion;* or defending those points and practices which would subvert or undermine religion: a secret endeavor to make all serious godliness seem a needless thing. ***There are many that seem orthodox, that are impious and malicious opposers of that truth in the application, which themselves do notionally hold, and positively profess.***

4. *Another great sin of the tongue is, the profane deriding of serious godliness, and the mocking, and jesting, and scorning at godly persons as such;* or scorning at some of their real or supposed imperfections, for their piety sake, to make them odious, that piety through them might be made odious. When men so

speaking, that the drift and tendency of their speech is to draw men to a dislike of truth or holiness.

5. Another great sin of the tongue is, unjustly to forbid Christ's ministers to preach his gospel, or speak in his name; or to stand up against them and contradict, resist, and hinder them in the preaching of the truth; and, as Gamaliel calls it, "to fight against God," Acts 5:39.

6. Another sin of the tongue is, profane swearing, either by God or by creatures: and also all light and irreverent use of the name and attributes of God.

7. Much more is perjury or forswearing a most heinous sin, it being an appealing to God, the author and defender of truth, to bear witness to an untruth, and to judge the offender; and so a craving of vengeance from God.

8. Lying also is a great and common sin of the tongue.

9. Another sin of the tongue is, hypocritical dissembling, which is worse than mere lying: when men's tongues agree not with their hearts, but speak good words in prayer to God, or conference with men, to cover evil intentions or affections, and to represent themselves to the hearers as better than they are.

10. Another is, ostentation or proud boasting, either of men's wit and learning, or greatness, or riches, or honor, or strength, or beauty, or parts, or piety, or anything that men are proud of.' As the faithful "do make their boast in God," Ps. 34:2; so the "workers of iniquity boast themselves against the righteous, and the proud do triumph and speak hard things," Ps. 44:2-4. "Even against the Lord," do they boast, in their boasting against his people, Ezek. 35:13.

11. Another sin of the tongue is, unseasonable speaking of common things when holy things should be preferred; as on the Lord's day, or at the time of public worship, or when the company, occasion, or opportunity call for holy speeches: worldlings are talking, as Saul, of their asses, when they should talk of a kingdom, 1 Sam. 9:10.

12. Another common sin of the tongue is, a tempting and persuading others to sin, enticing them to gluttony, drunkenness, wantonness, fornication, or any other crime; as men that "not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them," Rom. 1:32.

13. Another is, a carnal manner of handling the sacred things of God, as when it is done with lightness, or with unsuitable curiosity of words, or in a ludicrous, playful manner, especially by the preachers of the gospel themselves; and not with a style that is grave and serious, agreeable to the weight and majesty of the truth.

14. Another is, an imprudent, rash, and slovenly handling of holy things; when they are spoken of so ignorantly, unskillfully, disorderly, or passionately, tending to dishonor them, and frustrate the desired good success.

15. Another sin of the tongue is, the reviling or dishonoring of superiors; when children speak irreverently and dishonorably to or of their parents; or subjects of their governors; or servants of their masters, either to their faces, or behind their backs. “They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” 2 Pet. 2:10; Jude 8.

16. Another is, the imperious contempt of inferiors, insulting over them, provoking and discouraging them. Eph. vi. 4, “Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.”

17. Another sin of the tongue is, idle talk and multitude of useless words; a babbling loquacity, or unprofitableness of speech; which is speech that does not edify.

18. Another sin is, foolish talk, or jesting in levity and folly, which tends to possess the minds of the hearers “with a disposition of levity and folly like the speakers. Eph. 5:4, “Foolish talking and jesting are things not convenient.” Honest mirth is lawful; and that is the best which is most sanctified, as being from a holy principle, and about a holy matter, or to a holy end: as “rejoicing in the Lord always,” Phil. iv. 4. ” If any be merry let him sing psalms,” James v. 13.

19. Another sin is, “filthy speaking,” Eph. 5:4; obscene and ribald talk; which the apostle calls “corrupt or rotten communication,” Eph. 4:29; when wanton, filthy minds do make themselves merry with wanton, filthy speeches. This is the devil’s preparative to whoredom and all abominable uncleanness; for when the tongue is first taught to make a sport of such filthy sins, and the ear to be delighted in it, or be indifferent to it, there remains but a small step to actual filthiness.

20. Another sin of the tongue is, cursing; when men wish some mischief causelessly or unwarrantably to others. If you speak but in passion or jest, and desire not to them in your hearts the hurt which you name, it is nevertheless a sin of the tongue, as it is to speak blasphemy or treason in a passion or in jest; the tongue must be ruled as well as the heart. But if really you desire the hurt which you wish them, it is so much the worse. But it is worst of all, when passionate, factious men will turn their very prayers into cursings, calling for fire from heaven, and praying for other men’s destruction or hurt; and pretending Scripture examples for it; as if they might do it unwarrantably, which others have done in other cases in a warrantable manner.

21. Slandering is another sin of the tongue; when out of malice and ill will, men speak evil falsely of others to make them odious or do them hurt: or else through

uncharitable credulity, do easily believe a false report, and so report it again to others; or through rashness and unruliness of tongue, divulge it, before they try it, or receive either just proof, or any warrantable call to mention it.

22. Another sin is, backbiting and venting ill reports behind men's backs, without any warrant. Be the matter true or false, as long as you either know it not to be true, or if you do, yet vent it to make the person less respected, or at least without a sufficient cause, it is a sin against God, and a wrong to men.

23. Another sin is, rash censuring, when you speak that evil of another, which you have but an uncharitable surmise of; and take that to be probable which is but possible, or that to be certain which is but probable against another.

24. Another sin is, railing, reviling, or passionate, provoking words, which tend to the diminution of charity, and the breach of peace, and the stirring up of discord, and of a return of railing words from others, contrary to the love, and patience, and meekness, and gentleness which become saints.

25. Another sin is, cheating, deceiving, overreaching words; when men use their tongues to defraud their neighbors, in bargaining for their own gain.

26. Another sin of the tongue is, false witness bearing, and false accusing; a sin which cries to God for vengeance, who is the justifier of the innocent.

27. Another sin of the tongue is, the passing an unrighteous sentence in judgment: when rulers absolve the guilty or condemn the just, and call evil good and good evil, and say to the righteous, "Thou art wicked," Prov. xxiv. 24.

28. Another sin of the tongue is, flattery; which is the more heinous by how much more hurtful. And it is most hurtful, **1.** When it tendeth to delude men in the greatest things, even the state of their souls. **2.** Flattering is pernicious when it tendeth to the hurt of many; as when rulers are deceived and perverted by it to the destruction of the people and themselves.' Prov. 26:28, "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruin." See 1 Thess. 2:5; Ezek. 12:24; Ps. 12: 2-3.

29. Another sin is, a jeering, mocking, deriding, or scorning at others, either for their infirmities of body or mind, or for their virtues, or through envy and malice, or pride, or a custom of deriding, scornful speech. Especially when sinners scorn at the reproofs and counsels of the godly, and cast them all back into their faces with contempt; for he that "reproveth a scorner getteth himself a blot," Prov. 9:7-8- "A scorner loveth not one that reproveth," Prov. 15:12.

30. Another tongue sin is, idolatry or false worship; the praise of idols, or praying to them, or making songs, or speeches, or disputes for them; as also the false worship of the true God. These among others are the sins of the tongue to be

avoided. No wonder if there be yet more, for the " tongue is a world of iniquity," James 3:6.