

Richard Baxter *The vain religion of the formal hypocrite, and the mischief of an unbridled tongue (as against religion, rulers, or dissenters) described, in several sermons, preached at the Abby in Westminster, before many members of the Honourable House of Commons, 1660; and The fools prosperity, the occasion of his destruction: a sermon preached at Covent-Garden/ by Richard Baxter*

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(...)

And in order to your conviction and recovery, I shall first acquaint you with *your misery* that so it may awaken you to look about you, while there is time and hope. If it were God's way to work by ocular demonstrations, and the Christian life were a life of sense, and you had Heaven and Hell this hour open to your sight, how little need should I have to plead this cause with you any further? you would then see and hear that vengeance that would awake you; and make you presently fly into your hearts, and charge conscience to deal impartially with you, lest self-deceit should bring you to those flames. But it's a *life of faith* that we are to call you to, and a *word of faith* that we have to preach, but of things that are as sure as if you saw them.

And, 1. If thy *Religion* be *Vain*, thy *hopes and comforts* that are built upon it, are all but *Vain*. How *Vain* is that *hope* that will vanish when the *enjoyment* is expected, and will end in endless desperation? What though thou sit here with so great hopes and confidence of salvation, as maketh thee even scorn the man that questions it? Art thou ever the better when death awaketh thee, and thy confident dream is at an end? When thou art *dying*, wilt thou *hope*? perhaps thou mayst: But when thou art *burning*, wilt thou *hope*? When thou art *tormented*, wilt thou *hope*? *Desperation* will then be essential to thy misery. The Devils that now feed thy *hope* by their deceits, will then as readily keep awake thy conscience, and exasperate thy despairing soul. If now thou wilt hope under the *threatenings* of God (that thou may be saved in thy present state) wilt thou then *hope* under his *execution*? Thy flatterers and prosperity may cherish thy deceitful hopes for a time; but who will maintain them, when God commanded desperation to torment thee? *Job 27. 8, 9 For what is the hope of the Hypocrite though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? will God hear his cry, when trouble cometh upon him?* As Sands turns it.

*What hope hath the prevailing Hypocrite,
When God shall chase his soul to endless night?
Will God relieve him in his agonies?*

Or from the depth of sorrows hear his cries?

His worldly glory will then desert him, and leave him to the fruit of *his deserts*. His fruition will perish with his hopes, *Job* 27. 22, 23. For God shall cast upon him and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand. Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place: Or as Sands turneth it,

God shall transfix him with his winged dart:

Though he avoid him like the flying Hart.

Men shall pursue with merited disgrace:

Hiss, clap their hands, and from his Country chase.

Hopes that are built by self-deceit, have no foundation, but sand and waters, and in tryal they will fall, and their fall will be great and terrible, *Matth.* 7. 23, 24. *Job.* 8. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. *Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water? whilst it is yet in its greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb: So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrites hope shall perish: whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spiders web. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.*
Or,

Can bull-rushes but by the rivers grow?

Can flags there flourish where no waters flow?

Yet they, when green, when yet untoucht, of all

That cloath the spring, first hang their heads, and fall.

So double-hearted Hypocrites; so they

Who God forget, shall in their prime decay.

Their aery hopes, as brittle, as the thin

And subtile webs, which toyling spiders spin.

Their houses full of wealth and riot, shall

Deceive their trust, and crush them in their fall, &c.

Job 36. 13. *The Hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.* Or as the Paraphrase:

For the deluder hastens his own fall,

Nor will in trouble on the Almighty call.

Who on the beds of sin supinely lie,

They in the summer of their age shall die.

And what we say of the *Hypocrites hope*, we may say also of all his *pleasures and delights*. He may now be as merry as the most righteous of his neighbours; and seem the most happy, because the most jocund; and abound with medicines against melancholy and all wise and sober

consideration; even his business, his cups, his wantonness and uncleanness, or at least his less disgraceful pleasures and recreations, which fortify his mind against the fears of death and judgement, and all the threatenings of God;

*As sleepy Opium fortifies the brain,
Against the sense of sicknesses and pain.*

And if this mirth could always last, how happy a man were the self-deceiver? But saith Solomon, Eccles. 7. 6. *As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.*

*As thorns beneath a Caldron catch the fire,
Blaze with a noise, and suddenly expire;
Such is the causeless laughter of vain fools;
This vanity in their distemper rules.*

And as Job 20. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. *Knowest thou not this of old since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the Hypocrite for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reacheth to the clouds; yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung; they which have seen him shall say, Where is he? He shall flee away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him.* Or as the foresaid Paraphrase,

*This is a truth which with the world began,
Since earth was first inhabited by man;
Sins triumph in swift misery concludes,
And flattering joy the Hypocrite deludes.
Although his excellence to heaven aspire;
Though radiant beams his shining brows attire;
He as his dung shall perish on the ground;
Nor shall the impression of his steps be found;
But like a troubled dream shall take his flight;
And vanish as a vision of the night.
No mortal eye shall see his face again,
Nor sumptuous roofs their builder entertain.*

Thus as the *Hypocrites Religion* is Vain, so all his hopes and joyes will be vain, and will deceive him as he deceived himself. As Zophar concludeth of him, Job 11. 20. *But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape: and their hope shall be as the giving up of the Ghost.*

Poor soul, thy *Religion* is *already* so *vain*, that it giveth thee no *solid* satisfaction or delight. Thou art fain to go to thy lands, or friends, or pleasures, or carnal accomodations for delight. Thy *Religion*, which should let thee into heaven, and there refresh thee with the foretasts of everlasting pleasures, and should daily fetch thee fresh delights, from the face of God, alas is an impotent lifeless thing; acquainted with shadows, but strange to the invisible substance; acquainted with formal shews and ceremonies, but unacquainted with *God*: acquainted with the letter, but not with the Spirit; familiar with the orders of the Church, but strange to the foretasts of heaven. If thou hadst no other comfort, but what thy dead Religion brings thee from the face of God, thy pensive heart would be better to consideration and recovery, then it is, if thou hadst a faith that brought thee in any solid stablishing content what needst thou be hunting abroad the world, among thy crowd of vanities and deceits, to beg or borrow some short delight, which thou must return with griping usury? And what needest thou so many pitiful shifts to muzzle thy conscience, and to keep that peace a little longer, which will end in sorrow, and will part with thee as the devil went out of the possessed person, *Mark* 9. 26. that rent him, and left him as a dead man. That *Religion* is certainly *vain*, that is not sufficient to acquaint the soul with matter of solid comfort and content, but leaves that felicitating work, to worldly transitory things, while it self is used only as a screen, to keep hell fire from scorching the conscience, or as children's rackets to quiet them when they are apt to cry.

2. But the *vanity* of a *superficial Religion* will most appear in the hour of extremity; when their *help* as well as their *hope* and comfort will to them prove *vain*. Prosperity will not always last: As sure as winter followeth summer, and as the darksome night succeeds the day, so sure will adversity take its turn: sickness will follow the longest health; and death succeed the longest life; and your house of darkness in the dust, will hold you longer then your present habitations. And then, when thou seest *all things fail*. O what wouldst thou give for a *hope and help* that will *not fail*, that thou mightest be received into the everlasting habitations? The conscience that is now asleep will be shortly awakened in such a manner, that it will be utterly past the skill and power, of thy self and all the friends thou hast, to cast it asleep or quiet it again. And then, what wouldst thou not give, for a lenitive to pacifie it! No wonder if *thou sit here* as senseless as if no harm were near thee: It is now in *thy power not to believe* that there is a *hell for hypocrites*, or that it is *thy own inheritance*: But the day is near (if a supernatural change prevent it not) when it shall no *more be in thy power*, but *sight and feeling* shall convince thee whether thou wilt or no. *Now* we must *intreat* thy own consideration, and solícite thee for thy own consent, to know thy grievous sin and misery, and yet leave thee unconvinced, because thou art unwilling to know the truth, and because we cannot *shew* thee Heaven and Hell while we are speaking of them. But *then* God will not ask, but *force* thy consideration; nor will he *ask* thy *consent to feel* thy misery. But the less thou art willing, the more hast thou to feel. And which ways then wilt thou look for help? which way ever it be, it will be all in *vain*, because thy *Religion* was but *vain*; wilt thou look to thy *duties* and supposed *honesty*, whose sincerity now thou art so confident of? Alas, this is the *vain Religion* that could *deceive* thee, but cannot save thee. Thou art like a man in a falling house that hath nothing to lay hold on, but that which is falling, and is it that will break him unto death. Or like a drowning man that hath nothing but a handful of water to lay

hold upon; which is it that will choak him, but is vain to save him. It is thy superficial hypocritical complemental services that will fall with thee, and fall upon thee, that will thus both deceive thee, and choak thee, in the time of thy distress. To be told now that thy Religion is vain is a thing that thy dead unbelieving heart can too easily bear. But to find then, when thou lookest for the benefit of it, that it's Vain, is that which is not born so easily, but will overwhelm the stoutest heart with terrours. If thou were a man of *no Religion*, and so hadst none to deceive and quiet thee, thou couldst scarcely keep off thy terrours now. If thou hadst not thy hollow-hearted prayers, thy affected zeal, or forms, and shews, and tasks of duty, thy profession, with its secret exceptions and reserves, thy smoothed out-side, with the good conceit thou hast of thy self, and the good esteem that other men have of thee, if thou hadst not these to flatter thy conscience, and cloak thee from the storms of threatened wrath, thou wouldst perhaps walk about like another *Cain*, and be afraid of every man thou seest, and tremble at the shaking of a leaf, and still look behind thee as afraid of a pursuit. But, alas, it will be ten thousand times more terrible, to find thy confidence prove deceit, and thy Religion vain, when God is judging thee, when hell is before thee, and thou art come to the last of all thine expectations! Nay, then, to find not only that thy superficial *Religion* was *vanity*, and lighter then vanity, nothing, and less then nothing; but that it was *thy sin*, and that which will now *torment* thee, and the remembrance of it be to thee as the remembrance of drunkenness to the drunkard, and of fornication to the unclean, and of covetousness to the worldling, the rust of whose money will eat his flesh, and burn like fire: O what a doleful plight is this! when the sentence is ready to pass upon thee, and hell is gaping to devour thee, and thou lookest for *help* to thy vain Religion, and cryest out, *O now, or never help: help me, or I am a fire-brand of unquenchable wrath: help me, or I must be tormented in those flames: help me now, or it will be too late; and I shall never, never more have help*. Then to have thy self-deceit discovered, and thy *seeming* Religion condemn thee and torment thee, instead of *helping* thee, what anguish and confusion will this cast thy hopeless soul into? such as no heart can here conceive. Thy guilty soul will be like a hare among a company of dogs: which so ever of thy duties thou flyest for help to, that will make first to tear thee and devour thee. Like a naked man in the midst of an army of his deadly enemies, which so ever he flyeth to for pity and relief is like to be one of the first to wound him. Poor self-deceiver what wilt thou then do, or whither wilt thou betake thy soul for help? The reason why thou canst now make shift with a lifeless shadow of Religion, is, because thou hast thy sports or pleasures, thy friends and flatterers, thy worldly business to divert thy thoughts, and take thee up, and rock the cradle of thy security; and thy *piety* is not yet brought unto the fire, nor thy heart and duties searched by the all discovering light: But when the *light* comes in, and when all thy fleshly contents are gone, and when thou comest to have *use* for thy Religion, and seest that if it prove unsound, thou art lost for ever, O then it is not shadows, and shews, and complements that will quiet thee. That will not serve turn then that serves turn now. Thou wilt find then that it was easier deceiving thy *self* then God, *Gal. 6. 3, 4, 5, 7. For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself: But let every man prove his own work. For every man shall bear his own burden. Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that*

soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: But he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

But perhaps thou wilt say, *It is not any duties but Christ that I must trust to: he will be my help, and he is sufficient, and will not deceive the soul that trusteth him.*

Answ. Undoubtedly *he is sufficient, and will not deceive thee.* But doth *he deceive thee*, if he give thee not the salvation which he *never promised* thee? He *never promised* salvation to an *Hypocrite* (without conversion). It is the upright soul devoted to him that takes him for the absolute Master of his life, and for his only portion and felicity, to whom Christ hath *promised* salvation: And his *promise* shall be made good, and the sincere shall find that Christ deceives them not. But where did he ever promise salvation to a superficial Pharisee? to such a seeming Christian as thou? shew such a promise from him if thou canst; and then trust it and spare not. But thou dost not trust him, but thy own deceit, if he have given thee no such promise to trust on. Nay rather, should he not deceive all the world, if he should save such superficial hypocrites, when he hath professed in his word that he will not save them? and if he should not condemn such heartless Formalists, when he hath so often told us that he will condemn them? Surely he that breaks his word is liker to be a deceiver, then he that keepeth it. Be it known to thee therefore (and O that thou wouldst know it while there is a remedy at hand) that if thou trust that Christ should save an unsanctified falshearted person, whose soul was never renewed and revived by the Holy Ghost, and absolutely given up to God, and that setteth not up God and his service above all the interest of the flesh, and the commodities and contentments of the world, thou dost not then trust Christ, but thy own deceits and lyes: and it is not Christ that is the deceiver, but thou art a deceiver of thy self, that makest thy self a false promise, and trustest to it; and when thou hast done, sayst, thou wilt trust to Christ: yea trustest thy self against Christ, and trustest that he will break his word, and not that he will make it good. See whether he resolve not to condemn all such, *Matth. 10. 37, 38. Luke 14. 27, 33. Matth. 7. 26, 27. Jam. 2. 14. Heb. 12. 14. Rom. 8. 9.* with the texts before cited, and abundance such. Christ will be a Saviour; but he is the Saviour of his body, and not of the affixed hypocrites, *Eph. 5. 23.* And his body is the Church which is subject to him, *ver. 24.* He will save to the utmost: but whom? Even all that come to God by him, *Heb. 7. 25.* But not those that make the world their God, and would put God off with a few running heartless words and duties. It is the living fruitful branches that he will save: but the withered branches he casteth forth, to be burned in the fire, *Joh. 15. 2, 6, 7.* No man can serve God and Mammon: nor live both to the Spirit and the flesh: he that hath two hearts, hath none that's acceptable unto God, he that hath two faces (a face of devotion in his formal customary services, and a face that smiles on the world and fleshly pleasures when he hath done) hath none that God will ever smile upon. The leaves of the barren fig tree saved it not from the curse of Christ, *Matth. 21. 18, 19. Hew it down and cast it into the fire,* shall be the sentence of the most flourishing tree that's fruitless, *Luk. 13. 7. The earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and bryers, is rejected, and is nigh to cursing, whose end is to be burned,* *Heb. 6. 7, 8.* So that if thy *Religion be vain*, the blood of Christ, and all the treasures of his grace, will be *vain* to thee, that

are saving unto others. An *Infidel* may then as well expect to be saved by the Christ whom he *rejected*, as thou. Nay it is Christ himself that will *condemn* thee. It is his own mouth that will say to such as thee, *Depart from me, ye that work iniquity*. And though thou couldest say, *Lord, Lord, I have Prophesied, or cast out devils, or done many wonderful works in thy Name* he will *profess to thee that he never knew thee* or owned thee, *Matth. 7. 22, 23*. If crying would then serve, I know thou wouldst not spare thy cries. But he must so pray as to be accepted and heard on earth, that looks to be accepted and regarded then; when the miserable soul with endless horrors in its eye, is looking round about for help, and findeth none; when all the creatures say, We cannot, and he that can shall say, I will not; who can apprehend the calamity of such a soul? What soul so sleepy and regardless now, that will not then cry, *Lord, Lord open to us*] when the door is shut, and it is too late? *Matth. 25. 10, 11, 12*. Then if thou roar in the anguish of thy soul, and cry out to him that saveth others, *Condemn me not O Lord, but save me also! Now Lord have mercy on a miserable sinner! save me, or I am lost for ever: save me, or I must burn in yonder flames. Turn not thy heart against an undone perishing soul, If thou cast me off, I have no hope!* A thousand such cries would be in vain, because thou hadst but a *vain Religion*, *Prov. 1. 24, &c. Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity: I will mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you: Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. Therefore they shall eat of their own way, and be filled with their own devices, saith the Lord.*

And when hell hath once taken thee into its possession, if thou cry and roar there ten thousand millions of ages, it will be all in Vain. Thy strongest and thy longest cries, cannot procure thee a drop of water, to cool thy tongue tormented in those flames, *Luke 16. 24, 25, 26*. In a word, if thy Religion be Vain, all's Vain to thee. Thy life it self is Vain, *Eccles. 6. 12*. thou walkest in a Vain shew, *Psal. 39. 6*. Thou disquietest thy self in Vain, in all thy labours, *Psal. 39. 6. and 127. 1, 2*. and vanity and vexation is all that thou shalt possess, *Eccles. 1. 2, 14. Prov. 22. 8*. And if conscience, when thy day of grace is past, shall force thee upon the review to say, *My piety was but seeming and self-deceit, and all my Religion was Vain*; it will be *the voice of utter desperation, and will stab the heart of all thy hopes*. This and no better being the self-deceivers case, is not conscience now at work within you? and asking as each of the Disciples did, *Mat. 26. 24, 25. Is it I?* If thou have a heart within thee, beseeming a reasonable creature, by this time thou art afraid of self-deceit, and willing to be searched, and to know thy hypocrisy, while it may be cured. For my part, I shall pronounce no one of you personally to be an hypocrite, as knowing that hypocrisy is a sin of the heart, which in it self is seen by none but God and him that hath it: But my business is only to help such to know and judge themselves. Could I name the man to you in the Congregation, that had none but a *seeming vain Religion*, I am perswaded you would all look upon him as a most unhappy deplorable wretch. Alas, sirs, Hypocrites are not so rare among us, as some imagine. There are few or none, but *Saints* and *Hypocrites* in this Assembly, or in most of the Assemblies in the land. I think here are none that make not a *profession of the Christian faith* and of *love to God*. All therefore

that *have not* this *faith* and *love*, must needs be *Hypocrites*, as *professing* to be what they are *not*. In your baptism you engaged and profest your selves the Disciples of Christ, and gave up your selves in solemn Covenant to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. This Covenant you will say you stand to yet: and none of you will be known to have renounced your Christianity: As Christians you use to come to these Assemblies, and here to attend God in the use of his Ordinances: and some of you to renew your Covenant with him, in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. I meet with none that will say *I am no Christian, nor a servant of the God of Heaven: I am an Infidel, and Rebell against the Lord*. I think there is none of you, but would take it ill, if I should call you such, or should deny you to be Christians, and men fearing God. If therefore you are not such indeed, you must needs be Hypocrites. What say you? Is there any of you that profess your selves to be *ungodly, unbelievers, and servants of the Devil*, and will take this as your current title, disclaiming the love and service of the Lord? I think you will not. If you are such as you profess, you are all Saints, and shall be saved. If any of your be not such, they can be nothing else but Hypocrites.

Seeing therefore that you are all either *Saints* or *Hypocrites*, come now to the bar, and refuse not a tryal, that may prevent the errors of another kind of tryal, that you cannot refuse. And here let me set before you your Profession, and then try your selves, Whether you are such as you profess your selves to be or not? And I think I may take it for granted, that the *Articles of the Creed*, and the *Baptismal Covenant*, is the *least* that every one of you do profess; and that the *desires* implied in the Petitions of the Lords Prayer, you all profess to be your own desires; and that you take the Ten Commandements for part of the rule of your obedience. Let us peruse them briefly in the several parts.

1. Do you not all say that you *Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth*, and that you *will have no other gods but him?* and are you not accordingly engaged in *Covenant with him?* you will not deny it. And what is the meaning of this much of your profession? It is no less then to *take God* for the *only infinite good*, to be *loved* with the *chiefest love*, and to take him for *your absolute Lord and Governour, the Owner of you and all you have*, to whom you owe universal absolute obedience; and that you are truly willing to love him above all, and fear him, and trust him and obey him accordingly, though your flesh and all the world should be against it. He that meaneth not all this, doth dissemble or lye when he saith, he taketh God to be his God. For *to be God*, is to be *this much to us*.

And really *is it* thus with you, as you profess? Speak but as men that dare not lye before the Lord that knows your hearts? Do you indeed *Love God as God?* With your *superlative love*. Are your *hearts set* upon him? Do you make it your principal care to please him? Is it your delight to do his will? Is it sweeter to you to think and speak of him, then of the world? Doth it grieve you most to offend him? In a word, you are not such strangers to *Nature*, but you know *what love is*. And you are not such strangers to your *own hearts*, but you know what it is, to *love your pleasure, your profit, your honour and your friend*; can conscience say before the Lord, that you love him better then all these? if not more *passionately*, yet more deeply, effectually and resolvedly; with a love that will cause you to deny and part with all for him? If you thus truly love him as God; (and above all) how comes it to pass that you seek the world

more carefully, and eagerly than him? and that you are more pleased with worldly thoughts and speeches and employments, than with divine? Were not the Hypocrite justly blinded, and a willful stranger to himself, he could not but know that he loveth not *God as God*, and *above all*. And to love him *in subordination to your flesh* and its *contents*, is not at all *to love him as God*. As it is no degree of conjugal love, to love a wife but as a servant; nor no degree of the love due to your Sovereign, to love him as an equal, or as a slave.

And if really you take God for *your absolute Lord and Governour*, why is it then that you take no pleasure in his *Laws*; but count them too *strict* and had rather be at your own dispose? why is it that you obey your fleshly desires, before and against the God whom you acknowledge? why will you not be perswaded to that holiness, justice and charity which you know his Law commandeth you? Why do you willfully continue in those sins, which conscience tells you God forbids? Will you live in willfull disobedience, and love your sins, and loath your duty, and obstinately continue thus, and yet profess that you take God for your God, and consequently for your Lord and Governour? and yet will you not confess that you are dissembling Hypocrites?

2. Do you not all profess that you *believe in Jesus Christ*? And have you not in *Covenant* taken him for your *Saviour* and *Lord*? And do you *so indeed*, or do you not play the *Hypocrites*? If you believe in Christ, and take him for your *Saviour*, you then take your *sins* for the *disease* and *misery* of your souls, and you are so *grieved* for them and *wearry* of them, and *humbled* in the apprehension of your lost estate, that you fly to Christ as your only refuge, from the wrath and curse of the offended Majesty, and value his justifying and healing grace before all the riches of the world; and you are willing to take his bitterest medicines, and use the means appointed by him, for the destruction of your sin, and the perfecting of his graces. And is it thus with you, that have unhumbled hearts, that never felt the need of Christ, as condemned miserable men must do? And that love the sin that he would cure, and are unwilling to be mortified and sanctified by his grace? Unless a carcass be a man, such Hypocrites as these are no true Christians, and have but a seeing self-deceiving faith.

3. Do you not all profess *to believe in the Holy Ghost*? And are you not engaged to him in *Covenant* as your Sanctifier? And do you not grossly play the Hypocrites here? If not, how comes it to pass that you stick in your natural state, as if you had no need of sanctification? and live as quietly without any acquaintance with true Regeneration, and the Spirit to dwell and rule within you, as if you needed no such change? Or else that you take up with a *Formal*, an *affected*, or a *forced* kind of Religion, instead of Sanctification and spiritual devotion? And how comes it to pass that you distaste the *highest degrees* of holiness? and that you will not be brought to the mortification, self-denial, and unreserved obedience, which are the essence of sanctification? As for the more deoboist prophane sort of Hypocrites that make a common mock of godliness, and scorn at the very name of Holiness and Sanctification, and deride at all that pretend to have the *Spirit*. I had rather tremble at the thought of their misery, than now stand to reprove that notorious hypocrisie, which professeth to *believe in the Holy Spirit* which they deride; and *Covenanteth* with the Sanctifier, while they hate and mock, or at least do obstinately refuse sanctification. When God himself tells us, *Rom. 8. 9. That if any man have not the Spirit of*

Christ, the same is none of his. And therefore to deride a man for professing that he hath the *Spirit*, is to deride him for professing *to be a Christian*.

4. Do you not all profess to *Believe the Holy Catholick Church* that is, that Christ hath a people dispersed through the world that are sanctified by his Spirit, and made a holy peculiar people, whom he loveth as his Spouse and as his own Body, of which number you must be if you will be saved? And yet at the same time, the *members* of this *Church*, you contemn; the *holiness* of it you secretly hate; and the faithfull Pastors in it you despise and disobey. Is not this Hypocrisie?

5. You all profess to *Believe the Communion of Saints*, that is, that the true members of the Catholike Church are all *Saints*, that have one and the same Spirit, and walk by the same holy Law or Rule, and in holiness must converse together, and join in Church order, for the publick worshipping of God, according to his own institution: and must purely and fervently love each other, with such a charity as shall make one as ready to relieve another, when God calls for it, as if our riches did belong in *Common* to the Saints. This is the meaning of this Article of your Creed. And do I then need to ask you Whether those that profess this, are not Hypocrites, if they *hate* the *Saints*, and their inward spiritual *Communion*, and if they love them but with that lifeless charity that *James* describeth? *Jam. 2. 14, 15, &c.* Or if they despise or hate the Discipline, Ordinances and Holy Communion of the Church? And if they live in Communion with drunkards, with harlots, with worldlings, or sensual, vain, or ambitious men, and fly from the *Communion of Saints*? What dost thou, when thou sayst *I believe the Communion of Saints* but say *I am a dissembling Hypocrite* if it be thus with thee?

6. You all profess to *Believe the forgiveness of sins*, that is, that through the blood of Christ all true repenting and believing sinners, shall be forgiven, and are not shut up under remediless despair. And also I think you all profess that you do *repent* your selves, that *Forgiveness* may be *yours*. And yet you love your sin: you love not to be told of it: you will not believe it to be sin, as long as you can strive against conviction; and when you must needs confess it, you will not forsake it; but while you seem to reform by parting with so much as you can spare, your dearer sins, which pleasure and honour and profit are much engaged in, you will not forsake: though repentance do consist in turning from sin to God; and Christ hath assured you, that *except you repent, you shall all perish*, *Luk. 13. 3, 5.* Is not this therefore palpable *hypocrisie*, to profess repentance for remission of sin, and still keep the sin which you say you repent of, as if you thought to mock God with names and shews?

7. You all profess to *Believe the Resurrection of the body; and that Christ shall come again to judge the quick and dead.* But do you *live* as men that believe indeed, that they are passing unto such a judgement? If you seriously expected to be judged for your lives, for the words you speak, the deeds you do, the time you spend, the means of grace which you neglect or use, and for all that you receive and do, is it possible you could so waste your time, and neglect the means of your salvation, and sin so boldly and obstinately as you do?

8. You all profess that you *Believe the life everlasting* that the *Righteous shall go into their masters joy*, and the rest *into everlasting punishment* in hell, *Matth. 25.* and *13.* But do you not play the Hypocrites? Can you heartily believe that you stand so near to heaven or hell, to

everlasting joy or torments, and make no greater a matter of it, nor make no better preparation for it, nor bestir your selves no more in a case of such unspeakable weight? If you believe sincerely the *glory* of heaven, you set your hearts on it, more then upon earth, and take it for your portion and most desirable felicity. But do I need to tell the worldly fleshly Hypocrite how far he is from this?

9. You profess (as the summ of the ten Commandements) that you *Love God above all, and your neighbours as your selves*. But doth not your *selfishness* and quarreling with your neighbours, when they do but stand in the way of your honour or commodity, convince you of hypocrisie in this profession?

10. In the use of the Lord's prayer, what word do you speak that is not in *hypocrisie*? Do you first and principally desire the *hallowing of God's name*, the *coming of his Kingdom*, and the *doing of his will*? When you are far more tender of your *own names* then of Gods, and more regardful of your own *honour*? And when you care more for your own prosperity then for the prosperity of the Church and Gospel; and do your selves become the hinderers of his Kingdom and Government in the Church and in the souls of men? And when you cannot abide to do his *Will*, when it crosseth the interest of your flesh, but dislike it as too strict, and had rather the Word and Will of God were agreeable to yours, then you will conform your own to his?

Do you only desire *Your daily bread*, and that in *subordination to the honour, and Kingdom, and will of God*. Or rather do you not play the Hypocrites in saying so, when it is not *daily bread* that will content you; but plenty and prosperity is sweeter to you then *holiness*?

When you pray for The forgiveness of your sins, as you forgive others you intimate that you are weary of your sins, and hate them, and would forsake them; and that you forgive all that have wronged you, out of the sense of your own transgressions, and of the love of Christ: but is all this so, or is it meer dissembling, when you forsake not your sin, nor are willing to forsake it, and when your consciences know that there be some that you forgive not?

You pray against being led into temptation and yet you love it and cast your selves into it. Into tempting company, and tempting talk, and tempting employments: And for recreation, meat, drink, apparel, houses, attendants, estate, reputation, and almost all things else, you love and choose that which is most tempting.

You pray to be delivered from evil when the evil of your pride, flesh pleasing, and worldliness, you so love, that indeed you *would not* be delivered from them. What can you say to excuse all this from palpable *Hypocrisie*?

To conclude, you pretend to all that necessary to salvation; but have you that in reality which you pretend to?

1. You think your selves *wise enough* to be saved. But is it not *folly* that goes under the name of *wisdom*? When you should be converted and lead a holy life, you are *wise enough* to give reasons for the *contrary*, and *wise enough* to confute the Preacher, and prove him a fool, instead of obeying the call of God. You are *wise enough* to prove the Physician to be ignorant, and to cast away the medicine that should heale you. And what if nobody could deal with you in subtilty of argument, but you could say that against the necessary means of your own salvation, that none can answer? When you die by your wisdom, and have disputed your selves out of the

reach of mercy, will you not bewail it then as *folly*? Is he *wiser* that being hungry eats his meat, or he that gives such reasons for his refusing it, and pleadeth so learnedly against eating and drinking, that none can answer him? Is the condemned man wiser that makes friends for a pardon? or he that with unanswerable subtilty reasoneth against it, till the ladder be turned? Such is your vain and *seeming wisdom*. You are *not wise enough* to be *cured*, but to *give reasons* why you should *continue sick*. In the issue it will prove, that you were not *wise enough to be saved*, but notably wise to resist salvation, and plead your selves into hell.

2. You pretend that you have a *saving faith*, when your hearts refuse that salvation from sin, and that rule of Christ which is the object of faith: and when you will not believe the doctrines, precepts or threatnings that cross your own conceits; and when your belief of heaven will not carry your hearts from earth, nor work you to a holy heavenly life.

3. You pretend to *Repentance* (as I said before) while you hold fast the sin, and give not up your selves to God: when as if your *neighbour*, or *Master*, or *Husband* should but *beat* one of you, and tell you when he hath done that he *repenteth*, and do this as oft as you commit your willful sins, and say you *repent*, I am confident you would not take it for *true repentance*. You *repent*, but will not *confess* when it is to your *disgrace*, as long as you *can hide* your sin. You *repent*, but will not make *restitution* or reparation of injuries to your power. You *repent*, but your heart riseth against him that reproveth you. You *repent*, but you had rather keep your sins then leave them. What's this but to *deceive your own hearts*, and to mock your selves with a *seeming vain and mock-repentance*?

4. You pretend to *love God above all*, (as was before said) when you love not his Image, waies or communion: but love that which he hateth, and still prefer the world before him.

5. You pretend that you have *true desires to be godly* and what God would have you be: But they are such *desires* as the sluggard hath to rise, and as the slothful hath to work: that is, if it could be done with ease, and without labour: you lie still, and use not the means with diligence, for all your desires. When you can fit and have your work done with wishes, and your families maintained, and your necessities all supplied with wishes, you may think to come to heaven with wishes: The good desires that the poor may be warmed and cloathed, that *James* speaks of, *Jam. 2. 15.* did neither relieve the poor, nor save the wisher. *The desire of the slothful killeth him, because his hands refuse to labour*, *Prov. 21. 15.* Up and be doing according to thy desires, or else confess that thy wishes are hypocritical, and that thou deceivest thy own heart by *Vain desires*.

6. You also pretend to be *sincere worshippers of God*. You pray, and you read the Scripture and good books, and you hear the Word, and receive the Lords Supper. But I have before shewed you your hypocrisie in these you pray against the sin that you love and would not leave: you pray for holiness, when you hate it or desire it not, in any degree to cross your flesh: you serve God with meer words (whether of your own conceiving, or of others prescribing) with some forced acknowledgement of that God that hath not your hearts or lives. Let Christ pass the sentence on you, and not I, *Matth. 15. 7, 8, 9.* *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias Prophesie of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me: But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the*

commandements of men. You like that *teaching* that sooths you in your own opinions, and galleth not your consciences in the guilty place: *A Ministry* you would have, that should stand like an adorned Idol that hurts no body, and toucheth not your sores: or that is but instead of a pair of Organs, or a tinkling Cymbal, to tickle your fancy, and make Church worship to be as a kind of religious stage-play to you. But a true Minister of Christ, to open to you the doctrine of the Kingdom, and roundly to awake you from security in sin, and to call you up to the most serious holy heavenly life, and follow you and let you take no rest, till you yield and practise it; and to call you to open confession of your open scandalous sins, that you may make such reparation to the wronged honour of God and souls of men, as you are capable of, and accordingly to absolve you, or to bind you over to answer it at the bar of God, and charge the Church to avoid communion with you, if you are impenitent and incorrigible; *such a Ministry as this* (which is the Ministry of Christ's appointment) you abhor; at least, when they come to *touch your sores*. Then you are too proud to be taught and ruled by such as these, though you hypocritically profess to be ruled by Christ, who ruleth his Church by his *Spirit, Word and Ministers* conjunct. Then you say, who gave you authority to do thus and thus by me? As if you knew not that Christ in Scripture hath described, confirmed and limited the Ministerial office. Like condemned Traytors, that should say to him that bringeth them a pardon *Who gave you authority to make so bold with me?* or like a man that hath the plague or leprosie, that asketh the Physician *Who gave you authority to tell me that I am sick, and put me on such medicines as these?* or as the Israelite to *Moses*, *Exod. 2. 14. Who made thee a Prince and a Judge over us?* not understanding that *God by his hand would deliver them*, saith *Stephen*, *Act. 7. 25.* Or as the Jews to Christ, when he was teaching men the way to heaven, *Matth. 21. 23. By what authority dost thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?* so because you hate the way of your recovery, you will not be *saved without authority*, nor be *satisfied of their authority* that would *save* you, but are like a beggar that should proudly refuse a piece of gold, and ask, *By what authority do you give it me?* A Ministry that agreeth with Gods description, you cannot abide, *Act. 20. 18 to 36. Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Cor. 4. 1. 1. Thes. 5. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 20. and 2 Tim. 4. 1.* So that indeed it is but a mock-minister, a mock-sacrament, a mock-prayer, and so a *seeming vain Religion* which you desire.

7. Lastly, you pretend also to *sincere obedience*. If we ask you, whether you are willing to obey God? you will say, God forbid that any should deny it. But when it comes to the particulars, and you find that he commandeth you that which flesh and blood is against, and would cost you the loss of worldly prosperity, then you will be excused: and yet that you may cheat your souls, you will not professedly disobey; but you will perswade your selves that it is no duty, and that God would not have you do that which you *will not* do. Like a Countryman's servant, that promiseth to do all that his Master bids him: but when he cometh to particulars, threshing is too hard a work, and mowing and reaping are beyond his strength, and plowing is too toylsome; and in the conclusion, it is only an idle life with some easie charres, that he will be brought to. This is the Hypocrites obedience. He will obey God in all things, as far as he is able, in the general: But when it comes to particulars, *To deny himself*, and forsake his worldly prosperity for Christ, and to condemn the world, and live by faith, and converse in heaven, and walk with God, and worship him in Spirit and truth, to love an enemy, to forgive all wrongs, to humble our selves to the

meanest persons, and to the lowest works; to confess our faults with shame and sorrow, and ask forgiveness of those they have injured, these and other such works as these, they will not believe to be parts of obedience, or at least, will not be brought to do them.

Poor souls, I have stood here a great while to hold you the glass, in which, if you were willing, you might see your selves. But if you will yet wink and hate the light, if you perish in your self-deceiving, who can help it?

(...)

The sins of the tongue are of three sorts. 1. Such as are against piety. 2. Such as are against Justice. 3. Such as are against Charity.

1. Against Piety, that is, directly against God, are, Blasphemy, Perjury, rash swearing, swearing by creatures, light and unreverent using of God's Name, and attributes, and Word and works: pleading for false doctrine, or false worship: disputing against truth and duty: scorning at godlines or reasoning against it. These and such impieties of the tongue, the evidences of prophaneness in the speakers heart; though some of them much more than others: and if the tongue be not then bridled, all is in vain.

2. Sinfull speeches against Justice and charity are these: reproaching Parents, or Governours, or neighbours: railing and reviling: cursing: provoking others to do mischief, or commit any sin: disputing against, and dissuading men from truth and duty; and hindering them by your speeches from a holy life, and the means of their salvation: calling good, evil, and evil, good: lying; slandering; false witness-bearing; back-biting: extenuating men's vertues, and aggravating their faults beyond the certain apparent truth: receiving, and reciting, and carrying on evil reports, which you know not to be true: endeavouring to cool men's love to others, by making them seem bad, when we cannot prove it: mentioning men's faults and failings without a call and just occasion, unchaste, immodest, ribald speeches: cheating and deceitful words to wrong others in their estates: with other such like.

But undoubtedly that sin of the tongue which the Apostle here had particular respect to, was the reproaching of fellow-Christians, especially upon the occasion of some differences of judgement and practice in the smaller matters of Religion: The Judaizing Christians gave liberty to their tongues, to reproach those that refused the use of those ceremonies, which they used themselves, and placed much of their Religion in: The quarrel was the same that was decided by the Apostles, Act. 15. and by Paul, Rom. 14. and 15. and throughout the Epistle to the Galathians. And this is the Religion that James calls vain here, which was much placed in ceremonies, with a pretense of highest knowledge, and a censorious vilifying of all that would not do as they.

There are especially three sorts that use to reproach each other about the matters of Religion. 1. Those that are hardened to that height of impiety, as to make a mock at seriousness and diligence in the practise of Christianity itself, hating and reproaching them that dare not sell their souls at as base a price as they.

2. Those that have so far extinguished charity by faction and self-conceit, as to confine their love and honour to their party, and to speak evil of those that are not of their own opinions.

3. Those that give liberty to their tongues unseasonably, unmeasurably or unwarrantably to speak hardly of those that they suffer by upon Religious accounts; though perhaps they are their superiours whom they are bound to honour.

From pages 117-173 and 177-180 of the original.