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LANGUAGE POLLUTION

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"The Protestant Faith"

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Swearing and blasphemy and filthy jokes are becoming more common in the public press, on the stage, T.V. and so on. This sort of behaviour has, of course, always been with us but the new situation is that it is now done publicly. But it is interesting to ask why it is that people like to blaspheme and swear or to speak in filthy language. For example 'by Jove' is an expletive, just as using Christ's name or God's name is, but using it doesn't give any satisfaction, in the way that real swearing does, and the reason is that 'Jove' means nothing to us, but we know that God and Christ is He to whom we owe allegiance. Men and women, down in the bottom of their heart, hate God, and they like to shake their fist in His face, and this shows itself in the form of blasphemy. It gives satisfaction and it is therefore a reflection of our human nature which is in rebellion against God and refuses to acknowledge His claim on our lives. Even in the mildest form of blasphemy there is a satisfaction, and we need to ask why this satisfaction, and the answer is that God is real in the way that 'Jove' is not real, and to use His name as an oath gives vent to our feelings. For we are not in a relationship of obedience and love with God but rather of self-assertive independence, so we use His name to swear by.

The second question is, why is filthy language so attractive to so many people? I need hardly say that both swearing and filthy language is condemned in Scripture, but why is it condemned? The reason is similar - filthy language is a contradiction of a relationship. Just as blasphemy is a contradiction of relationship with God, so filthy language is a contradiction of our true relationship with the opposite sex. Our sexual nature is for the purpose of relating to our spouse in marriage, but because of our self-centredness we use sex for self-gratification rather than for relationship. Yet in the bottom of our hearts

we know that this is wrong. However, we're determined to do it. That is why filthy language gives us satisfaction. It is, of course, a twisted satisfaction just as blasphemy is, and is an indication that we are out of relationship with God and with one another because of our self-centred independence of God and disregard of our neighbour. We all know that modesty is right, yet we flout modesty in our thoughts. We all know that adultery and fornication and immorality are wrong but too often we disregard this knowledge and express our thoughts in filthy language.

But God sets before us a different way. We are never to use the name of our great God and Saviour as a swear word. We are to love Him with all our heart, and our thoughts are only to think about pure, honest, lovely and true things, things of virtue and praise. Our words and actions will follow our thoughts. "For as a man thinks, so he is". (Proverbs 23:7).

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