

Baneful Blasphemy

by Rev. H. C. Mullen*

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh His name in vain." Ex. 20: 7.

Swearing is much more common than it was fifty years ago. I think it is very probable that this commandment is being broken more often by more people than any of the ten.

When I was young it was only hardened sinners, mostly old men, who swore, and then only when in a rage about something. I was grown up before I ever heard the blessed name of Jesus used in blasphemy. It is commonly heard now. The people who do not swear nowadays seem to be in a minority. One can hardly be in the presence of a group of men or boys, five minutes, in any place, without having one's heart and ears outraged with profanity. It seems to be done now without the least provocation. Those who do it seem to think it greatly emphasizes what they say, and it makes them feel very big and important. They are mistaken on both counts.

Some people curse in their common talk, and if checked for it, would hardly be conscious of what they had been saying. They have become so habituated to it, that they seem to do it unconsciously.

But this does not excuse it nor make it any less sinful in the eyes of God. God says He will not hold him guiltless, that taketh His name in vain. In other words God will hold the person guilty, who does it. It is a terrible thing to be under guilt before God. God's word has spoken against swearing, therefore it is sin. God hates sin and sin must come into judgement. Sin will bring its own punishment both here and hereafter. Do not let any person who takes the name of the Lord in vain, or practices cursing of any kind, be so grossly inconsistent as to count himself a Christian. Christians don't swear! No one who loves God will blaspheme His name!

When we stop to ponder it, there is much more involved in this third commandment than we might generally think. In the first place, swearing is irreverent. Someone has called reverence, "the queen of all virtues". Indeed, it is the very essence of true worship. No one can approach God without reverence. We are taught to be reverent in the presence of dignitaries. How much more must we be reverent in the presence of God. If we must be reverent in order to worship God, or to pray to Him, and if taking His name in vain is irreverent, then swearing puts us off from God. It is a very serious matter and affects all our relationships to God. It is a sad and heart-breaking thing to see little children brought up in homes where there is no reverence for God, and where they learn to use bad language in their childhood. No wonder they persist in it when grown up. We used to have pledges to sign in our Sunday Schools against strong drink, tobacco and profanity; I have not seen one for a long time. There should be some kind of a movement among children to influence them against these things.

There is another phase of this matter which I wish to mention. Years ago one seldom ever saw profanity in books and periodicals. If there seemed great need to quote some speaker, only a blank, or a dash, would be used. Now most magazines and books print it right out in all its sulphurous reality; most disgusting to discriminating people, and in many cases making an article unfit to pass to a decent boy or girl to read.

With so much spoken profanity. It would seem that

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Steps to the Altar (No. 6)

by Rev. George E. Failing

COURTSHIP AND ITS PURPOSE

Following are some suggestions on how to get a date—in case you need them! First, make yourself desirable—in mood, in conversation, in appearance. Second, make yourself available. If you are interested, don't stay "hidden." Go places where the people are whom you want to meet. Be available to try fielding on a softball team, even though you don't know baseball. Your very mistakes may prove an advantage. Finally, if these two fail, then ask. There have been quite a few successful marriages that were made possible because she asked. (Very adroitly, of course.) Some men are ultra shy.

More seriously, God will answer prayer and help a young person find his life sweetheart. The Christian boy or girl must believe that God does not wish to cheat a person out of the best in life. God wants life to be a fulfillment, not a frustration. But a young person may spoil God's plan and cheat himself by selfishly grabbing at an easy opportunity rather than awaiting God's direction. Actually, if a young person will dedicate himself to preparing for Christ's service (and keep his eyes open!) he will see when God brings the proper one across the path. God still gives His very best to those who leave the choice to Him.

Robert F. Horton has a delightful comment on Genesis 24:64: "And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel." Says Dr. Horton, "The two lifted up their eyes and saw one another. From the ends of the earth elect souls come, guided by the finger of God, to be united; and often the first glance reveals the long preparations of the divine love. May not a young man pray that the soul which is his own counterpart and fulfillment may be led across the trackless wilderness to his side? May not a young girl commit this great issue of life to God? For not only are marriages made in heavens in the true true sense they are made nowhere else. Only when the circling spheres have ordered it and the stars in their courses bring about the mystical union between soul and soul, according to the will of God, is any marriage which deserves the name, accomplished."

But we pass on to consider courtship. We are assuming now that you have dated and have known several good friends. Out of all those friends, one of them is outstandingly interesting and attractive. You come to the opinion that such a person would be wonderful to live with always. You believe that love for that person has awakened in your heart.

Then you begin to court, "to try to get the love of another." A synonym of court is woo, which is defined as follows: "to make love to, usually with the intention of proposing marriage." And so the fine art of love-making begins. One person who is quite convinced of his own love for another, endeavors to get another's affection committed to him.

There must be utter sincerity here. A person must be honest with himself (herself) and the other. There must not be present in any form the base alloy of self-seeking. For true love-making seeks to make the other supremely happy and contented in your company and companionship.

I find that doing the will of God leaves me no time for disputing about His plans.

—George MacDonald