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VOL. X.

SCOTLAND NECK, N. C., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1894.

NO. 12.

PROFANITY IS UNMANLY.

It is Silly, Useless and Degrading.

A Sermon by Rev. R. T. Vann in Scotland Neck Baptist Church, Sunday, January 14, 1894.

"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.

When one reads the first and second commandments he may doubt whether, for the American people, they are not out of date. But when he strikes this third prohibition he knows he has touched modern life in every grade. For, be it said to our shame, no class or rank in society is free from the ungodly and unmanly habit of profanity. Much of what passes for by-words, idle talk, or harmless, is a breach of the third commandment. "Dad blame" is only "God blame" modified. "Dad burn" takes the place of "God burn." "Drot" is shortened from "God rot"; while "Zounds," an abbreviation of "His wounds," is an impious and blasphemous reference to our Saviour's bloody death. The irreverent use of scriptural texts to point a pun or embellish a story violates the spirit of this commandment; and the glib and ready quotation of profane speech is simply bald profanity. It is swearing by proxy. It is gratuitous endorsement of the swearer. It reveals the true spirit of the person quoting it and shows that shame or fear, but not any reverence for the sacred name of God, prevents him from swearing on his own account. These are the facts unimpeachable. Let us hope that the many professing Christians who indulge in this vicious habit do so because their attention has never been called to its exceeding wickedness.

In this third Commandment God expresses grave concern for the sanctity of his name. Is this concern unreasonable? Do not men feel a similar care about their names? Handle the average man's name carelessly, and you need not be surprised at a bullet or a blow. Names represent character; many, therefore, are the descriptive terms under which God's great name is set forth in Scripture. It is called a "great name" an "excellent name," a "glorious name," a "holy name," an "everlasting name," a "fearful name," a "terrible name." And in the form of prayer left us by Jesus the first of all, "Hallowed be thy name." In treating the text to-night, it is simply proposed to lay down and briefly enforce some propositions which, it is believed, will command the assent of all fair-minded men, even of swearers themselves.

1. Profane swearing is a silly habit. It requires no unusual skill to swear. It exhibits no unusual intelligence. The simpleton can equal the sage in this low business. Anybody can swear, as forcibly as you. Moreover, the common oath means nothing. What do these curse words mean to the man who uses them? Anything at all? Positively nothing. This, indeed, is the swearer's commonest plea: He "means nothing by it." But what means nothing is nonsense. Isn't it? Silly? Oh so silly! If you could see, good friend, how pitifully stupid your swearing makes you appear, you would give over the habit from very shame.

2. Profanity is a useless habit. It adds no beauty, no elegance to your conversation, and no force save among the vulgar. It does not make you or anybody else any wiser, any happier or any better. It gives no higher creditability to your word even in the minds of the most profane. It really lowers most people's respect for your veracity.

"An e'en when sober truth prevails throughout. They swear it till affirmation breeds a doubt."

If you can not trust your own word without an oath, do not be surprised if others decline to trust it with an oath.

In what respect does swearing help you? Does it open the door of society to you? O yes; that is, some society. But God help the society to which swearing is the passport. For what business does swearing fit you? In looking for a clerk do not even swear-

ers themselves prefer the man whose lips are clean of oaths? Look about you, friend, and tell me how or when or where profanity benefits you.

3. Profanity is an unmanly habit. I do not use the word ungentlemanly. I prefer the word, unmanly. One of the evils in the world to-day is the fact that there are so many gentlemen and so few men. And yet, I believe no one has ever ventured to maintain that swearing is the mark of even a gentleman, earth-born and man-made though he be. If it is gentlemanly to "curse" then of a course you do so in the presence of ladies. You do not? Do you swear in the presence of your wife and daughters? I know you do not. Thank God, even the lowest swearer commonly respects his family if not himself enough to keep the oath out of the home. Have I over stated your gallantry? Do you actually insult and degrade your family by swearing in their presence? Then I respectfully submit that they should close the house against you till you plead for pardon and promise reform. I do not charge that a real man never swears. I do charge that his manhood is marred when he does. Great he may be and yet swear. But if so, his greatness is not made by profanity; he would be greater still without it. Profane swearing is not a mark of greatness but of littleness. How sadly common is the misapprehension here among our boys. I can recall in vivid detail my first and only oath. I had the common notion that in some way swearing helped one along very rapidly toward manhood. I had heard the swaggering swain all caned and gloved and topped with a five-dollar hat over a ten-cent head, swinging his idle tongue in blatant blasphemy, and I stupidly made up my mind that he must certainly be one of the greatest men in the world; that he had become so mainly by swearing, and that my straight road to greatness was the highway of profanity. I must begin at once. So my brother and I agreed one day to curse two negro boys when they got to us. We did not have any provocation and did not want any. We were going to do the thing in cold blood just to show that we could do it. The result was a great surprise to me. I had supposed that I should feel immensely larger right away. But I did not. I can scarcely tell you how I did feel. A sort of weak and limber and white and red and cowed and silly combination laid hold of me, while the ground felt soft and shaky beneath my feet. O, how thoroughly silly and ashamed I felt! My brother doubtless had a similar experience, as it was his last appearance in the role of a swearer. Boys, if any of you ever swear—well, I hardly ever advise a boy to hide things from his mother; but if you should ever by any woful error let an oath pass your lips, I would not let my mother know anything about it, I think. She has been thinking so proudly of you as her boy, her manly boy, I should not undecieve her. I would never let her know what a humiliating failure she has made in raising me. No swearing ever made a great man. Run your mind over the illustrious names that have adorned the history of our country and see how many of them appear on the roll of the profane. Was Washington a habitual swearer? Were the Adamses? Was Jefferson, skeptic though he was? Was Madison, father of the Constitution, noted for profanity? Was either of the Great Three among statesmen distinguished as swearers? Was Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis or Robert Lee or Stonewall Jackson a common swearer? Who ever has taken his place among the world's immortals because of the habit of profanity? Whenever any man dishonors the name of His Maker he thereby dishonors his own.

Observe, in the fourth place, that profane swearing is a low and vulgar habit. Profanity is a marked characteristic of this class. Not all who swear are low or vulgar in their general character, but they are decidedly so in this particular aspect of their character. Who ever saw a man of the class mentioned that did not swear? If you were to hear through closed blinds as

you were passing down the street the voices of men indulging in coarse and blatant profanity without seeing or learning ought else about them, you would say here is a crowd of blackguards and ruffians. You would measure them by one single standard—profanity; and you would measure them accurately. Did you ever hear a woman swearing? I trust that you have been spared such a painful shock. But should you ever meet a profane female, would you be disposed to marry her? Would you tip your hat to her in passing? Would you even tip your hat to her in passing? Would you not know her at once as a disgrace to her sex? But why this merciless judgment? Simply because of the habit that has seemed so manly in you. I submit that a woman has the same natural right to swear and remain womanly that you have to swear and remain manly. Profane swearing, whether in men or women, is disgusting to the refined, shocking to the pure, revolting to the good, insulting to women, and degrading to all who practice it.

5. I affirm in the fifth place that profane swearing is an assault on the foundation of one government. This government is organized under three departments: legislative, executive and judicial; but the entire system depends for its purity and efficiency upon the sanctity of an oath. Our presidents and governors are inducted into office under oath. Our judges and our jurists are sworn to faithfulness and impartiality in the administration of justice. Witnesses and attorneys are put through the same solemn form. What assurance have we that righteousness and truth shall control the actions of these public servants? What guarantee have we that our property and our lives will be guarded by the majesty of the law? Simply this and nothing more: that these men respect an oath. In swearing "upon the holy evangelists of Almighty God," they profess to fear the wrath and reverence of this dread Being. But when a man habitually despises and profanes and blasphemes this awful name, what power has a court-house oath upon him? What restraint has the name of God upon him? What influence is there left save the mean fear of detection and punishment? For the man who swears habitually, no oath has any weight when self-interest is in the balance. He that can swear vainly can swear falsely. Only a solemn reverence for the Maker's name makes any oath a sacred thing.

6. Again, the habit of profanity eats out the swearer's moral character. The source of all moral life is God. He is at once the standard and motive of all righteousness. Remove him and you pluck out the heart of good feelings and good actions. Abolish the recognition of God and reverent fear of him, and you have left no anchor for man's moral character. I do not affirm that all swearers lie or steal. Many do not; they would resent the insinuation. What I do affirm is that the tendency of profanity is away from righteousness—all kinds of righteousness, and that no man can say where the swearer will end. You can introduce rot into a tree but can you stop its progress? There were two Lieutenant Generals in the Confederate Army who were the flower of Southern chivalry and the soul of knightly gallantry. Who then would have dared impeach their honor? But both, I believe, were profane swearers and one went beyond the borders of common decency in his blasphemy. They have become a blot on manhood and a by-word for shameless robbery.

7. Finally, profane swearing is one of the most malignant sins against God. It is a direct insult to Deity, an insolent affront to the Supreme Majesty. A blasphemous defiance of the Omnipotent. And its guilt is reddened by its utter wantonness. Some palliation may be found for almost any other sin; but for profanity even the swearer himself can offer no excuse. The thief steals for gain, the libertine may plead the heat of passion, the liar may urge the hope of reward, the murderer may be stung by his deed by the burning memory of wrong. But the habitual

swearer must stand in naked guilt, without even the thin cover of provocation. And who is this God whose name has become your foot-ball? Is he some cruel tyrant, some brutal ruler, whose power manhood must resist? Nay, he is your Maker, the Being who gave you existence and whose kind hand preserves your life, patiently merciful under the hot provocation of your blasphemy. And who is this Christ whose title you so flippantly invoke to garnish your lowest speech? Is he some worthless vagabond, some pestilent fellow, an object of just derision? Nay, but he is the Prince of Life, the self-forgetful Redeemer, who gave his life that he might open the gates of Heaven to the like of you and me. Will you ruthlessly profane his name? And yet, some persons think it high sport to induce little boys to swear. Yes, hear, O heavens, I have known fathers to teach their little sons to blaspheme this gracious name. Dear friend, if ever you have done a thing like that go apart where only the eye of God can see you and fall upon your knees and ask him to blot out the memory of a deed so vile.

We read that "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." In Deuteronomy, 28: 58, 59, 61, God says to Israel, "If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD, then will the Lord make thee plagues wonderful and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues and of long continuance and sore sickness. Also every sickness and every plague which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee until thou be destroyed."

God seems resolved to preserve the sanctity of holy things, and to bring into fierce judgment the soul that dares profane them. Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords. In the heat of wine he commanded to be brought the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple of God. They were brought, and from them wine was drunk to the honor of Babylon's idols. Then came forth that mysterious hand and wrote before the eyes of the terrified king; wrote slowly, while each stroke sent a shiver through the royal sinner's bones. And now comes Daniel "in whom was the spirit of the gods" thought the trembling monarch; in whom was the spirit of the Most High God. Daniel came because he was sent for. This is generally the way. When the hand of God falls upon a blasphemer of his name it is God's servant whom the guilty wretch must see. And what does Daniel say? "O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, a kingdom and majesty and glory and honor.*** But when his heart was lifted up and his mind hardened in pride, he was driven from his kingly throne and they took his glory with him.*** And they fed him with grass like oxen and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men.*** And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of Heaven and they have brought the vessels of this house before thee, and thou and thy lords and thy wives and thy concubines have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver and of gold and of brass, iron, wood and stone.*** And the God in whose hands thy breath is and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified."

Then went away the awful hand, but it left on the wall Belshazzar's doom. "In that night was Belshazzar the king slain"; this is the brief but fearful record of Belshazzar's end; this the blasphemer's doom. No, not his end: only the dread beginning. Belshazzar went to meet his judge. He went to take his place at last before the judgment throne of his dishonored God, with you, and you, and me. But when we stand before him, friend, I hope through grace at last to be

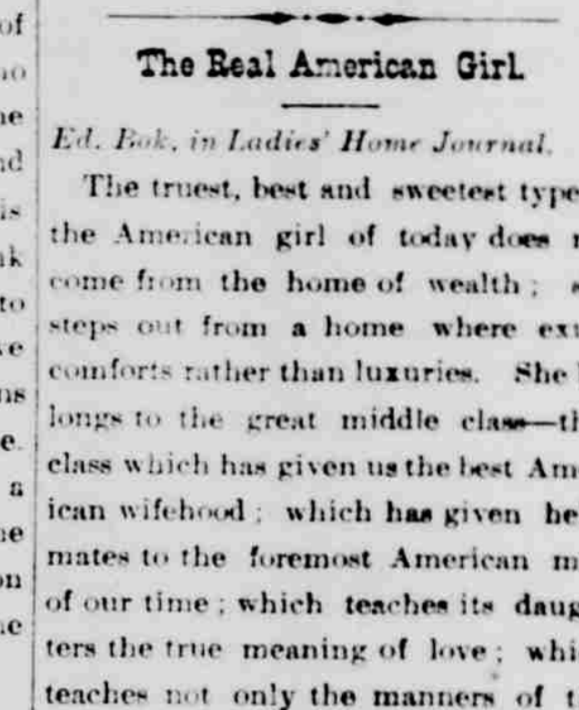
able to say, "Lord, with all my many sins, I have sought to honor thy great name." What shall you say in that dread hour? But there is redemption for the blasphemer. There is cleansing even for him. The Christ whose name you have profaned has shed his blood for your cleansing; and "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Come and wash in this fountain and be clean. Yes, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool.

The Real American Girl. Ed. Feb. in Ladies' Home Journal. The truest, best and sweetest type of the American girl of today does not come from the home of wealth; she steps out from a home where exists comforts rather than luxuries. She belongs to the great middle class—that class which has given us the best American wifehood; which has given helpmates to the foremost American men of our time; which teaches its daughters the true meaning of love; which teaches not only the manners of the drawing room but the practical life of the kitchen as well; which teaches its girls the responsibilities of wifehood and the greatness of motherhood. These girls may not ride in their carriages, they may not wear the most expensive gowns, they may even help a little to enlarge the family income, but these self-same girls are today the great bulwark of American society, not only the present but of the future. They represent the American home and what is best and truest in sweet domestic life and they make the best wives for our American men. I have no patience with these theories that would seek to place the average American girl in any other position than that which she occupies, ornaments and rightfully holds the foremost place in our respect, our admiration and our love. She is not the society girl of the day, and she is better for it. She knows no superficial life; she knows only the life in a home where husband, wife and children are one in love, one in every action. She believes no woman to be so sweet as her mother; no man so good as her father. She believes that there are good women and true men abroad in the world, and, thank God, her belief is right. And that man will ever be happy who takes such a girl for his wife.

Lend a Hand. Epworth Herald. Lend a hand to the fearful. Lend a hand to the doubting. Lend a hand to the tempted. Lend a hand to souls in the shadow. Lend a hand to the student at school. Lend a hand to those who are having it hard. Lend a hand to those who are often misjudged. Lend a hand to the poor, fighting the wolf from the door. Lend a hand to the soul crushed with unspeaking loss. Lend a hand to those whose lives are narrow and cramped. Lend a hand to the boy struggling bravely to cultivate his mind. Lend a hand to the warrior who is fighting battles alone. Lend a hand to those upon whose lives the sun seldom shines. Lend a hand to young people whose homes are cold and repelling. Lend a hand to those whose surroundings are steadily pulling them down. Lend a hand to the girl who works, works, works, and knows nothing of recreation or rest. Lend a hand to the prodigal sister—her life is as precious as that of the prodigal brother. Lend a hand—an open hand, a warm hand, a strong hand, an uplifting hand, a hand filled with mercy and help.

When Baby was sick, we gave her Castoria. When she was a Child, she cried for Castoria. When she became Miss, she clung to Castoria. When she had Children, she gave them Castoria.

IF YOU ARE A MUSTLER YOU WILL ADVERTISE YOUR Business. SEND YOUR ADVERTISEMENT IN NOW. THAT CLASS OF READERS THAT YOU Wish your Advertisement TO REACH is the class who read THE DEMOCRAT.



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LAND SALE. In pursuance of an order of court, to make assets, I will on the 3rd day of March, 1894, sell in the town of Scotland Neck at public auction that tract of land in Halifax county on which Mrs. Elizabeth Pender resided at her death and known as the Pender tract, bounded by the lands of Mrs. Whitaker, W. H. Kitchen et al. Terms: One-third cash, the balance on a credit of six months, bond with approved security, bearing 8% interest from day of sale, title retained until the purchase money is paid. Jan. 30, '94. THOS. L. PENDER, 2 1 4t Admr. Elizabeth Pender.

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