

Swearing

From Exodus 20:7 and Deuteronomy 5:11 we learn the Lord's name is not to be taken in vain. The word "vain" implies foolishness, fruitlessness, ineffectuality, etc. Some Bible translations render the word as "vanity" or "falsehood." Obviously His name is often used profanely. All the definitions embrace much of what man calls cursing or swearing. Those who indulge will not be held guiltless (Deut 5:11). How much better to call upon His name for salvation (Rom 10:13), and to give thanks in His name (Eph 5:20).

Hebrews 11:6 indicates that those who seek God will find Him. It is through the Word of God (Rom 10:17). The doing of His will for salvation is told in John 6:28, 29.

Is cursing God forgivable? Except for the sin of unbelief, believers are capable of performing any sin. There is some discussion of cursing God in Job 1:1-2:10. Note the piety of Job relative to knowledge of forgiveness in 1:5 (without doubt there was spiritual teaching by Job to the sons also). Read also of Peter, who was "afar off" (out of fellowship), and who denied the Lord three times with oaths and curses (Lk 22:54-62). He, of course, was restored and forgiven. And so can the same be true of Christians who sin today. See Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:9. 1 John 1:7 tells of cleansing and forgiveness for all sin. The verse in Proverbs speaks of confessing and forsaking (cut it out).

Joel 2:25—Are sin-marred and broken lives hopeless as far as Christian service is concerned? Not according to Him, who is eternal (and who reckons not only of time as does man, but rather of His unlimited and sovereign power).

An American writer tells the story of a most wonderful stained glass window in a certain cathedral. From far and near the people came to see it. It was indeed a masterpiece of art.

One day, during a great storm, the violence of the elements forced in the window, and it crashed to the floor, shattered into hundreds of pieces. The fragments, however, were carefully gathered up and stored in a box which was placed in the crypt of the cathedral.

Some time afterwards a visitor arrived to see the beautiful window. When he learned of its fate, he enquired what had become of the fragments. They showed him the broken pieces of glass. He asked if he might have them, a request which was readily granted, as they seemed to be of no further use.

The visitor carried the box away. Weeks passed; then came an invitation to the cathedral authorities to inspect a stained glass window in the studio of a famous artist, noted for his master skill in glasscraft. On arriving at the studio there shone before their astonished gaze a window of stained glass surpassing in beauty anything of the kind that they had ever seen. As they stood looking at its rich tints and marvelous workmanship, the artist said:

"This window I have wrought from the fragments of your shattered one, and it is now ready to be placed in position."

Once more a great window threw its beautiful light into the dim aisles of the old cathedral. The splendor of the new far surpassed the glory of the old, and its fame once more filled the land and brought pilgrims to view its beauty from far and near.

What a tragedy of spoiled lives one meets with among the children of God! If there has not been a violent fall, there has been, in a multitude of cases, a declension of soul that has involved abandonment, one after the other, of cherished ideals.

But is the position hopeless? Not if the Master Artist comes upon the scene. Not if He takes in hand the broken fragments. Not if His skill is available to restore and replace.

What then must *we* do? Hand over our broken lives to Him. Own our faithlessness, our folly, and the futility of all our efforts to make things different. Put ourselves unreservedly into His hands. *Abandon wholeheartedly everything concerning which we have a will of our own.* Bring the cross to bear upon every concession that we have made to the flesh.

Then, filled with the Holy Spirit, our lives shall once again be radiant *with Christ*, and something of His beauty shall shine in us.

—Harold P. Barker