

The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word." (II Timothy 4:2)

•

"Feed the Flock." (I Peter 5:2)

The Doctrine of Original Sin in the Light of the Bible



• By WILLIAM E. PAUL
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conception (Mary, Jesus' mother, was exempt from original sin since she was the chosen vessel to bring forth Jesus Christ). The fact that all these doctrines hinge upon "original sin" makes that doctrine a very key one. Let us consider what the Bible has to say about the subject.

I. THE NATURE OF SIN MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ONE PERSON'S SIN TO BE TRANSMITTED TO ANY OTHER PERSON.

According to the Bible definition of it, "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4; 5:17). "Transgression" means "the act of going aside or beyond" and always conveys an action in breach of a law.

Consider some things about this matter of breaking a law. A person breaks a law by his own action, not by proxy. He either breaks the law intentionally or ignorantly. Unless a person is accountable, he is not held guilty before the law, even if his action is in violation of the law. This is why adolescents and the insane are not considered guilty of breaking the law. They are not accountable for their action.

Therefore, by its very nature, guilt for sin cannot be attributed to the person who has not attained to the age of accountability for his action. This excludes infants, for they do not become sinners until they are old enough to commit sin.

II. THE SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES OF SIN FALL ONLY ON THE PERSON GUILTY OF SINNING.

A logical and Scriptural axiom is that the person doing the sinning is the one who receives the punishment. Ezekiel 18:1-4; 19-20 clearly teach this. We are told that a father is not punished for his son's wrongdoing and vice versa. Certainly if a person is not worthy of punishment for his father's sin, neither would he be punishable for his grandfather's, great-grandfather's, etc., clear on back to Adam. In Jeremiah's day the proverb that when a father would eat sour grapes his son would experience his teeth being "on edge" was not to be accepted. Instead, Jeremiah said, "Every one shall die for his own

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THE DOCTRINE called "original sin" holds that all men are born guilty of sin and are therefore condemned. This is said to be the result of Adam's sin. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) put it this way: "Adam's first sin has been transmitted to all his descendants." In a Catholic book titled, "Questions of Catholics Answered," author Winfred Herbst explains it this way: "Yes, every child born into this world has the guilt of original sin upon his soul. Original sin is the sin that we inherit from our first parents... Original sin excludes us from heaven unless forgiven. It is forgiven only by baptism. Hence when an unbaptized child dies, it cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

From this doctrine at least five other doctrines are derived. (1) Infant baptism (If a baby is condemned at birth, then surely it needs to be baptized). (2) Faith by Proxy (Since faith is necessary before being baptized, and since a baby cannot believe, the faith of a believing parent or sponsor is considered acceptable). (3) Baptismal regeneration (Since a baby cannot either believe or repent, the act of baptism alone provides salvation). (4) Confirmation (Children, ages 12 to 14 are required to publicly acknowledge the decision of their parents made for them when they were still infants). (5) Immaculate

THE SWORD AND STAFF

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Proverbs of Today

The organization of the Lord's church consists of nothing larger nor smaller than the local church.

"If we would have God hear us when we pray, we must hear Him when He speaks."

You can straighten out some kids by bending them over (your knee).

"For success try aspiration, inspiration and perspiration."

The political right and being religiously right are not necessarily the same thing (patriotism, politics, and religion should not be "wed" as if they were the same thing—a Christian's allegiance is to something higher, God and the kingdom of God.

"The higher a man is in grace, the lower he will be in his own esteem."

Many times people try to act big because they feel little (have an inferiority complex).

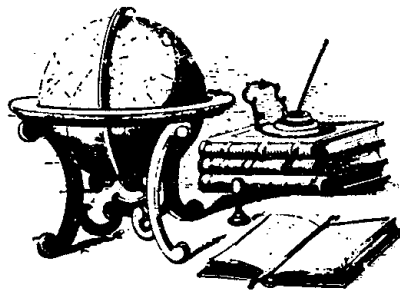
"A cold church is like cold butter, it never spreads very well."

Sometimes when the going gets "tuff" we find our "tuff" is gone.

"Doing nothing is the most tiresome thing in the world because you can't stop to rest."

An excessive show of strength is a sign of weakness.

"It is a law of life that we lose what we fail to use."



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...



THE TICKET IS REAL TOO! —This Mount Airy Police officer apparently didn't realize that he was giving two lessons to a speeder when he stopped a vehicle on Renfro Street, across from the Reeves Community Center.

THE ABOVE picture and words appeared in the MOUNT AIRY NEWS, a local newspaper, sometime ago. We run this as a matter of interest because we ran a picture of this small billboard one time in THE SWORD AND STAFF. The sign was painted by the editor of this paper. □

BIBLE LAND PICTURES:



THE EDITOR has been showing the slides he took during his Bible lands tour (earlier this year) to various churches and groups. They include views of significant places in Rome, Israel, and Greece. They are very interesting and valuable to the Bible student. We would be pleased to schedule further showings of these slides in the Virginia-North Carolina area. Should you be interested in seeing them, write us in care of this paper or call 919-789-1044. □

The DOCTRINE of ORIGINAL SIN in the LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

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iniquity" (Jeremiah 31:30). This same truth had been incorporated into the law of Moses much earlier (Deuteronomy 24:16).

Even though it is true that the PHYSICAL consequences of man's sin may be passed on to his offspring, this is not true of the SPIRITUAL. The children of a drunkard often suffer physical abuse; a wreckless driver may cause suffering to the passengers riding with him; a careless surgeon may be responsible for the death of a patient, BUT SIN IS A PERSONAL MATTER AND THE GUILT AND CONDEMNATION FOR IT FALL ONLY ON THE RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL WHO PERSONALLY COMMITTS IT.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM'S SIN DID NOT INCLUDE THE CONDEMNATION OF EVERY PERSON THAT WOULD BE BORN, REGARDLESS OF HIS AGE, MENTALITY, OR ACCOUNTABILITY.

Adam's sin did bring consequences upon the whole human race. What were they? Physical death was to become the lot of all mankind and this was the direct result of Adam's sin. God said, following Adam's sin, that his body would return to the dust in death (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:19). In Romans 5:12 we are explicitly told that "Death passed on to all men." Note that it does NOT say that SIN passed on to all men. That same verse says that "all sinned" and NOT that all are guilty or condemned for Adam's sin. Elsewhere in that chapter this is made quite clear. This death of mankind was to occur even to those who did not commit the same sin which Adam committed (Romans 5:14). Many died (physical death) because of Adam's sin (Romans 5:15). Physical death reigned upon mankind because of Adam's sin (Romans 5:17). This is also taught in I Corinthians 15:21, 22, where we are told "in Adam all die."

Other physical consequences for Adam's sin, which all mankind since his time have had to suffer, include toiling for a living (Genesis 3:17-19) and pain in childbirth (Genesis 3:16).

Also, the awareness of right and wrong, which all normal human beings come to possess at an early age, stems from Adam's sin (Genesis 3:17-12, 22). The inclination to do the wrong appears to result from the fact that the human body craves gratification. This is often called "the lust of the flesh" in the Bible and in this state man cannot please God (Romans 8:8). Jesus himself identified the flesh (our physical cravings) as weak (Matthew 26:41).

The universal nature of this tendency to do the wrong thing is so strong that all of mankind falls under the wrath of God because "all have sinned." (Romans 3:23). See also Ephesians 2:1-3.

While Satan provides the occasion for sinning with his devices, wiles and deception, it is man being drawn away by his OWN lust that brings forth sin (James 1:14, 15).

Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find it teaching that

a person is considered guilty of sin, muchless condemned for it, as a result of the sin of Adam. Adam's sin certainly left its mark on mankind but one thing it did not produce is the condemnation of newly born infants. The doctrine of "original sin" teaches that, but the Bible doesn't.

IV. POSITIVE TEACHING IN THE BIBLE WHICH REFUTES THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN.

Small children have no knowledge of good and evil. This is stated in plain terms in Deuteronomy 1:39 and Isaiah 7:16 (with 8:4). This means that small children are in the same category as Adam and Eve were before they partook of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:3-5). If they have no knowledge of good and evil, it follows that they could not be condemned for wrongdoing. It might be said that they are in the state of innocence. Only when a child comes to realize the DIFFERENCE between good and evil, and then chooses the evil, is he guilty of sin and therefore condemned.

The Bible teaches that judgment will be based on an individual's OWN words, actions and thoughts. Numerous Scriptures bear this out. Among them are Matthew 12:36, 37; 16:27 and Romans 4:12. If a person is judged for his OWN conduct, how can he rightfully be condemned for the conduct of another, ANY other, even Adam's? The laws of our land are based indirectly upon the moral code contained in the Scriptures. And we all know that you cannot be fined, jailed or otherwise made to pay the consequences of another person's breach of the law. The only exception would be a parent who would be held liable for his small children's actions. But this is the very point we are making. A small child is not accountable for his actions before the law. Only accountable persons are punished. This rules out the "original sin" doctrine. It is neither Scriptural nor logical.

Another principle which refutes the "original sin" doctrine is that God's kingdom belongs to little children (Matthew 19:14, 15). Whether this passage should be translated "of such is the kingdom of heaven" or "to such belongs the kingdom of heaven," the inescapable point of it is that little children are INCLUDED in the kingdom of heaven. And if included, then how can they be excluded as condemned sinners? Some make use of this very passage to prove infant baptism, however. They infer that, if children are actually to be a part of God's kingdom, then they are eligible for baptism. But, notice, baptism is not even remotely alluded to in this passage. These children being brought to Jesus so he could lay hands on them and pray for them, NOT to be baptized. Why not? They didn't need to be baptized, with John's baptism, Christ's baptism, or any other. They were already acceptable to God as innocent. They were without the knowledge of good and evil. They were part of the kingdom! Earlier, in chapter 18 of Matthew, v. 3, Jesus used such small children as examples of conduct befitting those in the kingdom. Certainly, if small children were condemned, they could not have been used as examples of what people should be like IN ORDER TO BECOME A PART OF THE KINGDOM. According to Jesus' teaching, children are considered safe.

The Word of God teaches that man's spirit comes from God. God is said to be the Father of spirits (Hebrews 12:9). God forms the spirit in man (Zechariah 12:1). God gives the spirit to man (Ecclesiastes 12:7). With that clear teaching in mind, the question comes, "Does God produce that which is corrupt and condemned?" Throughout the Bible God is represented as the essence of good. Everything

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he is, does and makes is good. Whatever is corrupt is the result of man's doing. God placed a spirit in Adam which was pure and innocent. Adam and his wife disobeyed God and thereby became sinners. Small children, like Adam, not knowing good and evil, reach an age when they are able to discern right from wrong. When they choose the wrong they then have a corrupt spirit, in need of redemption and forgiveness. The spirit starts out good because it is given by a good God. It becomes bad when man seeks his will instead of God's.

If babies are born lost why do we not find a plan of salvation directed to infants for bringing them back to a right relationship with God? Those passages which require faith, repentance and confession cannot be obeyed by infants. There are no instructions to parents for seeing to it that their babies are baptized. In the absence of any provisions for the salvation of infants the only conclusion which can be arrived at Scripturally is that they ARE NOT LOST and therefore could not have been born sinners.

V. LET US EXAMINE SOME OF THE PRINCIPLE PASSAGES USED BY ADVOCATES OF ORIGINAL SIN TO "PROVE" THAT DOCTRINE.

Perhaps the most popular passage of Scripture used in favor of "original sin" is that found in Psalms 51:5. It says, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." It is asserted that this passage teaches that an infant inherits sin at birth. To begin with, IF anything such as this is taught by this passage, it is that the tiniest fetus, at the moment of conception, is a lost sinner! Absurd? It is reported that Catholic nurses, believers in the original sin idea, injected holy water into the womb of an expectant mother when it became evident that the unborn infant might not survive the birth. Why? Simply because they believe that the human fetus is conceived in sin and therefore needs to be "baptized" in order to be saved from its original sin.

A far more probable explanation of the passage in question is that David's mother was a sinner at the time of his conception. Consider the following sentences, which form exact parallels to the phrase in Psalms 51:5, "In sin did my mother conceive me." (1) "In exasperation did my teacher scold me." (Who was exasperated?) (2) "In anger did my mother whip me." (Who was angry?) (3) "In love did my wife kiss me." (Who did the loving?) (4) "In rage did my enemy shoot me." (Who was enraged?) I believe it is clear in the forgoing examples that it was the teacher, mother, wife and enemy that were responsible for the actions (exasperation, anger, love and rage) and not "me." The most that this passage could be pressed to teach about personal sin is that, since David's mother was a sinner, the PRONENESS TO SIN in David's life may be traced to his earliest existence. It certainly doesn't teach that David was a condemned sinner.

Another passage used to bolster the "original sin" doctrine is found in Exodus 20:5. In explaining the second of the ten commandments, God said that He would "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generations of them that hate me." It is asserted that this passage teaches that children are condemned because of the sin of their parents. First of all, this idea is directly opposed to the teaching of Ezekiel 18:1-4, 19-20. Furthermore, the curse of sin is said to

pass on only to the fourth generation. This is certainly a far cry from Adam to us, which would be many more than four generations. The meaning of the passage is not at all difficult to get. It simply emphasizes that the practice of idolatry in any one generation is apt to carry over to their children and grandchildren who, learning it from their forebearers, are likely to become idolaters also. This same idea may be seen in Jeremiah 16:11-13 and Lamentations 5:7. The truth is that every generation which hates God is guilty of iniquity and every generation which loves God and keeps His commandments will receive His lovingkindness.

Sinners are said to be "by nature children of wrath" in Ephesians 2:3. From this the conclusion has been drawn that every person is a condemned sinner at birth. Notice that this passage says nothing as to WHEN a person is considered a subject of God's wrath. The term children does not refer to babies or infants. The word "nature" has been suggested to mean that people are born sinners. But, "nature" can easily refer to the fact that mankind is UNIVERSALLY condemned because of its sin (see Romans 3:9-18). The characteristic which prevails among all men is that they are worthy of the wrath of God because of their sin. The TIME when they become so regarded is not alluded to in the slightest. A passage such as this carries the idea of "born in sin" only when a person has already subscribed to the "original sin" doctrine in advance. Besides, if a sinner can transmit condemnation to his offspring, why could not a Christian transmit salvation to his? The whole concept of transmission of guilt and condemnation to other persons has no foundation in reason, much less the Scriptures.

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AUTUMN SPLENDOR

*If you want to view the works of God
And His majesty supreme,
Take an autumn trip in the mountains
Where His beauty can be seen.*

*The hills around are blazing
With the reds and brilliant gold,
And it makes one feel just speechless
When the beauty we behold.*

*God spreads His colors lavishly
And fills our searching eyes,
For He knows man's love of beauty
So His glories He supplies.*

*To think a God so wonderful
Could ever care for me,
And has beauties even greater
When we step across eternity!*

—A. WELLS



"Fringe Benefits"

By DAVID KIRK, 121 IRON RIDGE ROAD, GALAX, VA. 24333

• *"And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye see not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you use to go a whoring: That ye may remember and do all my commands, and be holy unto your God" (Numbers 15:37-40).*

PERHAPS THIS IS where the term "fringe benefits" originated. God wanted Israel to REMEMBER and DO all the commandments he had given them. Israel would be blessed both materially and eternally by the "fringe trimmed with blue ribbon" if it reminded them to keep God's commandments.

Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles: These three annual religious gatherings were commanded by God to be kept by all males in Israel. They were reminders of what God had done for Israel. Passover brought to their minds how God had spared their first-born sons and had delivered them from bondage to Egypt. On Pentecost the first fruits of the land were offered to God, which was a reminder that the harvest was from the Lord. It also commemorated the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai. Tabernacles called to their attention that they had lived in tents during their stay in the wilderness as they journeyed toward the promised land.

The pot of manna which was placed in the Ark of the Covenant told Israel that God had miraculously fed them in the wilderness. And Aaron's rod which was kept in the same place as the pot of manna, warned Israel that God would not tolerate the sin of rebellion against God's appointed leaders.

When Joshua and those who journeyed with him had safely crossed the Jordan River, God instructed Joshua to take twelve stones from the river and deposit them on the side of the river as a sign to the children of Israel of how God had stopped the flow of the Jordan when it was at flood stage to allow them safe passage into the promised land on the dry bed of the river.

The Lord wanted his people to remember his law. He said: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

God wanted Israel to remember and to keep his laws. The fringe upon each and every garment offered great "fringe" benefits if it served its true purpose: reminded

Israel to keep God's law. It assured them of God's leadership and blessings in this life. Moses said: "...it shall be our righteousness, IF we OBSERVE to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded" (Deuteronomy 6:25).

The Lord has left some memorials in the New Testament which are designed to help us spiritually. They are possible "fringe" benefits to us if we properly observe them. The Lord's supper is a weekly reminder that Jesus died upon the cross for our sins, and that he is coming again for his own. "As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew (proclaim) the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Visitors present may see in the Lord's supper just what Christ means to every Christian.

The Lord's day is another weekly reminder. On each first day of the week Christians rejoice as they vividly call to mind that Jesus arose from the dead upon the first day of the week. The church also remembers that it was upon the first day of the week that the body of Christ (the church) had its beginning. Christians gather upon the Lord's day around the Lord's table to proclaim the Lord's death until he comes to receive the church unto himself.

Baptism is also designed to remind the Christian of some very important facts—first of all, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus from the tomb. Also, the sinners death to sin, burial with Christ in the water, and his resurrection from the watery grave to walk in newness of life. Frequently we need to call to mind our condition before we accepted the Christ and how through baptism we were brought into Christ where all spiritual blessings are found.

Through properly observing the Lord's supper each Lord's day, and by constantly remembering the change in relationship that was wrought in us when we were baptized into Christ for the remission of our sins, we will find some "fringe" benefits in our lives. We will have greater peace of mind, stronger assurance of hope, and our love for the Lord and righteousness will multiply. May we be or become "blue ribbon" Christians, honoring our Lord more perfectly each day, and growing more and more in his likeness as the day of his appearing draws ever nearer. □

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What God Can't Do

GOD CAN'T use a greedy, stingy, selfish man as an instrument for His glory. But He can use misfortune and poverty to bring us to our senses so that we will not trust in the world and its possessions.

God can't take a life that is filled with sin and make a vessel for honor and glory unless the sinner is willing and even determined to quit his evil ways. But God can and will pardon every transgression if the sinner will obey, and then, after cleansing, that person can be a useful and fruitful servant of the Lord regardless of the evil deeds of the past.

God can't use a lazy, indifferent, unconcerned child of God in glorious service to Christ and to humanity. But God can help a sincere, devoted Christian to become more useful, even though the Christian's talents are few and his background is humble, and God can enable all of us to live a very satisfactory life here in full expectation of heaven hereafter. —L. Diestelkamp □

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THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE (Continued from Page 4)

One final passage will be considered. The phrase in Romans 5:19, "many were made sinners," has been used to "prove" the idea of "original sin." It is asserted that, because of Adam's sin, all generations following him were "made" sinners automatically, without any act of their own volition. Notice that this passage does not state HOW people were made sinners. It doesn't say whether people were "made sinners" by being bom that way, imitating Adam, or because they possessed the physical appetites similar to Adam's which would invariably lead them into sin as soon as they became accountable for their actions. Consider the last half of that verse. It says that "through the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous." The obedience of Christ DID NOT make people righteous WITHOUT their PERSONAL choice. They simply had the opportunity to become righteous through their choice of Christ as their Saviour. The rest are made sinners through Adam's disobedience when they choose the wrong instead of the right as he did. In both cases the INDIVIDUAL WILL and RESPONSIBLE ACTION are vital factors in the person's spiritual destiny. Adam paved the way and set the example. Because we share with him the AWARENESS of right and wrong, and possess a PHYSICAL body which demands gratification, we too "are made" or become sinners. When? When we disobey God as he did. When are we made righteous? When we "obey the gospel" and thus receive the righteousness which comes through the merits of Jesus Christ's death on the cross. No original sin in that passage either.

CONCLUSION:

We have seen a number of Scriptural reasons why the doctrine of "original sin" is not Biblical. According to the very nature of sin, being a personal act, the guilt of it cannot be transmitted to another. The spiritual consequences for sinning, being condemnation, fall only on the person doing the sinning. Children are not capable of knowing good from evil according to the Bible. A person will be judged for his own, not another's, words and actions. Jesus taught that children are part of the kingdom, not aliens in need of being baptized into it. Since the spirit of man, the seat of all sin, was given by a pure God, it cannot be considered corrupt without indicting God with being a corrupter. If babies are lost, where does the Bible tell them what to do to be saved? There is no example of any baby being baptized.

"Original sin" passages are pressed into service in order to "teach" a doctrine already conceived and believed. Perhaps the basis for such a false teaching is to found in the fact that baptism is said in Scripture to be necessary for entering the kingdom (John 3:3-5). Someone may have said, "That means everybody, including our baby." In any event, baptism is only for the person who is guilty of personal sin, who believes wholeheartedly that Jesus can and will save him, who determines to forsake the life of sin, and upon confessing such faith, is immersed into the death of Christ for the forgiveness of his sins (See Romans 3:23; 6:2-4; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 3:19).

THE ORDINANCES OF CHRIST ARE NOT DENOMINATIONAL PROPERTY!

By Richard Snell, Lexington, Nebraska

JESUS CHRIST HAS all authority in heaven and on

earth (Matthew 28:18)! The ordinances of the LORD'S SUPPER and BAPTISM are his ordinances, not church ordinances. They have been ordained by him, and belong solely to him. His church merely has the stewardship of them. As steward and not owner, the church may not change, alter or substitute in any way. The ordinances must remain as he has authorized them, in form and purpose.

Is it not strange, therefore, that denominations think they may refer to Christ's ordinances as ordinances of the church (meaning, specifically, *their* church), and that the ordinances may vary from church to church? The Lord of the church does not look favorably upon such irresponsible stewardship! Men will honor the authority of Christ or be damned. God does not allow men to trifle with His sacred ordinances.

But men recklessly defend their "right" for one denomination to sprinkle water and call it baptism, and for another to "baptize" non-believers (even babes, in whom saving faith cannot reside, and from whose lips no confession of faith can be made), and for another to teach for doctrine the commandment of men that baptism is NOT for the remission of sins (see Acts 2:38).

These denominations of men (plants which the heavenly Father did not plant—see Matthew 15:13,14) seem to think also that "our church" has the right to hold to a form of frequency or purpose of the Lord's Supper other than that which is clearly set forth in the New Testament.

The imperative need of the times is for men of faith to honor the authority of Christ! Humble and intelligent men in the churches have both the RIGHT and the NEED to carefully examine the Scriptures—not to defend or excuse a denominational position, not to support a falsely assumed denominational "right" to do in "a certain way" things commanded by Christ—but to learn as exactly as possible just what it was that our Master commanded. Seminary training is not necessary for this greatly needed search by "church men." (In fact, theological training in a seminary may prove to be a decided hindrance, it having shut men's eyes to truth not in the denominational tradition). The Word of God is in our language and we are literate, educated people. Any needed research books are available. The man of educated open mind and honest God-fearing heart CAN learn and know the truth!

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31,32).

NO, the ordinances of Christ are not denominational property. They are HIS. We'll face him soon. Let us be ready. □

Why Not Be Just A Christian?



EXPLETIVES DELETED

Careless and Corrupt Conversation

• By **RICHARD GERINGSWALD**
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CONVERSATION is being demolished. The astronauts abroad Apollo 10 cursed when their moon ship went into a tizzy. The newspapers stated in comment, "A few Anglo-Saxon words uttered under stress, have changed the image of America's astronauts and taken some of the pressure off spacemen. The Apollo 10 astronauts broke the shackles, which have bound all astronauts since the first group was named 10 years ago, by turning the radio waves blue when they ran into trouble near the Moon."

Astronauts Eugene Cernan, John Young and Tom Stafford issued an apology after protest letters saying that that "was the kind of language you expect to see on the restroom wall." These letters were sent to Nixon and NASA while the crew was still in space.

The just recent Watergate Tapes from ex-President Nixon, when appearing in print, showed how foul-mouthed some of our leaders are with "expletives deleted" appearing countless times on each page, and the expletives that weren't deleted were bad enough.

Careless words, pass words, by words, shady words slang words and worse are on the market everywhere. Among those who feel no constant responsibility to God, people speak them freely in the office, factory, shop, store and school. Careless talk is part of the modern age. It is informal, light, easy, expressive of feelings, so people say, and so it gets excused.

In a two year study at a Chicago University, which involved 3,000 factory and construction workers, it revealed they peppered their speech with one word of profanity for every four of standard use. Of college students, these ranked one word of profanity in every 14 words spoken.

All such talk "must not so much as be mentioned among you, as that is the only course becoming in God's people; there must be no indecency, silly talk or suggestive jesting, for they are unbecoming. There should be thanksgiving instead" (Ephesians 5:3,4, Williams translation).

We wish to travel several avenues on this subject of careless and corrupt conversation.

I. FALSE REASONS FAVORING SWEARING

If you fight with your wife and use profanity, Psychologists say that this is good. They say that cursing is "a healthy substitute for violence and is as basic and vital to the ultimate health of the society as laughter and crying." If this is correct, a great many marriages are going

to last and the health of the nation is excellent indeed.

A certain comedian gave a lecture to a college campus upholding old fashioned ideals. During the following question period, a young lady asked if he did not think they were right in their fight for freedom to use four-letter words. He answered, appearing to agree, "Why of course!" They have forbidden us to use a three letter word G-O-D. If we don't stand up for our rights, soon they will ban the use of 'four-letter words'." The young audience roared its applause.

In Anaheim, California, junior and senior high students learn obscene language in the classroom. The students are encouraged to put sex questions into a box and the teacher regularly writes all obscene expressions on the board and they are fully explained. Co-ordinator of sex education, Mrs. Sally Williams, defends the practice of teaching obscene language as a means of enabling teachers and students to communicate on the subject of sex.

Civil liberties lawyers argue that sometimes a good round of cursing forestalls physical violence and shouldn't automatically be punished as a crime. They desire to withdraw the public cursing section of the Washington disorderly conduct statute of obscene or indecent language in any street.

One man gave the following reasons why he swore:

1. It pleases mother so much.
2. It is a fine mark of manliness.
3. It proves I have self control.
4. It indicates how clearly my mind operates.
5. It makes my conversation so pleasing to everybody.
6. It leaves no doubt in anyone's mind as to my good breeding.
7. It impresses people that I have more than an ordinary education.
8. It is an unmistakable sign of culture and refinement.
9. It makes me a very desirable personality among women and children in respectable society.
10. It is my way of honoring God who said, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

II. WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT CURSING

Exodus 20:7, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

Leviticus 19:12, "Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God."

Leviticus 24:10-16, The son of Shelomith was stoned for cursing God. God did not put up with nor have much patience with cursers.

Isaiah 45:9, "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!"

II Samuel 16:5, Shimei cursed David, and even though David forgave the man, he was later executed for disobedience.

Job 2:9, Job was exhorted by his wife to curse God and die. He refused.

(Continued on Next Page)

EXPLETIVES DELETED, CARELESS AND CORRUPT CONVERSATION (Continued from Last Page)

Matthew 26:74, Peter cursed and swore when he denied Christ. The best way to prove to the crowd that you are not a Christian is by cursing.

Colossians 3:8, "Put off all these...blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."

Ephesians 4:29, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth."

James 3:10, "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing; my brethren, these things ought not so be."

I Timothy 1:20, Two disciples Hymenaeus and Alexander were turned over to Satan that they might learn not to blaspheme.

II. MINCED OATHS AND OTHER MEANS OF SWEARING

A preacher was visiting a member of the church and in the course of the conversation he used a very strong but common slang expression. A small son immediately hopped down from the sofa and headed towards the bathroom and said, "I'll get the soap, mommy." The mother, embarrassed, refused his offer though thanking him. She explained to the preacher that the boy had the fresh taste of soap for using the expression he had just heard. Then the preacher was embarrassed.

Teachers of English grammar tell us that slang is the language of those who are ignorant or too lazy to use the proper word. People with small vocabularies use a lot of slang. Others have said, "Swearing is a crutch for conversational cripples."

Many Christians who would never dream of swearing or cursing will pepper their conversation with darn, golly, gosh, gee, good grief and doggone. These are really just substitutes for swearing. Many who would never take the Lord's name in vain by cursing are careless in the use of expressions like, "My God, Good Heavens, For God's Sake and Glory be."

Our children are listening and are building vocabularies by imitation. What are we teaching them? Ungodly people and new Christians are listening. Do they note a difference in your speech? Or are we as careless in our words as they are?

Webster defines "minced" as "To alter (an oath, etc.) to a milder or euphemistic form." Webster defines "euphemism" as a "Substitution of a mild or round-about word or expression for another felt to be too blunt or otherwise distasteful or painful. 2. A mild roundabout word or expression substituted for another to avoid giving offense or pain: 'The departed' is a euphemism for 'the dead'."

Webster defines the following.

1. Darn: "Damn: a euphemism. (dern)."
2. Dickens: "Devil: a euphemism."
3. Doggone: "Damn! Darn! a mild oath. To damn: a euphemism. Alter. of God damn, or dog on it."
4. Confound: "To damn: used as a mild oath."
5. Gee: "A euphemism for Jesus."
6. Golly: "Euphemistic of God."
7. Gosh: "Euphemistic of God."
8. Heck: "Euphemistic of hell."
9. Goodness: "God. Goodness knows."

"But I say unto you, swear NOT AT ALL... But let your speech be, Yea, yea: Nay, nay and WHATSOEVER IS MORE THAN THESE IS OF THE EVIL ONE" (Matthew 6:34,37).

Matthew 12:36,37, "But I say unto you, that every idle

word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

James 1:26, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

A few years back when I worked for Sears I was passing through the warehouse and one fellow named Lester pulled some drapery rods down on his head. He shouted under the pain, "Oh, pickles!" I asked him where he got that expression and he told me how as a teenager he was president of his church youth class. He was working on his car. The wrench slipped. His knuckles got it. He cursed. He didn't know that his preacher was visiting inside with his mother. The preacher came to the back screen door, poked his head out and said, "Pickles, Lester. Pickles." From that time on Lester "pickled" things instead of cursing them.

LET US as Christians give our speech a bath, bridle our tongues, and not be guilty on the judgment day when the books are opened and our every idle word is judged; and the Good Master looks at the record and blushing says, "Expletives deleted and your name is deleted from the Lamb's Book of Life." □

Mouths Must Be Stopped

• "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:10,11).

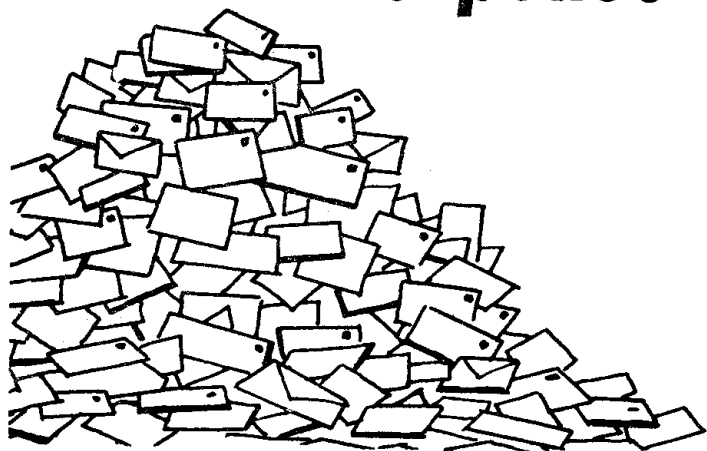
SOME PEOPLE may wonder why we preach and teach against the false doctrines of denominationalism (They say, "Why not just preach the gospel and leave others alone?").

In our text Paul says there are people whose mouths must be stopped! Why? Because they teach things which they ought not (verse 11). If people are wrong when they teach "once in grace, always in grace" (and they are wrong) then they are teaching things which they ought not, and their mouths must be stopped! If they are wrong (and they are) when they teach "justification by faith only" they are teaching things which they ought not and their mouths must be stopped. If they deny the virgin birth, the second coming, if they teach that Jesus was *only* a man, if they teach that the Lord's supper is not important, if they teach that God is pleased with denominations, then they are teaching things which they ought not, and *their mouths must be stopped!!!* Paul tells how to stop their mouths in verse 9. Sound doctrine! This is one reason why we preach against the false doctrines of human religion — mouths must be stopped! (Matthew 15:9; Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 22:19; James 2:19-26; Romans 6:3-5, 17, 18; Matthew 1:22, 23; John 1:1-14; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; Matthew 26:28; Galatians 5:19-21; I Corinthians 3:3, 4; Romans 8:6; I Corinthians 1:10-13). □

—By **LOWELL GREEN**
Rockwood, Tenn. 37854

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... Response



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(EDITOR'S COMMENTS: We are sending THE SWORD AND STAFF to several foreign countries. Some of these countries are very poor, and the government will not let money go out of the country. People have asked for THE SWORD AND STAFF, but were unable to send money. We have sent the paper to them anyway, someone else having to pay for it (namely, us). The letter above from India is one most recently received. Personally I do not know the man who sent the letter, but he considers the name of Jesus precious, and he would like to have a bundle of THE SWORD AND STAFF each mailing—as well as any other material we can afford to send him. If you would like to help back us financially in such cases as this, we would be very thankful. We have no resources except those that come through the mail from month to month. In fact, we operate by faith on a month to month basis. However, we do have a print shop, and with the necessary backing we can turn out badly needed gospel materials).

A HUNDRED THOUSAND SOULS A DAY

*A hundred thousand souls a day
Are passing one by one away
In Christless guilt and gloom.
Without one ray of hope or light
With future dark as endless night,
They're passing to their doom.*

*They're passing, passing fast away,
A hundred thousand souls a day
In Christless guilt and gloom.
O church of Christ, what will thou say
When in the awful judgment day
They charge thee with their doom?*

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

"CENTURIES AGO PLATO SAID THAT HE CARED NOT WHAT OTHERS TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS OF SOCIETY, BUT THAT IF HE COULD TEACH MUSIC, HE WOULD EVENTUALLY CONTROL THAT SOCIETY."

A PRAYER TO CLEAN HOUSE BY

LORD, I have been housecleaning. It's hard work to scrub, to polish, to wash and iron. But, Lord, what a satisfaction to see the windows sparkle, to hang clean curtains, to smell the cleanness.

Lord, help me to houseclean my soul... To cast out old prejudices, to discard outworn attitudes; to wash away old hurts and all the world's dust I've accumulated for so long. Let me face life clean and fresh, aware of my own weaknesses, but not guilt-ridden... More determined to overcome my own faults and more tolerant of others. Help me to be less selfish and more understanding. And may the winds of your Spirit blow through all the windows of my soul until my house is filled with love.

—Selected—

MURDER IN THE BALLROOM

JUDGE—Do you mean to tell me that man strangled a woman in a ballroom with more than 20 people present?

WITNESS—Yes, your honor, everybody thought they were dancing.

"I Don't Believe in Whipping Children!"



"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

HARRY RIMMER tells of an unpleasant experience he had with a rowdy boy. After repeated efforts to get him to behave had failed, he approached the boy's father explaining that his son was destroying property and making a terrible nuisance of himself.

The father listened, then shrugged his shoulders and said: "Well, I can't do anything with the little devil! One of these days he'll land in real trouble, and the law will handle him. He belongs in a reform school anyhow!"

Astonished, Rimmer said he wanted to say: "Generally speaking, a little devil would be the offspring of a big one!" But instead he questioned: "What do you mean, you can't do anything? The boy is 12 years old and weighs less than a quarter of your weight. You have a hair-brush, haven't you?"

The father glared at him and answered: "I don't believe in whipping children!"

"But you do believe," Rimmer retorted, "in letting them go to jail?"

The man walked away without replying, and Rimmer never saw him again. However, he did see the boy occasionally. The last time was when he was taken away to the State Reform School.

Considering the attitude of that father, it's evident that the court was forced to sentence the wrong culprit! That father did not truly love his son, for: "He that spar-eth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24).

While obedience may be produced primarily by patient teaching and careful guidance, almost every child needs a spanking on occasion. And the depth of a parents devotion to his child is at times measured by his willingness to inconvenience himself and inflict needed punishment, when every impulse cries out to "drop the matter and save yourself the trouble!" The loving parent heeds the Divine advice:

"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:13, 14).

David insisted that children are "as arrows" in the hand of a mighty man (Psalms 127:4). An arrow doesn't fly straight unless it is aimed straight. Neither does a child! —Joe R. Barnet

PLEASE RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION WHEN IT IS DUE—NO NOTICE WILL BE SENT. Thanks!

THE STRENGTH YOU FAIL TO USE

THE STORY is told of a small boy trying very hard to lift a heavy stone. His father, happening by, and noticing the son's failure, said to him, "Are you using all your strength?"

"Yes, I am!" the boy exclaimed impatiently.

"No," the father replied, "you are not. You haven't asked me for help."

We, who are Christians, are said to be the sons of God, and yet there are times when we need the help of someone to lift up our burdens, but we fail to call upon our heavenly Father for strength to carry our burdens. Peter wrote, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). Christians ought to use all their strength by asking help from their heavenly Father and Almighty God.

—SELECTED.

COURTESY

ONE OF the most neglected flowers in the garden of Christian character is courtesy. This seemingly insignificant virtue can determine the difference in happiness and sorrow, between heaven and hell. Good manners are a real ornament, and are worth more in winning favor than the finest clothes or jewels ever worn. Coarseness will lock doors and close hearts, but politeness will cause the doors of home and heart to open wide... There is no society where smiles, pleasant looks, kindness, gratitude, and graciousness are not welcomed. The little courtesies which form the small chains of life may not appear important but they become a treasure as they accumulate.

—Selected □

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— JACK HAMM

Who is THE ANTICHRIST?

By William Pile
Los Angeles, California

THE ANTICHRIST is to religious publishers what sex is to secular publishers. It is a sensational and mystical subject that sells! People are thinking about the end of the world, and The Antichrist is usually associated with that subject.

Who got all this uproar started? Surprisingly, it was a rather quiet, unsensational man named John. Here's what the apostle John said: "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour... Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son... And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world... For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist" (I John 2:18, 22; 4:3; II John 7).

Who is The Antichrist? Just about every infamous historical figure has had that name pinned on him: Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, the Pope. Current speculation is somewhat diverse because there is no current World Enemy No. 1.

WHAT REALLY IS ASTOUNDING AND SENSATIONAL about this whole subject is that there is no "The Antichrist"! The above verses are all the Bible contains on the subject of the antichrist and they certainly don't point to some single individual, some Great Deceiver.

Who did John say was the antichrist? He said the antichrist is anyone who denies that Jesus Christ is who He and His Father said He was. The word John used means "against Christ."

THERE ARE MANY ANTICHRISTS according to I John 2:18. "Many antichrists have arisen," he told early Christians. There is a "spirit of the antichrist" he told them, an influence which is against Christ" (I John 4:3).

"BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BEAST OF REVELATION 13?" someone asks. It has long been a popular pastime to apply John's term "the antichrist" to the beast he described in Revelation. But why didn't he tie the two together? Whatever or whoever the beast of Revelation 13 is, it is not The Antichrist, i. e., some single arch enemy of Christ. It is obviously antichrist, but not The Antichrist. If it were, John surely would have so identified it.

Hal Lindsey, in *The Late Great Planet Earth*, says the beast of Revelation 13 is The Antichrist, but not once in an entire chapter called "The Future Fuehrer" does he

refer to John's description of the antichrist in I John. Instead, he took the liberty of appropriating the name The Antichrist to the beast.

"The man of lawlessness" of II Thessalonians 2:3 and 4 has been identified by the sensationalists as The Antichrist too. For sure he is antichrist, but John said there were many antichrists already arisen in his time, so he must be considered one of many antichrists.

THE GREAT ANTICHRIST FRAUD

If Satan, particularly through Bible teachers and writers, can get you looking for The Antichrist, some Super World Deceiver, you'll miss the real antichrists who are all around. You'll miss the Christ-deniers who occupy seminary professorships, editorships, pulpits, and even positions of leadership in church organizations. You'll overlook their pernicious destruction of Christianity. While you watch for some arsonist who might burn your house down, the termites have destroyed it!

Antichrists deny salvation through the shed blood of Jesus. Will you believe them? or the Scriptures? Read Revelation 1:5, believe it and then, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16). □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MARK TWAIN, AND MARRYING IN THE LORD

MARK TWAIN, the great American humorist, was deeply in love with Olivia L. Langdon. "Livy," as he called her, was reared in a Christian home and possessed pronounced religious convictions. Mark, in spite of his love for Livy, was far from being an ardent believer. And yet her Christian ideals seemed to have influenced him.

They were married. The humorist regularly asked a blessing upon the food at the meals and joined in family worship. But this did not last. One day Mark burst out: "Livy... I don't believe in the Bible."

Gradually Mark Twain's unbelief exerted a deadening influence on his wife's spiritual life. Later, in a period of deep sorrow he tried to strengthen her with the words: "Livy, if it comforts you to lean on the Christian faith, do so."

"I can't... I haven't any," she replied.

This is not an isolated case. The evil of mixed marriages is taking a regular toll, though it does not make the daily headlines.

What happened to Oliva L. Langdon may happen to YOU! —MAIL BOX MINISTER □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE TRUTH SLIPPED OUT THAT TIME

A SMALL BOY was on the witness stand in an important lawsuit. The prosecuting attorney cross-examined him, then delivered, he thought, a crushing blow to the testimony. "Your father has been telling you how to testify, hasn't he?"

"Yes." The lad didn't hesitate with the answer.

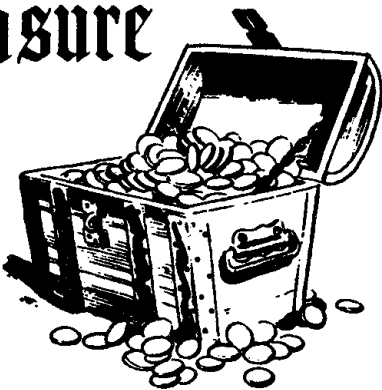
"Now," said the lawyer triumphantly, "just tell us how your father told you to testify."

"Well," the boy said modestly, "Father told me the lawyers would try to tangle me in my testimony, but if I would just be careful to tell the truth, I could repeat the same thing every time." —Minister's Monthly □

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