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Questions Youth Are Asking Today

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Questions Youth Are Asking Today

Answered by Mervyn Maxwell

REACTIONS TO LONG HAIR

When the young man asked about long hair (in the January "Signs") and said Jesus Christ wore long hair, why didn't you quote to him 1 Corinthians 11:14, 15? I have found that anything you want to know is in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 11:14, 15, RSV, says, "Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her pride?"

Unfortunately, "long" is a relative term, and we don't know how long "long" is in this verse. The principle seems clear, however. Women may to great advantage wear their hair long, but men should not wear theirs in such a way that it resembles a woman's long hair.

ANONYMOUS CONFESSING

Until recently I have had very unkind feelings in my heart toward one of my teachers without really having any reason to. My attitude has now changed as I have become better acquainted with him and I see him in a different light. I believe we should confess our sins not only to God but also to any person we have been mean to. Do you think it would be all right if I wrote a letter and didn't sign my name?

I agree that we should apologize to people we have wronged. "Confess your faults one to another."

James 5:16. It's the least we can do to make things right.

But have you thought about your teacher's reaction when he gets your anonymous confession and learns that someone has bitterly disliked him all semester? I think that in a state of distress his mind

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Would you like to ask Mervyn Maxwell to help you find an answer? If so, send your question to

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"Signs of the Times"
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will go through the names of his students wondering if it was this one or that whom he unwittingly offended. Thus in getting a load off your own mind you will be putting a heavy one on his.

If you have seriously undermined his influence among the other students, tell him you're sorry or at least write a manly note and sign your name. If, however, the matter has remained within your own mind, it is enough to tell God you're sorry and ask Him to forgive you. 1 John 1:9.

P.S. Teachers can take quite a few letters telling them they're appreciated. These don't have to be

signed. Then the teacher can think everyone in the class likes him!

CORN FLAKES AGAIN

I do not wish to refute the authority of a nutritionist. In fact, when I read what you said about whole wheat cereal in the December "Signs" I thought it made good sense. But then I read something else that said that many cereals which claim to be whole-grain—and the article specifically mentioned corn flakes—aren't really whole-grain at all. When is whole wheat whole wheat and when isn't it? Are corn flakes really good for you?

The portion of my answer in the December Signs which I confirmed with a nutritionist was the part which asserted that whole-grain cereals, when eaten with milk, are not to be regarded as providing only empty calories but are a useful source of amino acids for protein building besides being a source of starches and of vitamins and minerals.

All cereals which claim on the package to be "whole-grain" have to be whole-grain by law, and my statement fitted these. Shredded wheat is a whole-grain cereal. So are Ruskets flakes and Ruskets biscuits manufactured by the Loma Linda Food Company. So too are some others.

Corn flakes as originally manufactured by Dr. J. H. Kellogg were a whole-grain cereal. Today they

are not. I erred in giving the impression that they are. Thank you for the correction.

MESSY LITTLE SISTERS

I have to share my bedroom with my little sister. It's awful. She's so messy! She never picks up her junk but leaves it lying all over the place. I've told her a million times it isn't fair. Mother doesn't seem to help. If you told her off, maybe she'd listen to you.

OK, Little Sister: Be a good sport. You've got only one big sister. She's real nice to you sometimes. Why not be nice to her?

And now for you, Big Sister! She's your little sister. You're bigger than she is. Why not be nice to her? Here are some things you could do:

1. Go on telling her she has to do it. This way you'd go on getting nowhere—and that would never do.

2. Pick up for her. This way you'd have a tidy room (and a lazy sister).

3. Offer to help her pick up. This way you would have a tidy room and she would see that you were nice.

4. Make a game of it. Put up a weekly chart with spaces for daily stickers when she tidies up. Help her get started. Six stickers a week and you promise to play her favorite game with her for half an hour. This way you'd have a tidy room, she'd see you were nice, and you'd get to know your little sister as a friend.

MENUS OR MEALS?

My pastor tries to preach Christ. He tries too hard. He talks about righteousness by faith until I wish he would think of something else. First it's justification, then it's sanctification, and the next week it's perfection. He reads from the Bible, "Be ye therefore perfect," and then he says that nobody can be really perfect. People who are "trying to do their best" are perfect enough. It doesn't sound very perfect to me! I don't have any questions. I'm complaining.

Many of us preachers would rather be nutritionists than cooks. Like nutritionists explaining diets, we would rather define Christian

theories than go into the kitchen and cook up a good, digestible meal of well-prepared Scriptural truths.

I'm coming to think that we ministers should preach all the beautiful and meaningful things we can about Jesus—and then let Him go to work. By beholding we become changed. See 2 Corinthians 3:18. If we preach only the theory of the thing, our hearers may become good theoreticians; but to get them to be real Christians, we must preach the real Christ.

The best way to get a boy to grow is not to explain endlessly how proteins and carbohydrates become glycogen and adenosine triphosphate (though this information can be helpful), but to set a plate of steaming food in front of him that he can't resist eating. I am becoming increasingly convinced that righteousness by faith is just this: It is what happens to a person when he thinks appreciatively about Jesus.

"INFANTLY BAPTIZED"

I don't agree 100 percent with you or your answer to the person who wrote "Born Again When?" You make it sound as though you believe you are born with the Spirit when you are infantly baptized. . . . John 3:3 says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and in verse 5 Jesus says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Thank you for not disagreeing 100 percent! (Some people do.)

I really don't believe children can be born again by being "infantly baptized." I really don't believe in infant baptism. The Bible says that people are to be "taught" before they are baptized, and that in baptism they are to "die to sin," impossible things for mere babies. See Mark 16:16; Romans 6. On this we evidently agree.

Baptism and being born again don't always happen at the same time. Some people are baptized to please their pastors, or to make an impression on their relatives, without ever being born again. On the other hand, don't you know people who "found Christ" and became

converted Christians before they asked a minister to baptize them?

The margin of the RSV says "born from above" instead of "born again," and this translation is closer to the Greek original.

My point was that if parents will lead their children to love Jesus and ask Him to forgive their naughty ways and to help them be good, Jesus will surely send the Holy Spirit to mold their characters even while they are still very little. All through their childhood they will be "growing in grace."

They will never need to know a sudden conversion to Christ, because they will always have known Him.

WHO'S THE HYPOCRITE?

The people in my church are hypocrites. They talk pious and holy, but they sure don't put their lives where their mouths are. I know some who owe big bills and aren't even trying to pay them. Two older couples you'd think should know better are about to get divorced. And so on. What's the matter with them?

When you visit a hospital you expect to find people who are sick enough to know they need medical help. The church is a hospital for people who are evil enough to know they need spiritual help. So you ought to expect to find sinners in the church.

Hypocrites are people who claim to be good but who aren't really trying to be. To tell the difference between the people who are failing in spite of trying, and those who are failing because they're not even trying, requires a pretty highly programmed people-sniffer that can run a chemical analysis on people's motives. Jesus called it "judging" and added that genuine non-hypocrites don't judge. Matthew 7:1, 2.

So—some church-related sinners are genuine, certified hypocrites. Others simply have tired blood. They need a refill of the spiritual vitamins that put spring in their step when they first found Christ years ago. And others are ordinary sinners who simply need more time to recuperate from their sinful habits.