

A High Sense of Honor

J.R. Miller:

Everything that is beautiful in life, should be most earnestly coveted by every young person. Youth is the time for the building of character. What we expect to be when we are out in the world in mid-life â€” we must begin to be when we are in school. If we would have a good name at forty â€” we must do only worthy and honorable things through the years that lead to forty.

Nothing is too small to take into the account in the making up of life. We may say that there is no harm in this, that that is not wrong, that we would be foolish to care for such little things as moralists insist upon. But "trifles make perfection." It is oftentimes the little blemishes that mar the beauty of the character; and the little "no harms" that dim the luster of the character. "Dead flies cause the ointment of the perfumer to send forth a stinking savor."

There are many little things which seem not to be sinful, not distinctly immoral â€” which yet indicate a low moral tone. It is very easy to grow lenient with one's self, to relax the severe demands of one's conscience, and to drop into little self-indulgences which not many years past, one could not have been induced to admit into one's life.

Many men find themselves doing things in their mid-years, which in their young manhood they could not have consented to do. There is need, therefore, for the cultivation among young people of a high sense of honor, and the maintenance of a lofty standard of life and conduct.

There are many temptations to things which are not altogether honorable. Every such temptation should be met with resolute firmness. Only the sternest and most rigorous self-discipline, will keep one's life up to a high standard in this regard. It is easy to think that what is conventional in conduct, is good enough, being as good as other people are. But we must take no lower standard than absolute perfection. We must set our watches by the sun of God's Word â€” not by any other person's watch.

A high sense of honor would make it impossible for one to do anything petty or small, to speak unkindly of a friend, or to repeat a confidential conversation or anything told in confidence.

This law of honor applies to all that one may learn of a family in which one has been a guest. There may have been little occurrences in the household life, which it would be easy to gossip about outside. Sometimes even in excellent homes, there are small infelicities at table, discussions which grow warm, differences of opinion about this or that. There may be family peculiarities, or little habits which seem strange. No one can be a guest for a few days in any home, without seeing or hearing something which it would be easy to talk about and criticize. But this is a case in which a sense of honor forbids any mention outside of what one may have heard or seen. A guest in a home is received in confidence; and the acceptance of the hospitality seals one's lips and forbids any comment or criticism, or the rehearsal of anything that would in the slightest way reflect badly on the character of the home or the home-life.

There are many other applications of this principle. Too often there is a lack of highest honor in FRIENDSHIP. There are many who are not careful in speaking of their friends in their absence, who join too readily in criticism of them â€” when a fine sense of honor would lead them to speak words of defense. There is no truer test of friendship, than the way one speaks of another behind the other's back.

Another mark of honor in friendship is loyalty when it costs something to be loyal. Our friend is in need of help, which we can give â€” but only at much personal sacrifice. True love always serves. God so loved â€” that he gave. Love always gives â€” and the giving is the measure of the loving. Christ loved and served unto the uttermost. What we will do or suffer for one we love â€” is the measure of our loving. Too many friendships are found lacking, when there is need for deed, as well as word.

A word may be said about honor in MONEY matters. There are some good people who are very negligent in paying their debts. The borrowing propensity is too much indulged. They are always getting loans of little amounts from friends and neighbors. They need the money only until tomorrow; but they forget, or at least fail, to return it. Young people should resolutely determine that in all such matters, they will maintain the highest honor. As far as possible, they should "owe no man anything," keeping out of debt absolutely. And if they have occasion to ask a favor, they should repay it at the hour they promised to do it. In business a man's note going to protest, hurts his commercial standing, perhaps leads to his downfall among men. When a man's word goes to protest, although it is only in a matter of five cents or a postage-stamp â€” harm has been done to his

reputation.

There is need, too, for a fine sense of honor in the handling of the money which belongs to others. Almost every society has a treasurer — often a young person. The amount of money in hand may never be large; but the honor required in the treasurer is the same, however small the sum that is held in trust.

Sometimes there is a temptation to use the money in one's own affairs, as there is no present need for it in the society, and will be no call for it for a time. There is not the slightest thought of appropriating the funds for any but temporary use; when the society needs them, they will be paid out of one's own pocket. But there have been cases when the money thus used, could not be returned when it was called for.

Sometimes, too, money held in the hands of a treasurer is allowed to pass out to help a friend, another member of the family perhaps, with the assurance that when it is required it will be returned. There have been cases of this kind in which serious trouble has occurred because the money could not be repaid.

But whether there is trouble or not, the question of honor remains unchanged. We have no right ever to borrow or to lend from trust funds in our hands for any purpose whatever. Such funds are sacred, and should be kept inviolable.

Thus in every department of life, we should set as our standard the highest sense of honor in all our conduct, and in all our relations to others. God desires truth in the inward parts, and that truth should show itself without blemish or spot in every word and act.

It was said of Sir Isaac Newton, by those who knew him most intimately, that he had the whitest soul they had ever known. His heart was set ever upon finding out and telling others the simple, honest, straightforward truth about any subject with which he had to do. No selfish thought, no hidden motive, came in to lead him to vary in the smallest particular from the truth. Those who live thus will honor God, will win for themselves an honored reputation, and will bless the world.