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The Shining Light[®]

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Finger Marks




Some time ago, a gentleman residing at Cambridge employed a mason to do some work for him, and, among other things, to whiten the walls of one of his chambers. This thin whitening is almost colorless till dried. The gentleman was much surprised, on the morning after the chamber was finished, to find on the drawer of his bureau, standing in the room, white finger marks.

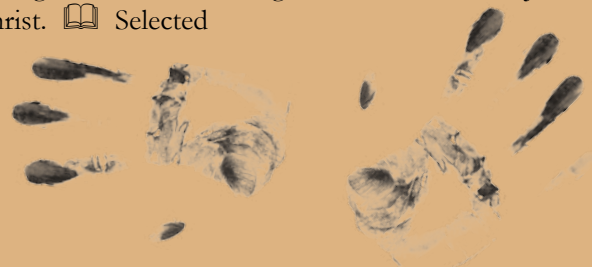
Opening the drawer, he found the same marks on the articles in it, and also on a pocket-book. An examination revealed the same finger marks on the contents of the wallet, which proved exclusively that the mason, with his wet hands, had opened the drawer, searched his wallet, which contained no money, and then closed the drawers, without once thinking that any one would ever know it. The thin whitening which chanced to be on his hand did not shew at first, and he probably had no idea that twelve hours' drying would reveal his attempt at depredation. As the job was concluded on the afternoon the drawer was opened, the man did not come again, and to this day does not know that his acts are known to his employer.

Children, beware of evil thoughts and deeds! They are all finger-marks, which will be revealed at some time. If you disobey your parents, or tell a falsehood, or take what is not your own, you make sad finger-marks

on your character. And so it is with any and all sin. It defiles the character: it betrays those who engage in it by the marks it makes on them. These marks may be almost, if not quite, colorless at first; but if they should not be seen during any of your days on earth—which is not at all likely—yet there is a day coming in which all finger-marks, or sin stains on the character, “will be made manifest.”

Never suppose that you can do what is wrong without having a stain made on your character. It is impossible. If you injure another, you, by that very deed, injure yourself. If you disregard a law of God, the injury is sadly your own. Think of it, ever bear it in mind, children, that every sin you commit leaves a sure mark on yourselves.

Your characters should bear a coating of pure truth. Let truthfulness ever be manifest. Beware of sin, “and be sure your sin will find you out”; for it makes finger marks, which, even should they not be seen by those around you on earth, will yet be seen, to your condemnation, at the bar of God, unless washed out through faith in the atoning blood of our Savior Jesus Christ.  Selected



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Sin's Corruption.

Sis Kathy Loewen

Sin. Such a small word, but what depth of meaning it has. It means separation from our God. It refers to all things hideous, evil and revolting. Sin has done so much damage. It has shattered countless lives, ruined many prospects, and corrupted innumerable souls. From the days of Adam and Eve until now, sin has polluted mankind.

But God has not left us without a cure! "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Zech. 13:1. This blessed fountain still atones for sin today! And I ponder, what was it that made it available to us? The answer is love. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Jn. 15:13. No man took it from Him, but Jesus laid His own life down for us. John 3:16 informs us that God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son. Heaven's very best was sacrificed so that we could be reconciled to God. No pain was spared. Amazing love! To what shall we liken such immense love? None other can compare. We can safely conclude that there is no one that loves us, loves you, more than God does. Jesus Christ proved His boundless love to all of mankind, without reserve. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." 1 Pet. 3:18. It does not prove that all will in fact be saved, but it proves that the plan of salvation is suited to meet all the evils of the fall of man. Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and it is offered to all without distinction.

Adam Clarke wrote, "What must sin be in the sight of God, when it required such abasement in Jesus Christ to make an atonement for it, and undo its influence and malignity!" I implore all those still entangled in the deception of sin: flee from it like from a fiery serpent! Fly to the Savior for refuge and forgiveness, He can wash away every trace of wickedness. 📖



The Corn Seedling

A rush of fresh spring air swept across Sister Anna's face as she knelt in the freshly tilled dirt of her garden. The winter was past and the promise of summer and a bountiful harvest of vegetables at the end of it made planting one of her favorite jobs.

As she prepared the soil she suddenly noticed a tiny plant off to one side of the garden. A corn seedling! She was excited to see the volunteer plant pop up from last year's corn crop.

"I will not pull that up. This plant will have a head start and I will have an early ear of corn to eat." So her thoughts went as she carefully worked around the little plant on this fine spring day. And so her thoughts continued as she carefully worked around the little plant all summer long.

The little plant became a big plant. It was always ahead of the rest of the corn crop, growing straight and tall and strong in its own separate corner of the garden, far away from the rest of the corn. It tasseled, the shiny, silky, green hairs eventually turning brown as a sign that the corn was nearly ready to be eaten.

Daily, Sister Anna eyed the fat cob on the stalk, imagining the delicious taste of that first ear of corn. She imagined herself munching on it, with melted butter and salt running down her chin in rivulets.

The day finally came when she went to the garden to harvest her prized ear.

She broke off the cob and pulled back the husk.

No corn. What!? With a gasp of dismay she tried to take in what her eyes were telling her. There was no corn on the cob. Not one single kernel on that big, fat cob. Her mind reeled. It had all been a waste of time. The space the plant took up, the tender care she had given it. All to no avail.

In the days and weeks that followed, Sister Anna thought often of that lonely corn stalk. It had looked so good. So strong and beautiful in its own little corner. But, when the time of the harvest came, there was nothing profitable on that plant.

She came to realize that one of the main reasons was its isolation. In order for corn to do well it must have nutrients and pollination from other corn plants. It also needs the shelter of surrounding plants to keep its shallow roots from being plucked up by summer storms.

Sister Anna learned a very important lesson about community that day. Just like that stalk of corn needed all the other corn plants in the garden to help it be healthy and productive, so Christians need one another. We cannot be isolated and do well on our own. We must be a part of the community of God. 📖

By Sis. Verna Bontrager



Plants

Our earth would be desolate without plants.

Fill in the blank with the proper plant.

1. Jesus told us to remember the _____. They are clothed better than Solomon.
Matthew 6:29
2. _____ and _____ grew in Adam's garden after the curse. Genesis 3:18
3. "All flesh is as _____," cried Isaiah. Isaiah 40:6
4. What kind of seed did Jesus liken the kingdom of heaven to? Luke 13:19
5. Ruth gleaned _____ in Boaz's field. Ruth 2:17
6. Jonah sat under a _____ vine. Jonah 4:6-10
7. Rahab hid the spies under stalks of _____. Joshua 2:6
8. Jesus is the _____ and we are the branches. John 15:1
9. Moses' mother made an ark of _____ to float him in the water. Exodus 2:3
10. Isaiah said the desert would blossom as a _____. Isaiah 35:1



Jonah and the Whale— *Or was it a fish?*

By Sis. Crystal Keim

*“Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah.
And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.”
Jonah 1:17*

Have you ever wondered how a fish could swallow a person whole? I mean, maybe if the person got chomped into several chunks, but swallowing them whole? And that person living to see the light of day? Unbelievable!, right?

The largest fish known to man is called the whale shark. There is an account of a disobedient prophet who was, er, bitten, no—eaten—no—let’s just say he was thrown overboard and suddenly everything went black. He realized he was inside of a fish’s mouth! Now, the whale shark knows from experience that it can’t technically chew up its food and that its throat is only 3 to 4 inches in diameter, so if it accidentally gets the wrong thing in its mouth, it knows that the best course of action is to spit it back out (sigh of relief!). It doesn’t look like this is the fish that swallowed Jonah, does it?

Another possibility is the great white shark. It can grow

to be up to 15 to 20 feet long, with its mouth opening 3 feet wide! While the largest sharks have the ability to swallow a man whole, they usually take a “test bite” of their prey. Great whites can turn their stomachs inside out to get rid of garbage and bones, etc. This one might be a candidate for the fish who swallowed Jonah, but let’s consider a couple more options.

The Hebrew word translated fish in Jonah 1:17 means “sea creature.” It could mean fish, or it could mean something else, like a whale. But whales are classified as mammals, not fish. Consider this: In 1735, a man named Carolus Linnaeus published a classification of animals in which he listed whales under the category of fish! Pretty much everyone at that time thought whales were fish. It was not until 1756 that Linnaeus, in a revised edition, classified whales with the mam-



mal family. The King James version of the Bible was printed in 1611–145 years before whales were officially recognized as mammals. With these facts in mind, let's study a few whales.

The blue whale is possibly the largest animal that ever lived. Could this be the sea creature that swallowed Jonah? Its throat is almost a foot in diameter. Maybe if Jonah was very skinny... But the blue whale doesn't even live in the Mediterranean Sea, which is where Jonah had his adventure. All other whales, while they may have monstrous mouths, have teeny tiny throats! All other whales, except one, that is...

The sperm whale has a very large mouth and a very large throat—24 inches of throat! Get your mom's tape measure from her sewing cabinet and measure your dad across the back of his shoulders. If he is less than 24 inches, he could be swallowed by a whale.

But are sperm whales found in the Mediterranean Sea? Yes! There are pods of them living near the coast of Greece. Adding to the evidence, sperm whales are famous for vomiting (look up Jonah 2:10). They do this to get rid of indigestible items like squid beaks (and disobedient prophets?).

What do you think swallowed Jonah? A great white shark? A sperm whale? Or something else? 📖



Wonderful World

Great, wide, beautiful, wonderful world,
With the wonderful water around you curled,
And the wonderful grass upon your breast,
World, you are beautifully dressed.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree—
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the tops of the hills.

You friendly earth, how far do you go,
With the wheat fields that nod and the rivers that flow,
With cities and gardens and cliffs and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of miles?

Ah! you are so great, and I am so small,
I hardly can think of you, world, at all,
And yet, when I said my prayers today,
A whisper within me seemed to say:

“You are more than the earth,
Though you are such a dot!
You can love and think,
And the earth cannot.”

—William Brighty Rands