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## The Right Books

By Mrs. Paul E. King

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Kari Louise tripped lightly up the steps to the library, the list of books needed for completing her theme held securely in her hand. A light snow sifted out of the skies and powdered her dark shining hair, giving her a sort of glittery-halo look. Lifting her face and allowing the frosty-cold flakes to land on her cheeks, she laughed softly, cupping her hands at the same time and trying to capture as many of the tiny crystals as possible. But they melted almost as quickly as they landed and the young woman smiled, thankful that the trees, the bushes and the cold earth could retain and hold the beautiful white stuff even if her warm hands couldn't.



She would read only the purest and best, Kari decided.

She entered the library with a bit of reluctance, loving the beauty of the snow and the early twilight and hating to leave it. Once inside, however, she became the diligent student and excellent scholar which she had ever been, and she set to work with a will and fixed determination. Life consisted more of work, she realized, than of play and leisure, and she meant to continue on through life doing everything she did as unto the Lord and with all her might. If there was anything her godly parents despised, it was the person who became a spiritual and physical drone, and did nothing but seek after pleasure and ease.

Going down the list of books needed, Kari soon found what she was looking for and, with her arms loaded, she hurried to a secluded spot and put the books carefully down on the table. Then, as always, it happened again; she became overpowered by the lure of literature.

Irresistibly drawn to the small, neat things called words, she was soon totally and completely lost in what she was reading. How inviting were the words and how tantalizing! They cried out to be read, and she read them.

Truly, (she thought as she read) she inhabited a world in which knowledge was multiplying so rapidly that--like M.S. Williams had written--even the encyclopedia had to field a small army to keep abreast of the copious flow of information.

Approximately 800 contributors, authenticators, reviewers, editors, artists, researchers, and support personnel had joined forces to update the year's annual edition of the World Book Encyclopedia, she remembered having read. All this at a cost of \$2 million to revise more than 5,000 pages in the book's 22-volume set.

The snowballing accumulation of information, the author had stated, had demanded a whole new technology, a means by which to store information in small space and to make it possible to retrieve it quickly.

Kari smiled as she mentally recalled the article. She was thankful beyond any expression of words that her beloved and much-treasured, much-used Bible needed no updating and no changing. Not that men hadn't tried to change and alter and update it--like the popular World Book Encyclopedia. They had, and they did. But God's Word was just as relevant for her day and age as It had been for the saints and prophets and priests and sages of centuries past. It was still the beginning and ending--the Alpha and the Omega--and it would abide forever and ever, for "the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

As she read, a tinge of sadness overwhelmed her for those of her acquaintance who literally loathed reading. A multiplicity of books in her beloved America seemed to have dulled the appreciation of the masses for something which relatively few people around the world could enjoy. Sadder still, many in foreign countries could not even read literature if they had it, or were it available to them, she mused in silent contemplation

Taking notes, Karl's eyes fell on a book near the far end of the table at which she was seated. Eager to find out what it contained between its two covers, she brought the book to where she had been sitting and opened it. The title seemed innocent enough and since there was no preface as to its contents, she began reading at the first page

To say that the author knew how to use words was an understatement, she thought as she read and was soon caught up in what he was writing. Midway through the twenty-fifth page a bell sounded its warning somewhere inside her heart. Something was not right, it seemed to alert her.

For a moment, Kari put the book aside; then, deciding to do skip-reading, she turned to a page farther into its pages. Immediately the warning bell inside her sounded off--loudly and clearly. This was no mere figment of her imagination, she recognized

instantly. It was God the Holy Ghost alerting her to the danger of reading the wrong thing--regardless of the author's skill at writing. Quickly she closed the book.

"Oh, there's my book!" A male voice exclaimed across her shoulder "I see you were interested in it, too. Quite a writer, isn't he?" the young man added, stepping up beside Kari's chair and retrieving the book off the table

"Kari's cheeks blushed scarlet. "He's excellent with words," she admitted quickly, "but something's all wrong with his writings."

"How's that?" the tall young man asked, sitting down on the edge of the long table, his handsome face wearing a cynical smile.

"I detect much error, and mockery at Christianity and God's true church, in that book" The man tapped his fingers on the edge of the table, stalling for time. Then, looking Kari squarely in her face, he said, "I find myself believing exactly like the author believes There is nothing to religion Nothing! It's not relevant for our age. Frankly, it's outdated and archaic and it doesn't work Look at the churches in our city--one on every corner in some areas. And what have they done to better things? Nothing Absolutely nothing!

"The author is right; we must begin focusing our attention upon the science of higher learning and make an in-depth study of man's basic needs and then go from there You spoke of 'God's true church' What did you mean by that? Every church claims its teaching is the right way; and, in many instances, each declares there is no other church preaching the truth but its own. Something's wrong; it doesn't take a man with super-intelligence to know this or to recognize the error and the fallacy of the teaching. Why can't there be just one church . . . one central meeting place in the city? Look at the waste of money on the elaborate church buildings here in our city alone. It's a shame."

Kari pushed her reference book aside and stood to her feet. "I detect the same cynicism in you as I detected in the book," she said, sounding sad and appalled. "Frankly, I'm sorry I read even the few pages I did. But I'm thankful for God's warning bell in my heart, and that I obeyed the warning and ceased reading any farther."

"Afraid of absorbing its truth, I presume," the young man exclaimed with a wicked smile.

Kari sighed. "I am a believer in the Word of God . . . the Bible," she declared candidly and without preamble, "and in It, I am warned to beware of 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' And too, I am instructed to think only upon those things which are pure and true and honest and upright and lovely and..."

"That's what I mean!" the young man exploded, gesticulating wildly with his hands and arms. "It's not relevant for our day and our age. It just isn't! Who can think of such

things when everywhere there is nothing but hate and lust and strife and trouble? It's an utter impossibility. I know; I once tried the Christian way. I couldn't live it and I..."

Kari took a step closer to the young man. "You can't live it within yourself," she said quickly, "but Christ, living in you makes it both possible and delightful to live a holy life. Better still, His presence in the heart fully and completely satisfies the longings of one's soul."

Quickly she countered with a question of her own. "You say you once tried this Christian way? Was it a deep heart-felt and soul-experiencing crisis or a mere head acceptance? If it was the latter, I can see and understand why you say you couldn't live it. What the Lord Jesus Christ gives . . . and does in one's heart . . . makes serving Him and keeping His commandments a joy and a delight. I know; He lives within my heart in saving grace and sanctifying power, and I find this beautiful way of heart purity and death to self the most wonderful thing in the world. What my blessed Saviour did for me not only keeps me living clean and pure and holy here and now, but it has prepared me for Heaven, where only the pure and holy, and those free from sin, are going."

Still wearing his cynical smile, the man commented, "I see you're pretty much established and deeply entrenched in your beliefs, but I choose to differ with you. I am convinced that my way of thinking is correct. Now, what did you mean by speaking of 'God's tree church?' Like I said, I can't believe in any church."

Kari sighed. "God's true church is comprised of the body of people who are born again and sanctified wholly. These peculiar people . . . purchased people, the marginal reading states . . . live lives separated from the world and all things worldly. They..."

"Stop it! Stop it!" the young man interrupted, his eyes flashing fire. "You sound exactly like an aunt on my father's side of the family. Who wants to live in this world and not enjoy its pleasures? Not!! You're one of those 'stuffy' kind--a real square. Me? I'll follow the writings of this book and live life to its fullest."

With those words, he stormed away.

Getting back to her books, Kari realized that she had been talking to someone who had once known the way and who had, no doubt, rejected God's light and had had that light "turn to darkness." The books which the deluded young man was now reading had taken the place of God's eternal and changeless Word--to his detriment.

Had he, perhaps (like herself) been captivated and intrigued by the author's superb style of writing? By his masterful use of, and play upon, words? A shudder escaped Kari's slender body. What tools for evil or good were books, she thought, pledging to God afresh and anew that her reading would ever and always be only the purest, cleanest and most wholesome kind. With that, she settled down to working on her theme.

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**THE END**