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### What the Bible says about divorce

William Orr

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What the  
**BIBLE**  
says about

**DIVORCE**

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# What's Wrong With Divorce? . . .

- Everything's wrong with it . . .
- There are few tragedies in this world that strike so cruelly at the very foundations of human happiness as divorce. It ranks right in the forefront with war, crime and pestilence as a thief of joy and an assassin of achievement. If the home is the basis of society, and if the seeds for right living and noble character are planted first in the home, then that which blights or destroys the home's normal product is humanity's greatest enemy. Such an admitted enemy is divorce.
- Consider the wretched train of misery that follows in divorce's wake . . . broken homes, bruised and torn hearts, bewildered, homeless children, delinquent youth, mountains of loneliness, oceans of tears, suicide, insanity. The damage to society is beyond computation. Even the economic loss is staggering.
- But there's not only human loss. It's not merely a matter of men's statistics. Though some fail to admit it, still this is God's world and the home is God's plan for the world. When anything pilfers from the home the natural fruitage which God expects, when instead of benevolent efficiency the home's harvest is bitterness and blasted lives . . . God is robbed. This is truly one of today's greatest sins.
- What's the answer? This grave question currently engages the greatest minds of our land. No thinking person can lightly laugh off this problem. All agree . . . scientists, sociologists, educators, humanitarians, and even politicians that the divorce dilemma is one of our country's largest. All feel that no stone should be left untouched to attempt to alleviate the injury and harm.
- What can be done? In all honesty let us say that numerous plans have been advanced. Many have merit, all have a sincere desire to help. The sad thing is that the best plan is too often absolutely ignored.
- Let's be honest . . . is not the home God's institution? Did not God perform the first marriage ceremony? Did not He reveal the principles on which the family was to operate smoothly, happily and efficiently? *Will not the earnest acceptance of His plan bring true and lasting happiness and prevent divorce?* We sincerely believe so . . .



## **God's Plan Is The Family . . .**

- Read it for yourself. On the very first pages of Scripture we find that God fashioned the first man. Then, God reasoned, that it was not good for man to be alone, he needed a home. So, God made Eve, a lovely counterpart for Adam, and brought her to him and the first home was formed. This is the basic unit of life. This is the building block of society. The family is God's good and wise plan for happiness and usefulness, and His only plan.
- In the unfolding of human life men and women are necessary to each other. Neither one is complete in himself. God made the man to be physically stronger, more aggressive, inventive. In the same manner women are more patient, more understanding, better with details, able to endure more. The two complement each other. Together they supply what the other lacks. All this is God's wise and beneficent plan.
- The home finds its fullest purpose in the beautiful culmination of love when a darling child is born. This is the home's unique and natural fruitage and wonderfully blesses and enriches it. But children come into life utterly helpless. While the young of animals can care for themselves almost immediately after birth, the human child must be nurtured and protected for years. Thus the home is a haven. It is utterly indispensable to the rearing of children.
- Father and mother are teachers too, for the home is by far the world's greatest university. In the child's formative years it is the parents in the home who have the privilege of instilling into plastic-like young minds and hearts the great principles and ideals of life. No child has a normal education who is denied the blessings of living and growing up in his own home. On the other hand the lists of small and great misfits and criminals have one thing in common . . . broken homes.
- But the teaching of the home is two-fold. While the parents train their children in the multitude of life's subjects, the children in turn teach their parents. They teach courses on patience and unselfishness. They show life's more serious aspects. They point out so often the value as well as the necessity of leaning on God for aid. No adult is really educated until he's been a parent.
- There's no question about it. The home is God's plan. It's part of His purpose and there is no other agency in life to take its place. Nor did God ever make provision for homes to break up.

## ***And Does Not Include Divorce . . .***

- Even though some may not agree, this *is* God's world. On every hand we see the unmistakable imprimatur of a mighty Creator. The heavens declare His glory. The earth is full of His goodness. God wonderfully plans all His works.
- Consider the fish of the sea . . . efficiently streamlined for their watery courses. Note the birds of the heavens . . . meticulously designed for flying. The grass under our feet forms a green carpet both functional and restful. The blue sky overhead is soothing and beautiful. The mountains are rugged and utilitarian. And the rain comes down in little drops. Look for yourself . . . all of God's creation show His wisdom in planning.
- But man is the highest of God's creation. For after God had created and made all things we see and know, He paused before He made man. God's plan was that man should have dominion over all the things which He had made. So, God made man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.
- Nowhere in all of creation do we find greater evidence of God's omniscience. Men have eyes to see, and there are sunsets to behold. Men have ears to hear and there is the song of the birds. Men have tongues to taste and there are strawberries and cream. Men have feet to walk and there are mountains to climb. Don't you see . . . man is God's creation . . . God made man for a purpose.
- God planned man's life too. It is God's will that children shall be born, shall grow into maturity, shall marry and establish a home. Then into this new home children shall be born, shall grow up, shall marry and establish their own home. All of life revolves around the home. The home is God's basic unit. Everything in life is related to it. God has no other plan.
- We hold in our hands a great Book, the Bible. On its pages is stamped the hallmark of God's authorship. Full instruction as to how to live a life successfully and happily is given in the Scriptures. No question in human life is unanswered. To follow the Book is to be in the center of God's will.
- You may search diligently throughout the Bible but you will not find God approving divorce. For divorce is diametrically opposed to all that God desires for His creatures. Divorce destroy's God's plan.



## **What To Do About Divorce . . .**

- This is a tremendous problem, there's no doubt about that. Cold, cruel statistics reveal that nearly one marriage out of five ends in the divorce court and the rate has been on the increase for years. The tragedy is further heightened when we learn that most of these divorces might have been prevented if those involved had taken time before marriage to really think.
- Someone has facetiously remarked that the greatest contributing factor to divorce is marriage. That's a poor joke, but there's no doubt that one of the greatest reasons for divorce is *hasty* marriage. Those who have made an extensive study of the question report that it's not true that people "fall in love." They may fall into infatuation, but they must *grow* into love. So there's time provided to think.
- Many fail to understand that love is from God. The Bible declares that God *is* love. Not that love is God, for this would be pantheism. But in a very real sense, love is a characteristic, a part of the person of God. This puts a very different interpretation on love's qualities. Being from God it's high and clean and noble. It's unselfish and patient and pure. It's just like the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and about as different from the modern, movie-pulp magazine type of love as day is from night.
- No one should ever consider marriage unless real love is present. For love is marriage's primary requisite. Love is the divinely given cohesive to permanently hold two hearts and two lives together. God never intended for folks to marry until true love was kindled in their breasts. Far better . . . infinitely better . . . is single life than marriage without the light of true love.
- Before marriage . . . pray. Don't think for a minute that God is not interested in your contemplated union. If you're a Christian, marriage is perhaps the most important step in life next to receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. If you're not saved, pray anyway for God hears the prayer of every sincere heart. We do not believe that all marriages are made in heaven. But we do believe that marriages *may* be made in heaven . . . if you'll really want them to be.
- Then think . . . think deeply. At no place in life is it more true that haste makes waste, only here it's haste makes wasted lives. Take time to carefully analyze all the factors relating to the marriage. Some deep thinking here may prevent a tragic mistake.

## **Let's Prevent It . . .**

- For instance, the very first rule in Christian marriage is that Christians shall marry only Christians. God has sternly forbidden (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). His children to enter into the marriage relationship with unbelievers. The heartaches that have come from a disregard of this divine principle are beyond calculation. Nor should one marry an unsaved person on the promise of becoming a Christian.
- Then too, religious faiths are important. Protestants should marry Protestants, and Catholics should marry Catholics. Both ministers and priests unite in requiring this. The faiths are too far apart in belief and in practice. Divided church allegiance means divided homes, and the bitter truth is that even love too often fails to surmount the difficulties connected with mixed marriages. Statistics go further in recommending that marriages fare better if the pair is of the same denomination. (i.e. Baptists, Lutherans, etc.)
- Think too about the mutuality of interests. If what the man likes the woman abhors, that's bad. This doesn't mean that each must absolutely be sold on exactly the same pursuits, but there should be some basis of compatability of interest. Educational backgrounds ought also to be somewhere near equal, and ages within reason too. It seems that small differences here grow rapidly with the passing of the years.
- Good advice to contemplating couples is to look carefully at the parents. That friendly, plump person who is the mother of your intended is just what your dimpled best girl will look like some years hence. And that paunchy, balding fellow who calls himself your boy-friend's dad will be the spit-tin' image of your dashing young man in about twenty years. Does your love stand this test?
- When you're real sure, the engagement should be publicly announced. Perhaps you'll want an announcement tea or maybe not. But be sure that folks know your intentions. Then, the engagement period should be long enough. Statistics are oftentimes coldly impersonal, but they say here that successful marriages come mostly from couples with engagement periods of from six months to a year.
- The engagement period gives opportunities to closely observe. See how your young lady acts at home . . . have a lookat her with her hair in curlers. Observe your young man at work. See how courteous he is to mother and sister and if your love suffers here, it's far better to break the engagement there and then.



## **Weddings Add Permanency . . .**

- The natural tendency is always to shorten the engagement, rush off to some drive-in marriage mart and get it over quickly. There's no doubt that this is the easiest, cheapest way, but such fly-by-night marriages are already on their way to the inevitable break-up. Cheap, brief ceremonies make for cheap, brief marriages.
- Elopements too are so unsatisfactory. Sometimes for a moment the elopement seems a short cut to happiness, but in reality the couple are cruelly robbed of one of life's most unforgettable experiences. The memories of a beautiful wedding become a blessing and a benediction all through life. Somehow elopements never quite seem to be lived down. In the minds of people is always the question of "why did they elope?"
- There's really no doubt about the value of genuine weddings. Competent surveys overwhelmingly reveal that the lovers who take the time, go to the trouble, and spend the necessary money for a dignified, beautiful wedding add a wealth of satisfaction and permanency to their married life.
- It's true that weddings take planning and planning takes time. But this is an event which should not be hurried. After all, if it's to be a life-time proposition, and that is God's plan, it should be approached and conducted in a manner commensurate with its dignity.
- Where shall the wedding be? No one can dictate here, for this must of necessity be the bride's choice. But what better place to seek the favor and blessing of God than in a church dedicated to His worship? Most couples find that it can be done. The ceremony need not be too elaborate, just sweet and reverent. Usually too, there are friends who are glad to help.
- The ceremony should be one of deep spiritual significance. A good start will aid immeasurably in the trials and differences that will most surely come. Let the first recognition be that of the most honored Guest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let the words of the service be rich with Scripture. Let the prayers made be straight from the heart.
- Following the sacred ceremony the couple should be sped on the way safely with everyone's good wishes. What a travesty against the dignity of marriage when pagan rice, shoes, tin cans forever mar the reverent memory. This is one time when "horse play" is sadly out of order.



## ***Begin The Home Aright . . .***

- Getting the home started on the right basis is insurance happiness of the finest sort. After all, the home is an institution of God's own planning, but when God is not recognized, or when Christ is not honored the home isn't really a home at all. Rather, it's an empty shell, and can expect neither stability nor contentment.
- Too many people look for Christ's presence only in religious buildings failing to realize that He also fits quite naturally into the home. And when His gracious presence is acknowledged, His blessing sought, and His Word read the benevolent goodness of His favor will fill every corner of your home.
- But Christ will never "demand" such recognition. Rather, He waits your invitation to become your home's Head. But when He is thus enthroned He will graciously supply every need, and with divine wisdom answer every question. There will just be no problems at all if Christ continually reigns. He's been solving home problems for centuries.
- But He must be King and the home must be operated on His wise and loving principles. Things which do not honor Him must be excluded. His advice must be sought on everything coming into the home . . . friends, parties, magazines, pictures, radio, television, drink. If He doesn't approve . . . then out it goes! But the reward of obedience will be deep down happiness.
- You'll want to hold conversation with Him of course. Perhaps you'll talk privately with Him in prayer. It's marvelous to know that you can talk with Him as long as you wish and He'll listen. You'll want to have the whole family pray too. That's called the family altar. Very old fashioned, but very profitable.
- You'll want then to listen to Him speak to you. He speaks, of course, through His Book, the Bible. You'll read the Bible in your family altar sessions, but you'll want to read it privately too. Sometimes the reading will be so real, you'll think He's right in the room . . . He is.
- Hospitality should be written over the home in large letters. Visiting missionaries should be welcome, and your Pastor's visits encouraged. There may be "sings", parties, services too for just everything is right and proper if King Jesus approves.

## ***Follow God's Order . . .***

- It should surprise no one to learn that God has an order for the home. Everything that has come from God's hand exhibits the perfection and omniscience that is God's hallmark. The surprising thing would be if God hadn't suggested how the home was to be run. And, as always, to follow God's way of doing things is to know success; to ignore God's order is to foolishly invite catastrophe.
- The Bible's first story clearly sets forth the order. God made Adam first, and then soliloquized on the inadvisability of man living alone. Eve was made next, brought to Adam, and the first home came into being. But there was no question as to authority. Definitely the man was the leader, the stronger one, the one most aggressive, bold, inventive. Woman was to follow, was made with finer instincts, made to be the mother and the loving Queen of the home.
- Let's be clear here. God's Book does not teach that woman is inferior. She's just different. She's perfectly made for the particular place which God planned for her. The facts are, that in her fields woman far outranks man in ability and accomplishment. She's certainly more patient and understanding. She's less selfish and of greater aptitude in detail work. She can be a million times a better wife and mother than any man.
- Woman's so called equality in the modern world is a cruel deception. When women are "freed" from the home they are taken out of their God-given environment. And the net result of such emancipation is they become victims of frustration, disillusionment. Women can never be on an equal footing in man's work and it's crass folly to attempt it. On the other hand it's equally true that man can never be equal with woman. God's plan is for men to be men and women to be women. Simple, isn't it?
- Let's be practical . . . the home has a divine order. Man is the head, presumably wise and careful. Not the despot, not the slave-driver. He is gravely warned to deeply love his wife, and to be careful not to provoke his children to wrath. He is to act with loving intelligence in guiding the affairs of the home.
- Women in turn are to be subject to the guidance of their own husbands. Not sullenly or resentfully but as "unto the Lord." Together their motto is . . . each for the other, both for the Lord. To follow God's order even in this modern age is to find it to work.



## **Children Really 'Make' The Home**

- This is part of God's wise plan to make the world go round. To earth's first couple God commanded "be fruitful and multiply." There's no substitute for them. Homes without children are like gardens without flowers. It's normal to want them, it's normal to have them.
- The coming of babies into the home is part of life's unfolding. There are joys and sorrows here that can be experienced in no other way. Children become teachers for their parents, "instructing" them in some of life's greatest lessons. It's no secret that people without children tend to be selfish and self-centered. But when kids come (God bless them) they change all that.
- But children are not all schooling and patience. What greater pinnacle of thrilling joy can there be than to hold in your arms your own darling child? This baby is God's masterpiece and is given to loving parents as a product of the culmination of their love. And with their chubby arms they lock the hearts of the husband and wife together in a grip stronger than steel.
- Children provide needed responsibility too. How often has the arrival of the first baby changed the irresponsible boy and giggling girl into passable parents. When children come into the home life takes on a more serious aspect. There just can't be so many nights out, and home becomes sweeter and more "homey."
- The parents too become teachers. For the child starts from scratch and has to learn everything. Thus the home becomes the greatest university, and the mother the greatest teacher. But in teaching the child the basic principles of life, the parents relearn them for themselves. In teaching that boy honesty the dad realizes how important honesty is in his life. In instilling unselfishness into her daughter the mother realizes anew the necessity of this noble virtue in her own life.
- Homes need children but children need homes. Check carefully the delinquents of today. Without exception they are the pitiful product of broken homes. There just isn't any substitute for the loving discipline of a true home.
- Suppose one can't have children. This is indeed more of a tragedy than many think. Many times adoption helps, and with real love the adopted child fits in. But pray about this too. There have been cases where God has stepped into a situation like this. (I Samuel I).

## **Plan Finances Together . . .**

- The source of a large portion of family trouble is at this point. Who is to administer the family purse . . . husband or wife? But there is no need to disagree, for God has a financial order to follow.
- Remember this is a Christian home and the Christian home is built upon New Testament principles. Basically the Bible teaches that all we have or hope to have has come into our hands as a loving gift from our heavenly Father. That job which you hold is only God's method of sending you the money. It's always His hand that bestows it.
- Nor is the money *really* ours. It's entrusted to our care to use wisely, first for His glory, and then to supply our needs as God's children. The fact is, the money isn't ours at all. It's God's and He loans it to use to further His cause on the earth.
- Some Christians worry themselves over keeping their jobs. But there's no need, for God will care for you whether you have work or not. Don't misunderstand here . . . there's no excuse for idleness or laziness. On your job, work faithfully and efficiently. Give your employer full sixty minutes of labor for every hour of work. But job or no job, God is a million times able to meet your need and the needs of your family. He's your Father, don't you understand?
- Let's be practical too. Who shall administer the family budget? Well, there's no need to speculate for the husband is the God-appointed head of the home and has the important responsibility of directing the family finances. It is his duty to see that the funds are wisely and properly expended.
- But discerning indeed is that husband who prayerfully counsels with his wife on financial subjects. In fact, many husbands realizing that their wives are much closer to the problems of buying and selling, delegate to them the responsibility of the budget, while they give themselves more wholly to the matter of providing the funds. Wives who are given this position of trust should be doubly careful to spend wisely, asking God daily for help.
- If the husband prefers to handle the money himself, then the wife should have the administration of a portion for personal needs. She is well entitled to this, for her labors in the home are indispensable. The secret of harmony in family finances is to work together, all three . . . husband and wife . . . and God.



## ***Sex Life Should Be Normal . . .***

- Here's another danger point where marriages go on the rocks. Perhaps most of the reason being that couples misunderstand the complete normality of sex. You see, the plan of sex is God's own plan for life, and when God's plan is followed, sex is right, proper, necessary to one of life's most beautiful experiences.
- God made men and women for each other. Not only their spirits, but their bodies too. Each complements the other. And normal sexual relationships not only have the permission of God but have His blessing. Never in the Bible is there one word of reproach to husbands and wives on account of sexual intercourse.
- God intended sex to be enjoyed. It's the natural culmination of married love and the pinnacle of married happiness. This is true not only for husbands but also for wives. Actually, God made women as strongly sexed as men and as capable of as much sexual pleasure.
- It is true that women are less aggressive sexually. This is God's wise provision to restrain immorality. Still, in a marriage union brought about by pure love, and with a lovingly patient husband, the wife will find equally as much sexual pleasure as her husband. This is as God planned it to be.
- Some have said that sexual intercourse is for the purpose of procreation alone and should not be practiced except for the purpose of begetting children. But these have completely misunderstood God's purpose. Sex is holy but sex is joy's quintessence. God planned sex not only for the intent of bringing darling children into the world, but for the comfort and happiness of married life. For loving husbands and wives frequent sexual intercourse is right, healthful and necessary. Moreover, it is the best deterrent to infidelity.
- The question arises sooner or later concerning how many children. The Scripture does not dictate here, but it certainly smiles on large families. Large families are happy families, and children born therein tend to be more considerate, less selfish and better trained than others. God is abundantly able to provide for large families too.
- Sometimes reasons of health suggest that additional children are not desired. If so, the parents should consult a Christian physician and ask his advice as to the spacing of children. There seems to be nothing in Scripture to prevent the wise planning for children although the body seems to have a way of doing this naturally.

## **When Disagreements Come . . .**

- It seems that into every married life some disagreements must come. or even though husband and wife are both Christians yet they have not reached that plateau of heavenly bliss when quarrels and differences shall be no more. Rare indeed is the couple which never has one cross word. The problem is to limit it to *one* cross word.
- Most of the difficulties arise from our stubbornness or stupidity. If this is the cause, then the remedy is not far off. Be honest enough to see your fault, confess it, correct it and turn from it. God will give you grace to do this and harmony will be restored.
- But allow me to let you in on a secret. In the Christian life oftentimes God allows difficulties to come in order to see how we'll react. You see our earthly life is in reality a period of preparation for our eternal home. It's a training ground, and trials and hardships make very good teachers. We might even say the "difficulty's the thing." As we overcome it, we grow. So God prepares us for heaven.
- Never is it God's plan to take us to glory on flowery beds of ease. He knows that we'll be stronger, wiser, more experienced as we learn to overcome the trial (of course in His strength). So He lovingly sends the difficulty, the problem, the disagreement into our lives . . . not in order to make us fall. Rather, His plan is that the trial shall make us turn to Him for strength, and as we turn He will send the victory.
- In disagreements prayer's the practical thing. Let husband and wife kneel down together and pray the matter over. Prayer's power to heal hearts is positively amazing. You see, Christians have an all-wise all-loving Heavenly Father which unsaved folks do not have. It just isn't possible for disagreeing couples to honestly lay a problem before God and not know His perfect solution.
- But when you pray don't hold anything back. God knows it all anyway. Don't pray for God to see it your way. Ask rather that you shall be given grace to see it God's way. And don't lose any time in getting together to pray. Even small problems gather tremendous pressure when you confine them to your own heart. Pray it out . . . at once.
- Use large doses of common sense too. Study each other's habits, moods. Don't both get angry at the same time. Plan things together. Avoid if possible, living with your "in laws" (Lord love 'em) or they living with you. Your marriage is big business. Resolve to make it a success.



## **God Is Able To Meet Your Need . . .**

● Don't under estimate the power of God. Don't think that your problem is too difficult or involved for Him to solve. God has been solving human problems in answer to prayer ever since sin entered the world. Nor is He too busy managing the affairs of the universe to give personal attention to your need. He loves His children with infinite affection. And His name is honored and His testimony advanced as He sends the answer in response to our calling upon Him in prayer.

● The Scriptures are full of the accounts of God's intervention in answer to the heart cries of His children. Abraham was a mighty man of faith but sidestepped God's directive will on one occasion, and knew the searing blasts of feminine jealousy in his home. He cried to God and the answer was given (Genesis 16).

● Hannah was a godly woman but had never borne a child. Her heart was empty and her arms ached to cradle her own son. She took this need to God in prayer and was rewarded by the birth not only of a boy child, but a son who became one of Israel's greatest. (I Samuel 1).

● David was a King of Israel. One day he sinned greatly by committing adultery with another man's wife. This sin led to other sins, and David became guilty of lying, cheating, conniving and finally murdering the woman's husband. Nathan, God's prophet, confronted the King with his sin and David, overwhelmed with remorse, confessed, repented and knew the sweetness of pardon and cleansing. God, nevertheless, punished David for his sin. (2 Samuel 11,12).

● The home of Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus was always open to the Lord Jesus. On one occasion trouble seemed to be brewing and Martha came to the Lord with her problem. As always, Jesus answered with heavenly wisdom and the problem was beautifully settled. (Luke 10:38,42).

● Some great verses could well be written in letters of gold so wonderful are their promises.

*"Be careful for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."* Philippians 4:6, 7.

*"Casting all your care upon Him."* (I Peter 5:7).

*"There hath no temptation (testing) taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted (tested) above that ye are able but will with the temptation (testing) also provide a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it."* (I Corinthians 10:13).

## **God Disapproves of Divorce . . .**

- Let's be crystal clear on this point . . . divorce is completely, diametrically, irrevocably outside God's will and purpose for man. There just isn't anything about divorce that God approves. He thoroughly opposes it. God's plan for men and women is and has always been, marriage—marriage for life.

- When God created our first parents He solemnly commanded the permanent institution of marriage. Adam and Eve were no longer to be two but one. The marriage union was to be inviolate, inseparable: "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.*" Genesis 2:23.

- God's plans are always exceedingly wise and beneficent. When adulthood is reached the young man as well as the young woman need to leave their parent's home and find a home of their own. Both have physical needs and needs of spiritual companionship that only a new home can supply. But all of these are found in the new home. There under the influences which the new home produces the young couple mature, reproduce and fill their place in life. For God to allow divorce in the home which He had planned would be to utterly defeat His own purpose.

- In the home children are born. God made human children with a long period of immaturity. The first few years they are next to helpless. In the period of childhood they need great protection and guidance. No child is able to shift for himself at the earliest until a dozen years have passed. To deprive the growing child of parental love and affection is to cruelly rob him of that which he needs most at the time he needs it most. Divorce is society's greatest crime against children.

- God's plan for men and women most certainly includes their happiness. And life's truest joys are those which are to be found in the home circle . . . the reciprocated love of men and women . . . the intense satisfaction of holding your own darling child in your arms . . . the humor and pathos of watching children grow up . . . the meeting of difficulties, the sharing of victories . . . together. Divorce defeats all this, makes a mockery of life.

- Not to mention that divorce encourages sin. In many cases the parties commit adultery. The marriage vows are made a lie. Hearts are torn and lives are wrecked. Little innocent children are the most pitiful victims. Some go on to marry again outside the permission of God. Others grieve, some lose their minds, some seek rest in suicide.



## **Divorce Breaks God's Type . . .**

● In the Scripture there are many types or pre-pictures of truth. For instance the ark of Noah is a type of salvation, the brass serpent on the pole in the wilderness a type of Christ on the cross. God is very jealous of His types and on one occasion sent death to two who broke the type by bringing in strange fire to the tabernacle.

● In the same manner marriage is a type of the union that exists between Christ and His church. Christ represents the Bridegroom, the Christians of all ages the Bride. There is a time coming when these two are to be eternally united. It is a type very dear to God.

● In the New Testament an entire section is given over to the development of this type:

*"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

*"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

*"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

*"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*

*"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

*"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.*

*"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:*

*"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

*"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.*

*"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

*"Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." (Ephesians 5:23,33).*

It is not difficult to see that divorce cruelly shatters this beautiful type. For this and other causes, God hates divorce.

## **God Forbids Divorce Except . . .**

- The laws of our land provide for divorce on many grounds including adultery, cruelty, desertion, drunkenness, neglect to provide, gross neglect, vagrancy, conviction of crime, separation, bigamy, incompatibility, fraudulent representation, misconduct and other causes some of which are trivial indeed. But do not be deceived . . . the laws of God allow divorce on none of these grounds save one.

- Our civil laws concerning divorce are a sorry mixture. Almost every state has different provisions. Some states have fallen so low as to go brazenly into the criminal business of expediting divorce for the tainted money profit it brings into the state coffers. In some cases the routine of divorce is as simple as going to the grocery store and takes but a few minutes to accomplish. Needless to add, such proceedings are a stench in the nostrils of Almighty God.

- Make no mistake about it, God holds the marriage contract, whether in the case of saved or the unsaved, to be a lifetime contract and not to be broken. While it is true that people are not always wise in their choice of a mate, still when a marriage is made, God seals it and joins the husband and wife together saying that they are not to be put asunder.

- This very question of causes for divorce was placed before the Lord Jesus Christ on one occasion when a group of His enemies sought to discredit him by forcing an unwise answer: *"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,*

*"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh"*

*"Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."* (Matthew 19:3,6).

- Here then are the solemn words of Christ the Son of God. This is the mind of the Heavenly Father. It is God's wish to have only one termination of the marriage contract and that is death. God's plan for marriage is that when a man and a woman have been joined together in holy wedlock they are no longer two but one flesh.



## **For One Cause Only . . .**

- On the same occasion the Pharisees further questioned the Lord:

*"They say unto Him why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."* (Matthew 19:7,9).

- Here then is our Lord's momentous answer . . . let us weigh His words with extreme care. He says that because of the hardness of men's hearts, because of their moral perversity, because of their obstinate waywardness God allowed the marriage contract to be broken on one condition . . . fornication. But this is not God's will, it is not God's plan at all, it is His sufferance only because of man's sinful inability to measure up.
- What is this one cause, fornication? The two words adultery and fornication are closely related. Some say that adultery means one specific act of unlawful sexual intercourse while fornication apparently means a course of adulterous action, a number of acts of infidelity. A closely related word to fornication is harlot or whoremonger . . . someone given over to a life of illegitimate sexual procedure.
- So God's one reason for divorce is continued illicit sexual sin. It is giving one's body repeatedly to someone not husband or wife. It is the breaking again and again of the seventh commandment. It is being a whoremonger, a prostitute at heart, a husband or wife unfaithful to the other many times.
- God's intention apparently is not that one act of infidelity, not one misstep into sin shall demand divorce. But only when there is no hope for reclamation on the part of the sinning one. Only if there is persistent adultery, if the husband or wife has gone off into a course of whoremongering or harlotry from which there is no chance to return, then God allows divorce. But even here we feel that it is with genuine reluctance that God permits.
- The Christian who would be in the will of God will not divorce under any circumstances. However, because of sin and human weakness, God allows the Christian to divorce for one reason only . . . fornication. But this is God's sufferance only, His negative consent. He grants this permission only because of the hardness of human hearts.

## ***Fornication And Adultery . . .***

- Some writers have suggested that as our Lord used both these words in speaking of the divorce problem (Matthew 19:3,9) He meant to differentiate in their meaning. That the word "adultery" had to do with sexual sin in the *married*, while the word "fornication" connotated illicit acts between the *unmarried*. So that the Lord meant fornication only and not adultery constituted grounds for divorce.

- If this were true the only allowable cause for divorce would be unfaithfulness on the part of engaged couples, for example if, during the betrothal period, it should be found out that one of the parties to the coming marriage had not been chaste . . . this would be grounds for divorce. The usage of these two words in some English dictionaries seems to bear this out. But we do not believe this to be the meaning.

- The New Testament was written in Greek, and there seems to be some authority for believing that the term "adultery" relates to a *single act* of sexual infidelity either in the married or in the unmarried. The seventh commandment states "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and has reference to *all* sexual sins. No one would suggest that the seventh commandment meant only those who were married.

- The second term "fornication" apparently includes illicit sexual intercourse by both married and unmarried but on a *continued* basis. The meaning is not restricted to the unmarried. Both single and married can be fornicators if they continue in this sinfulness. The difference in the terms is not whether the participants are married or unmarried, but in the persistence of their wicked behaviour.

- A cognate word to fornication is the noun translated "harlot." Today's meaning of "harlot" is "prostitute" or one who habitually sells her body for sinful purposes. The fornicator then is one who has not only sinned once, but many times has broken the commandment against adultery.

- Thus the Lord's one and only acceptable reason for divorce seems to be continued and irreparable unfaithfulness. God allows divorce only when the wife or husband has gone into a course of harlotry and cannot be reclaimed.



## ***Fornication May Be Forgiven . . .***

- Although the Lord Jesus permits divorce for fornication He does not *require* it. There is no command in the Bible that marriage must be broken off for this or any other sin. Do not misunderstand. If either mate is guilty of whoredom God permits the other to divorce and remarry. But God does not *demand* the divorce. This is not His wish, but only His sufferance . . . His reluctant permission. The injured party may still forgive and preserve the marriage.
- There's no question but that a persistent course of harlotry on the part of the wife, or whoremongering on the part of the husband is about the most tragic thing that could happen to a home. Marriage is robbed of its essential meaning, its beauty, its usefulness. The heart of love dies and only the empty shell remains. In such sad cases God allows divorce to take place. But even here, God does not compel divorce. There is still another course open . . . to forgive.
- Sometimes divorce raises more problems than it solves. One should always consider the children in the home. They need the security and warmth that a home provides. Invariably divorce greatly impairs the children's happiness and too often character is injured as well. Is it not better to swallow one's pride, forgive and be reconciled rather than hurt the children?
- There are other important factors too. Economic problems often follow divorce. Very often it is impossible for the divorced husband to support his former family and the new one he hopes to form. Nor can one lightly disregard the public disgrace that divorce brings even in this modern day and age when divorces are all too common.
- More significant to the Christian is the reproach which is brought on the name of Christ. Christian people are expected to love one another. They are supposed to be examples in the world. Whether we like it or not folks judge Christ by us. So it is that every Christian home broken by divorce brings shame upon the name of the One we love and profess to serve.
- For the unsaved the answer may be simple indeed. Perhaps it's to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour. As hearts are cleansed in His precious blood, all things become new. So a new start can be made with new goals and new power. And God, if given the opportunity can heal the broken hearts.

## **May Divorced People Remarry? ..**

- Make no mistake . . . God thoroughly disapproves of divorce. His will is that whenever possible divorce should be prevented. Often it is far better that the erring mate should be forgiven and received back in order that the home be kept intact rather than give way to divorce.
- But if nothing will avail, and if the divorce has taken place on scriptural grounds (fornication) then both parties have the right to remarry. The Bible takes for granted that divorce includes the permission to remarry. The former husband is now no longer a husband and the former wife a wife no longer. Those who are divorced on scriptural grounds are now single, unmarried, unbound.
- In the Old Testament God instructed Moses to permit divorce. This is the passage (Deuteronomy 24:1, 2) commented on by the Lord as He explained God's permission because of the hardness of the human heart. (Matthew 19:8). Here it is clearly stated that the right to divorce included the right to remarry.
- There has been teaching that the innocent party alone has the right to remarry while the guilty party should be barred. It is true that the one who breaks a marriage is guilty of despicable, terrible sin for he has violated the laws of human decency and blasphemously mocked at God's solemn vows of marriage. Such an one has sinned grievously against God, against his mate, against society and against himself. This sin is naked, unadulterated, hateful.
- But we must not prohibit that which God has not prohibited. Nowhere do we find Scripture that those who are now single are to be denied the right to marry. There is no law that the murderer cannot marry or the thief, the drunkard, the blasphemer. Nor is there any command for one to remain single after the marriage has been scripturally broken. The truth is, that if the divorce has been obtained on Biblical reasons the guilty party may remarry too. God may deal with him for his sin, but God does not forbid his remarriage. Some churches hold that the guilty party may not remarry until the innocent party has married again.
- Divorced people are certainly poor marriage risks and should go very slowly into remarriage. And anyone who enters into a marriage with a divorced person should realize that this new union is already under a tremendous handicap. Only after abject, heartfelt, repentance and with a great deal of prayer should such marriage be attempted.



## ***Are Second Marriages Adultery?***

- The tragic but inevitable result of easy divorces are broken homes and twisted lives. An ever increasing tide of repeated marriages is creating a situation so tangled that it is becoming almost impossible to straighten out as multitudes rush into second, third, fourth and even more marriages. What is God's attitude here? Are the remarried living in adulterous sin?
- Part of the answer depends upon the cause for which the divorce was secured. If it was on Biblical grounds (fornication) then the innocent party has the full right to remarry. Our Lord himself has given (Matthew 19:9) the one cause which God recognizes as cause for the dissolution of the marriage ties. It is a thoroughly dissolute life impossible to remedy. So when one is so divorced, he is no longer married, no longer bound . . . he is single and may marry again.
- Concerning the guilty party (in divorces granted for adultery) certain churches have established restrictions. They have held that the guilty party may not remarry until the innocent party has remarried, or while there is chance for reconciliation. But this would be to forbid what the scripture does not forbid. Nor is this position consistent. If the divorce is made on scriptural grounds, then neither the innocent or guilty is now married. Both are unbound, unmarried, and free to marry again. This does not mean that God will not punish the guilty party for his sins.
- If, however, the divorce was secured on other than scriptural grounds then both parties commit adultery if they marry again (Matthew 19:9). Thus they doubly sin. First they sin before God as they wreck their home and mock at the marriage vows. They sin again by marrying someone else, when in God's sight, they are married to one another. This second sin Christ labels as committing adultery. (Matthew 19:9).
- But look carefully. To break the second marriage (if there has been a second marriage) would be to sin still further. This would entail another divorce and God abhors divorce. Usually it is impossible to restore the first marriage. The former husband or wife may have married again and there may be children by this marriage. Two wrongs do not ever make a right. Do not break the second marriage even though you committed adultery in marrying again.
- The best thing to do is to go straight to your knees in deep confession of sin to God. Cry out your heart to Him and know His forgiveness. Then earnestly endeavor to make a go of your second marriage always walking softly before God.

## ***If The Wife Only Is A Christian . . .***

- We know that God sternly opposes the marriage of one who is a Christian to one who is not a Christian (II Corinthians 6:14,18). What then is to be done when, for instance, a wife received Christ and is saved and the husband unsaved, or a husband saved and the wife unsaved? Should they continue to live together? Is this cause for divorce?

- The Scriptures do not leave us in doubt here. It seems that in the early days of Christianity there were many cases like this. As the story of the gospel spread around the world of heathendom multitudes were saved, and in many instances only a husband or a wife would be saved in a family. To meet this need for wisdom and guidance the Lord through the Apostle Paul gave specific instructions:

*"If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband which believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean, but now they are holy."* I Corinthians 7:12-14.

- While it is a violation of the direct command of God for a Christian woman to marry a non-Christian man, or for a Christian man to marry an unbelieving woman, still when once the marriage is made it should not be broken. The fact that a husband or wife is not a Christian is not a valid reason for leaving one's mate. Rather, the Christian is categorically told to stay. No separation or divorce is to be instituted by the one who is a child of God. God recognizes the validity of the marriage even though it was made contrary to His will. Divorce is forbidden in such cases.

- There are related cases too, where both members to the marriage are unsaved. Then either husband or wife hears the plan of salvation, receives Christ as Saviour and is saved. Shall the Christian, who knows of God's disapproval of mixed marriages, leave the unsaved mate? The answer again is "no." No move toward either separation or divorce action is to be instituted by the one who is a Christian.

- The reason given is that the unsaved has a greater chance of being saved too through the testimony of the one who is now a Christian, (I Peter 3:1,5). It is also better for the children of the family if they can have at least one saved parent (I Corinthians 7:14,16).



## ***Is Desertion Grounds for Divorce?***

- The instructions regarding desertion when both members of the family are Christians are likewise specific:  
*"Let not the wife depart from her husband. But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife."* I Corinthians 7:10,11.

Desertion is thus forbidden, or if there is separation neither party is to remarry but reconciliation is to be earnestly sought. God does not recognize desertion alone (if there is no fornication) as grounds for divorce between Christians.

- But what of desertion in a mixed marriage, when one is a Christian and one is a non-Christian? This situation must have been very common in first century Christianity. And, due to the fact that marriage bonds were easily broken, heathen husbands frequently left their Christian wives, and heathen wives deserted their Christian husbands over the matter of their newly found faith in Christ. To meet this situation the Apostle writes:

*"But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."* (I Corinthians 7:15.)

So while fornication is the only cause for divorce admitted by the Word of God, the matter of desertion is a closely associated problem. The plain statement of scripture is that if a wife or husband who is unsaved refuses to live with a mate on the grounds of their Christianity, the Christian is to let them go, and in such cases, the Christian is free and may remarry.

- Applying this apostolic principle to our modern day it becomes apparent that when an unfaithful husband maliciously and permanently leaves his wife because of her faith in Christ and will not return, this desertion breaks the marriage relationship. The deserted wife, according to the Apostle's statement is "not under bondage" which evidently means that she need not longer consider herself bound to her former husband and may seek a divorce.

- It is absolutely wrong, however, to stretch these provisions out of the bracket which the Scriptures teach. They must not be made to cover quarrels and misunderstandings which result in husband or wife leaving the home temporarily. The only desertion which the Scriptures recognize must be occasioned by the unsaved member of a marriage refusing to stay on account of the mate's faith in Christ.

## ***Are Annulments Scriptural? . . .***

- The Bible makes no mention of annulments but certainly there is a field where fraud or intimidation have been used where annulments are in order and should be granted. Usually annulment proceedings deal with premarriage conditions while divorce concerns postmarriage reasons. And if it can be shown that actual coercion has been employed or the marriage has been performed at the point of a gun or, if there is bigamy concealed or if there is a union of two who are too closely related, these reasons are full and sufficient to make such a marriage null and void. This is the honest field for annulment.
- However, this is a far different matter from the present wave of annulments in which certain technicalities are seized upon, in many cases months or even years after the wedding, to purportedly show the illegal nature of the marriage. There is no question but that such is a sinful repudiation or evasion of God's will, and is in no wise allowed or substantiated by scripture.
- The chief culprit in the field of annulment is the Roman Catholic Church. On the surface of things this Church advocates the extreme opposite position, emphatically forbidding divorce for any reason whatsoever. One of the dictums of the Catholic Church has been that marriage is a perpetual and indissoluble bond which cannot be broken by civil law.
- Of course this Catholic position is wrong too, for it ignores and rejects the teaching of scripture in which Christ definitely states that divorce may be allowed (Matthew 19:9) on the one condition of fornication (continued adultery). Further, the Catholic teaching position ignores that those who are scripturally divorced may remarry.
- On the other hand in multitudes of cases the Tribunal of the Rota at the Vatican (an ecclesiastical court to grant annulments) continues to hear and grant annulments to both Catholics and Protestants.
- The majority of these annulments have been granted on the ground that the marriage was not performed on the basis which the Catholics recognize. Without a doubt the Rota has had in mind the furtherance of Catholic fortunes even at the expense of criminally ignoring God's will. Such annulments are sinful, wicked and forbidden by God. To obtain an annulment on any grounds other than that which the Scriptures allow is to commit adultery, notwithstanding what the Catholic Church teaches.



## **Remarriage Problems . . .**

- May two divorced persons marry one another? The answer depends entirely upon the reasons for which the divorces were granted. If they were obtained on the grounds of cruelty, drunkenness, neglect, incompatibility or any one of another dozen other causes the divorces are not valid in God's sight, they are still married to their former mates. Those who are divorced on these grounds commit adultery when they remarry. Such may not remarry until their former mates die, or until they marry someone else.
- There is only one scriptural cause for divorce and that is fornication or continued adultery. If the two parties in the above case were both innocent parties in divorce actions where the cause was fornication of the guilty party, they may remarry as freely as if they had not been married previously. A divorce on Biblical grounds breaks the marriage ties and makes the innocent party free, unbound, unmarried.
- What about the case where two divorced people now married to each other find their divorces were not obtained on scriptural grounds? Are they "living in adultery?" Can God be pleased with them as long as the second marriage is maintained?
- God is not pleased, make no mistake. There was terrible sin in breaking the former marriages. There was sin against one another, against the home, and against God. Then there was additional sin in contracting their present marriage. Both parties committed adultery when they married one another. In God's sight they were then still married to their former mates for God allows marriages to be dissolved only on the grounds of fornication.
- But all this being true, still the second marriage should not be broken. The Bible does not say anything about "living in adultery." It does condemn "committing adultery" and they did just that the night they were married. But now being married, even though God did not approve, God recognizes their present marriage. They should continue to live together as man and wife in their second marriage.
- What about their sin? Sin is always desperately wrong in God's sight. So these should go to God in penitential confession (I John 1:9) and find (so marvelous is the grace of God) pardon and peace. Having been cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, the divorced and remarried should seek to live very close to Christ all the days of their lives.

## **May Divorcees Join Church? . . .**

● In the Book of I Corinthians the Apostle Paul taught that sinners, including fornicators, adulterers and others would not inherit the Kingdom of God. But he goes on to say . . .

*“And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”* (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

It would seem that the Corinthian Church in whom the Spirit of God then dwelled (I Corinthians 6:19,20) contained those who had been both adulterers and fornicators but who were now Christians, cleansed, sanctified and justified by the living God.

● What is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not a band of blood-bought and blood-washed believers? Is it not composed of former sinners who have come to know the marvelous miracle of the new birth (John 3:3) and those who by faith have become new creatures in Christ? (2 Corinthians 5:17). To be sure church members are not yet perfect but are strangers and pilgrims (I Peter 2:11) and are bound for that heavenly city (Hebrews 11:14).

● To discriminate against the admittance of divorced people in a church would be to place a difference where God has placed no difference. If sinners are to be barred from body of believers then all manner of sin must be taken into account including pride, gossiping, covetousness as well as murder and adultery. (Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:1-5).

● There is no command in scripture which would exclude former thieves or murderers from fellowship if they show complete evidence of true salvation. Nor is there any ban against divorced people if they too have truly been saved and have confessed their guilt to God.

● If there are those who are living in known sin the church should deal with them in loving discipline. This should apply to all kinds of sin. In the same manner the elders of the church should counsel, and advise those with problems of divorce. But no divorced person who loves the Lord and wants to do His will should be denied the privileges of fellowship with God's people on account of his or her former sins. If there is anything the divorced person needs it is the guidance, the comfort, the encouragement that can be given by godly people. As the Lord so gently said to the woman taken in adultery, so the true church should teach to those taken in divorce . . . go and sin no more. (John 8:11).



## **Hold Church Office? . . .**

● May they sing in the choir? May they teach Sunday School classes? May they hold official positions in the church? Let us recognize again that there are differences in divorces. Some are most certainly the "innocent party" and are guiltless before God as far as the divorce is concerned. Others are the "guilty party" and are responsible for committing grievous sins in God's sight.

● But innocent or guilty there is no doubt that there is a stigma attached to divorce. Some even attach blame to the innocent party feeling that if the wife had been all she should have been to her husband, he would not have gone astray. Many judge a divorced person without endeavoring to fully understand the reasons behind the divorce. All of this judging may not be right, but this is the manner in which people think nevertheless.

● Churches often feel hesitant about putting divorced people into office. They feel that the church may come under the reproach of those on the outside, and that unbelievers will misjudge the church's position. They believe that outsiders will consider the elevation of those who are divorced to official position an endorsement or a condonement of the divorce action. Most churches are truly sincere in this position fearing to bring dishonor to the name of Christ.

● There is a principle in scripture about Christian liberty. There may be some things which a Christian feels perfectly free to do. If he were to do these things his conscience would not condemn him, and the teaching of scripture would not oppose it. But on the other hand, if he were to exercise his liberty in this matter, he might cause others, and particularly weaker Christians, to stumble over him in their failure to understand the liberty which was his. To such a problem the Spirit of God advises . . . if this matter cause my brother to offend I will not do it while the world standeth. (I Corinthians 8:1-13).

● Perhaps it is best for divorced people in the church to remain in the background as far as official position is concerned. This is not a specific command . . . this is the law of unselfish love. You do this not because you are forced to . . . rather because you love Christ.

● But divorced people may partake of all the church's joys. They may be baptized, partake of the Lord's table, drink in the rich teaching, serve in many unofficial ways, pray and sing. Be assured too, that Christ will not misunderstand.

## **God's Logic Is Unanswerable . . .**

- God is unalterably opposed to divorce. It was never included in His plan for man. No divorce has ever had His approval. He has allowed divorce (on one ground) only because of the perversity of human nature. But even when these sinful conditions are present in a home God advises against divorce.
- God's hatred of divorce is not a mere whim on His part. His will is always founded on sound, logical principles. He does not oppose divorce without weighty reasons. God knows that divorce is a destroyer of man's usefulness, a thief of man's happiness and an assassin of man's character. God is imminently interested in His creatures. He desires the best for man and his heart of affection is grieved when trouble overwhelms man's soul. It is His will that man's life shall proceed according to His wise and beneficent plan. If we could only understand it, God's way is infinitely best.
- Consider the matter of children. It is God's intention that children shall have protection, provision, affection, training. This necessitates parents and a home and there is no substitute for it. Children are made to be reared in a home and they are extremely sensitive to the lack of these influences. When the home is threatened or when trouble is found in the home this is reflected in the child's life and thinking. But a divorce is even worse for the entire environment for which the child was made is swept away. Broken homes mean warped, frustrated and too often criminal lives.
- Children from broken homes are deprived of that quality of spirit which is most important. They may be satisfactorily trained in skills or their heads may be crammed with knowledge in schools. But it is in the home where they receive the indefinable and almost indispensable qualities of nobility of spirit, high ideals, the will to achieve and the example of true character. God has planned it so.
- Life's most important product is children. Men may build skyscrapers, bridges, boulevards. Inventors may provide gadgets, machines, labor saving devices. But all of these are to perish with the using. The life of a child, however, is cut from the mould of eternity. He it is who was created to be the companion of God. The endless ages were partly planned for him.
- Life has no substitute for homes in the fulfillment of the responsibility to rear children for God. For the child's sake is it not better to maintain the home, overcome the difficulties, avoid divorce.



- Serious financial difficulties frequently follow divorce.

While it is true that marriages often get into trouble over the matter of money and who should handle it, yet the divorce court does not settle this problem but often heightens it. How can a man who has difficulty in providing for one family's support manage to support two? Then it often follows that due to the mental worry divorce brings, the former husband and father fails in business and his character so deteriorates he finds it impossible to maintain either himself or his divorced family.

- Or in any case, divorced men pay alimony very reluctantly. They consider it unfair and often seek in the courts to have alimony reduced or wiped out. The former wife has the doubtful satisfaction of living on money which is paid under protest. There's no question but that families who desire a decent home, the comforts of life, and the benefits of a good education should avoid divorce. Better to swallow one's hurt pride, talk things over before the Lord, and earnestly try to make a go of marriage. Too often divorce is just economic disaster for all concerned.

- Nor can anyone deny the accompanying disgrace of divorce.

Even though it is tragically common today, one can't get away from the inevitable shame which attends it. There are still many decent people who oppose a marriage of their son or daughter to a divorced man or woman. It's common knowledge that a man who has made a failure of one marriage is a poor risk to marry again. Divorce means that sin has taken place and the one who is divorced has had some part in it. Even if he be the so called innocent party there will be those who feel that he is partly responsible. Try as you wish, public opinion still condemns.

- But there's a deeper side to Christians. When a Christian divorces there's reproach brought upon the name of Christ. God's children are supposed to love one another. They're considered able to pray to an all wise heavenly Father and secure help to meet their need. They hold in their hands a Book which is said to be the answer to every human need. They follow as their ideal the greatest, the most righteous, the most loving Person who ever lived, Christ. When Christians divorce, dishonor, shame and opprobrium come upon the name of the Lord.

- God's will is to maintain the marriage. But with God's will there is available sufficient wisdom and power to bring about the performance of God's purpose. This wisdom and power can be yours.

## ***How To Restore Lost Love . . .***

- If there is serious trouble in the home divorce is not the only answer. Don't despair for it is possible to have a restoration of lost love, confidence and happiness in marriages that seem about to be broken. Even in difficult cases where there has been almost insufferable bickering and contention God challenges them to give Him an opportunity to restore lost harmony. Is anything too hard for God?
- The first step is basic and absolutely necessary. Let both husband and wife get right with God in their personal lives. Get alone with God and ask Him to search your heart for the sin that is there. Confess that sin honestly, and know the sweet peace of His pardon. How can there ever be harmony in the home if there is disharmony between husband and wife and God.
- We must understand that real love is come from God. In a very real sense love is a part of God. The scriptures state that "God is love" (I John 4:8). When God created us he placed in our breasts the capacity to love with His own brand of love. All other love is rank and inferior imitation. God's love is clean, high, noble, unselfish, eternal. Only as we know God's love and reciprocate by loving Him can we truly love each other. But God's love is abundant and will flood our hearts toward one another . . . if our hearts are right with Him.
- The next step in the restoration of love is to follow the simple, sensible means of grace. Surely this is a small price to pay for the genuine and abiding joy it will bring. Everything is so simple. There should be daily recognition of God's beneficent presence in the home. Christ should be the honored Guest always. There ought to be prayer, private and united. In prayer it is quite right to ask God for anything and everything we need . . . including love without measure for one another. God is not poor . . . ask largely.
- Then invite God Himself to speak . . . that's by reading His Word. How else can you know God's will . . . hear His voice? The Bible will teach you, encourage you, comfort you, advise you, admonish you, reprimand you, correct you. The simple fact is that the Christian life is utterly impossible without the Bible. God intended it so.
- Generally speaking the ignoring or abandonment of these fundamental Christian practices was the cause for the coming of difficulties in the home. So the restoration of these, simple as they may seem, will mean the restoration of lost love . . . and the creation of new love.



- Let husbands and wives take their God-given places. This will not be difficult if there is love in the home. The husband is the head of the home in the same manner as Christ is the Head of the Church. The wife is to be subject to her husband to the same degree that the Church is subject to Christ. What is wrong with that? Are you not able to believe that God knows what He is doing?
- The Bible commands that husbands are to love their wives even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. This is a plain duty of husbands and to fail to do so is a sin. Be assured that if God requires husbands to love their wives it is quite possible for husbands to measure up. God never commands what He does not make possible. And even if the wife has been ungracious, disobedient and rebellious, God will enable the husband again to love her . . . deeply, sincerely. Such husbands ought to put God to the test.
- The Scriptures are emphatic too on the point that wives shall be obedient to their husbands. Not in a sullen, resentful sort of a way, but in the same loving manner as the Church is to be subject to its Head, even Christ. If wives find difficulty in obeying these plain statements of the Bible they have a right to go to God in prayer and ask Him to give them this grace. God will most certainly make His "happy home" plan work if husband and wife will do their part. If the parties to a marriage implicitly follow God's instructions the home will be a happy one or else God would be proved to be untrue to His Word. And if God is not true the universe would disintegrate for it is held together by His integrity.
- Then earnestly resolve in your heart to show your love in every way possible. Far too often marriages grow cold simply because of the lack of warm, demonstrated love. What's wrong with showing your wife that you love her? What's wrong with proving to your husband you think he's great. Give some time, do a bit of planning to just making love again. Let the flower of love be watered often by loving kindness and old fashioned courtesy. There need not be expensive gifts. It's not necessary to take her on a trip around the world. You'll be both amazed and delighted at the results of speaking a few words of sincere praise . . . often.
- God wants your home to continue. It is His will that there be no divorce. And when you are cooperating with Him in this you are most sure to win. There isn't the slightest doubt but that love and happiness can be restored if men and women are willing to come God's way.

## **How To Become A Christian . . .**

- Without a doubt this booklet will fall into the hands of many who have never received the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal, individual Saviour from sin. May we say to you in all kindness that you're missing the most important thing in life . . . that you're lost now and eternally . . . but that you can be gloriously saved. Would you like to know how?
- The entire matter of salvation centers around man's desperate need. Ever since Adam's terrible sin the whole human race has been born with their faces away from God. Man is born a sinner and the wages of sin is death. There was no hope for mankind until one day God sent His well beloved Son into the world to die in the sinner's place.
- He was born of a virgin mother, lived a beautiful, sinless life. He spoke as none other has ever spoken; he wrought as none other has ever done. There was no cause of death in Him. But because of human sin and because there was no other way, Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross of shame and willingly gave His life to save you . . . and me .
- The story doesn't stop there. They took down His bruised body, placed it for three days in a borrowed tomb from which He came forth in glorious resurrection, went back to heaven after promising to return for all those who are His . . . someday . . . soon.
- The New Testament tells His story. The disciples went forth preaching the good news to all. The centuries unfolded with the thousands of Christians stretching into millions and more millions. The story is two thousand years old but is as new as today.
- No one has ever been saved but on the basis of the death of Christ. But no one has ever been refused who has come to God through Christ. The way of salvation is simple belief . . . believe that you're a sinner . . . believe that Christ is the Son of God and a Saviour . . . believe in His work for you enough to trust Him all the days of your life. If you'll do that . . . you'll be saved.

"FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT .....

.....(your name) WHO BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE." John 3:16.