

**God the Home**

**PRAYER ANSWERED BY  
CROSSES.**

I asked the Lord, that I might grow  
In faith and love, and every grace;  
Might more of His salvation know,  
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,  
And He, I trust, has answered prayer;  
But it has been in such a way  
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour  
At once He'd answer my request,  
And by His love's constraining power  
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart,  
And let the angry powers of hell  
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more: with His own hand He  
Seemed  
Intent to aggravate my woe;  
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,  
Blasted my gourds, and laid me  
Low.

"Lord, why is this?" I trembling  
cried,  
"Wilt thou pursue thy worm to  
death?"

"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,  
"I answer prayer for grace and  
faith:

"These inward trials I employ  
From self and pride to set thee  
free,  
"And break thy schemes of earthly  
joy,  
"That thou mayest seek thy all in  
me."  
—American Tract Society.

**MARRIAGE ALARM BELLS.**

BY MARTIN WELLS KNAPP.

Many Christians have been wrecked upon the rocks of mismatched marriages. This should not be.

"It is not good for man to be alone." Marriage is honorable to all who honorably enter upon it. God designs that the home shall be a beautiful and peaceful haven, a foretaste of the Home eternal. Mismatched marriages thwart His purpose, and make it too often a place of bickering and strife, with alarming frequency ending in divorce.

How can these evils be avoided? By hearing and heeding the following Marriage Alarm Bells:

I. *Don't marry an unconverted person.* Why? For the following reasons:

(a) God forbids it. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. 1 Cor. 6, 14.

(b) There can be no spiritual fellowship between a child of God and a rebel against Him, such as all unconverted persons are.

(c) Mental and physical affinity will not suffice for spiritual communion.

(d) God's blessing never rests upon a marriage which he forbids; hence if you marry an unconverted person you thus forfeit God's blessing.

(e) You would each have different aims in life, one living for Christ and the other not.

(f) The unconverted companion often becomes jealous because God is loved more than himself.

(g) A goat and a sheep never make a good team.

(h) Their sources of enjoyment are opposite.

(i) The person who will not promise to be true to God you cannot trust to be true as a companion.

(j) Such marriages are usually unhappy.

(k) The Christian who is thus ensnared usually repents when it is too late. I refused to marry a friend of mine to an unconverted man. They lived together in misery until two children were born, and then separated.

(l) The unconverted are frequently regardless of observance of the laws of marital self-control and purity, without which marriage is degraded, and both suffer in mind, soul and body.

(m) The children of such marriages are robbed of the sacred parental influences to which they have a right, and which largely affect their destiny.

(n) The unconverted often insist upon ruinous sexual indulgence and prenatal murder, debasing the sacred bond of marriage into a license for lust.

(o) You have no right to choose for the father or mother of your children a godless person.

(p) Both husband and wife need all of God's grace that is for them in order to exercise the forbearance and self-denial which marriage demands.

(q) There are always matters arising upon which there will be a division. One wants to go to church, the other on a stroll or visit; one wants to give for the gospel, the other is opposed to it; one welcome's God's ministers, the other dreads them; one wishes to rear the children for God and the church, the other for the world. How many mothers have aching hearts because the father leads the children to the dance, the theater, the horse-race, and the circus.

Remember. 1. The fact that God has overruled so that sometimes the marriage of Christians with the ungodly leads to their conversion is no argument in favor of such marriages.

2. A kind disposition, personal beauty, a mere profession of religion, or church membership and promises of reformation, should never be accepted as substitutes for vital experimental piety. All who have not that are practical "unbelievers."

3. If, through infatuation or personal magnetism or natural affection, you have become engaged to an unconverted person, the first duty you owe to God, the person, and yourself, is to wisely, firmly, tenderly, and quickly as possible, *break off the engagement the same as you would any other sin.*

4. If you do not, you will sooner or later bitterly regret it.

5. Though unconverted people sometimes live happily together on a worldly plane, yet such instances are rare and in no wise affects the law which is to govern the actions of Christians. The aims of worldlings are one, those of Christians and worldlings are opposite.

II. *Never marry a person to reform him.* Why not?

(a) Because you cannot reform him that way. Salvation, not matrimony, is God's prescription for such persons.

(b) Many have been deceived by this device, and discovered the mistake only when too late. A friend of mine married a young man on this plea, though repeatedly warned of the danger. In less than six months he threatened to kill her, and they soon separated, he to go on in sin, she to a blighted life and to fill an early grave.

(c) If your love and influence is powerless to win your friend before marriage, much less will it be after, when you have lost the power of religion by marrying against the will of God.

III. *Never marry an illegally divorced person.* Many lives have been wrecked on this rock. All persons who are divorced for other reasons than the single cause mentioned in Matt. 5, 22 and 19:9 are illegally divorced, and marriage of them or with them is adultery. And as no adulterer can enter heaven, all such, unless they break off the unholy alliance, are lost. Neither time, nor

affection, nor children, nor public approval, can atone for this express violation of God's law.

IV. *Never marry to please others, nor for money, nor a home, nor social position, nor for any other reason less than pleasing God and doing Him better service.* Thousands marry from social motives and reap a harvest of disappointment. If God's blessing is received, His will must be learned and done. A single state with His favor is Paradise compared to a married life without it. Marriage without true love is like a furnace without fire.

V. *It is no reason you should marry a person because infatuated.* Two persons may be of such temperaments and so keyed mentally and physically as to become infatuated almost on sight. Many mistake this feeling for true love and the basis of matrimony, and by its balmy breezes are wafted into the harbor of a wedded life only to discover when the glamour is gone that they are mismatched and mistaken. The bright morning dewdrops of intense infatuation are soon dissipated by the hot sun of the long day of marriage endurance. For a fuller treatment of this point, see my work on "Impressions," pages 27-40.

VI. *Be sure and learn God's will as to whom and when to marry.* You can afford to make no mistake at this point, and victory here means victory at all other points. He knows just who you need and who needs you, and with whom you can be the most useful and happy, and if you will claim His counsels He will make you sure. See "Impressions," pages 52-69.

Never marry while there is doubt at this point, and be sure never to mistake your own will, or the will of others, for God's will in this matter. Then all will be well. If you have married against these rules and find yourself the wedded companion of an unconverted person, then seek by penitence and prayer the fulness of God's favor and strive to win the wandering one to God.

VII. *Be right with God yourself.* Be sure that you are converted, and also that your heart is fully cleansed from all sin and selfishness and filled with the Holy Spirit. Until then you are unfitted for the holy offices which marriage brings.

"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in due season. . . . Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived. . . . Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul. . . . that your days be multiplied, and the days of your children. . . . as the days of heaven upon the earth." (Deut. 10, 13-21).—Original.

Those who enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, must first draw near with true hearts in full assurance of faith. When there is any place given to doubt or unbelief it is not possible to enter into the fulness of the gospel of Jesus. Christian people must learn that they are to be made whole by faith. Salvation is all received by faith. The reception by faith is preceded by faith and followed by devotion to God. The humble penitent Christian man who has seen the whole depth of inbred sin and so feels it as to loathe, hate and abhor it may receive deliverance by faith. Faith to him is the only requirement to enter into the fullest experience of perfect cleansing and being filled with love.—Era.

**HAVE I THE FRUIT.**

[From "Christian Perfection," by J. Wesley; selected by J. P. Broadhead].

But some who have much love, peace and joy, yet have not the direct witness (of being perfected in love); and others who think they have, are, nevertheless, manifestly wanting in the fruit. How many I will not say; perhaps one in ten, perhaps more or fewer. But some are undeniably wanting in long-suffering, Christian resignation. They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs and cheerfully embrace it. They do not in everything give thanks and rejoice evermore. They are not happy; at least, not always happy; for sometimes they complain. They say, "This or that is hard."

Some are wanting in gentleness. They resist evil, instead of turning the other cheek. They do not receive reproach with gentleness; no, nor even reproof. Nay, they are not able to bear contradiction without the appearance, at least, of resentment. If they are reproved, though mildly, they do not take it well; they behave with more distance and reserve than they did before. If they are reproved or contradicted harshly they answer it with harshness, with a loud voice, or with an angry tone, or in a sharp or surly manner. They speak sharply or roughly when they reprove others, and behave roughly to their inferiors.

Some are wanting in goodness. They are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft and loving at all times, in their spirit, in their words, in their look and air, in the whole tenor of their behaviour; and that to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of persons; particularly to them that are out of the way to opposers, and to those of their own household. They do not long study, endeavor by every means, to make all about them happy. They can see them uneasy and not be concerned; perhaps they make them so; and then wipe their mouths and say: "Why, they deserve it; it is their own fault."

Some are wanting in fidelity, a nice regard to truth, simplicity and godly sincerity." Their love is hardly without dissimulation; something like guile is found in their mouth. To avoid roughness they lean to the other extreme. They are smooth to an excess, so as scarcely to avoid a degree of fawning, or of seeming to mean what they do not.

Some are wanting in meekness, quietness of spirit, composure, evenness of temper. They are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low; their mind is not well balanced. Their affections are either not in due proportion, they have too much of one, too little of another; or they are not duly mixed or tempered together so as to counterpoise each other. Hence there is often a jar. Their soul is out of tune, and cannot make the true harmony.

Some are wanting in temperance. They do not steadily use that kind and degree of food which they know, or might know, would most conduce to health, strength and vigor of the body; they do not rigorously adhere to what is best for body or mind; otherwise they would constantly go to bed and rise early, and at a fixed hour; or they sup late, which is neither good for body or soul; or they use neither fasting or abstinence; or they prefer (which are so many sorts of intemperance) that preaching, reading or conversation which gives them transient joy or comfort, before that which brings godly sorrow or instruction in righteousness. Such joy is not sanctified; it does not tend to, nor terminate in the crucifixion of

the heart. Such faith does not centre in God, but rather in self.

So far all is plain. I believe you, many of you, have faith and love, and joy, and peace. Yet you who are particularly concerned know each for yourself that you are wanting in the respects above mentioned. You are wanting either in long-suffering, gentleness, or goodness; either in fidelity, meekness or temperance. You have not what I call perfection; if others will call it so, they may. However, hold fast what you have, and earnestly pray for what you have not.

**PERFECTLY SAFE.**

A gentleman visited a lighthouse and said to the keeper:

"Are you not afraid to live here? It is such a dreadful place to be constantly in."

"No," replied the man, "I'm not afraid; we never think of ourselves here."

"Never think of yourselves! How is that?"

The reply was a good one: "We know that we are perfectly safe, and only think of having our lamps brightly burning and keeping the reflectors clear, so that those in danger may be saved."

The Saviour says, "Ye are the light of the world," and we never get tired, nor are we afraid to shine for God. God is light, and if we are in Him we will shine and disseminate light wherever we go. Others may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Let your light shine, brother. Some poor perishing one may even now be looking at you and be guided into the kingdom—into the harbor of salvation through your holy life.

The deepest affection in the believing heart will always be the love of Jesus. The love of home, the love of friends, the love of letters, the love of rest, the love of travel, and all else, are contracted beside this master passion. "A little deeper," said one of the veterans of the first Napoleon's old guard, when they were probing in his bosom for a bullet that had mortally wounded him, and he thought they were getting somewhere in the region of the heart,—"A little deeper and you will find the Emperor." Engraven in the Christian's heart, deeper than all other love of home or friends, with an ineffaceable impression, that nothing can erase, you will find the loved name of Jesus.—Rev. W. M. Punshon.

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There is one class of people against whom every one should be warned. They have several different names, but they are all of the same evil spirit. They go into communities and enter into some religious controversy. One place it is water baptism, in another place it will be the Sabbath question; somewhere else it will be the sleep of the soul and the annihilation of the wicked. They make no effort to win any one to Christ. They have neither knowledge nor faith to lead souls into the experience of entire sanctification. They are about the devil's work, and strife and spiritual death follow wherever they go. Beware of them; do not harbor them; kindly but firmly resist them. If they come into your meetings drive them out by the power of the Holy Ghost. They are usually afraid of the Holy Ghost. A heaven born shout frightens some of them. Do not argue or debate with them. Rather ask them, Have you been born of God? Are you converted? Do you know the witness of the spirit? Are you wholly sanctified? Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? Do you know God as a forgiving God? Are you all on fire to get men to Christ? These and some other similar questions are of more value than any argument with them. Let the pastors where the evil spirits have come keep the churches at prayer and fasting until God sends deliverance.—Wesleyan Methodist.