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## **COURTING, OR SOCIETY GOATS DISROBED**

**By James Milburn Taylor**

Author of  
Defeats of the Devil  
Ruth, or How She Fell  
Doing His Will, or Going to Hell

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### PREFACE

In my book, "Defeats of the Devil," as seen in life of James M. Taylor, I wrote a chapter on the association of Christian boys and girls with unsaved ones. Some who heard it read, prevailed with me to write more, and put it out in a book. I therefore send it as a little messenger, pleading for the sustenance of purity and virtue in the lives of the young. I write it with the prayer to God that it may prove a warning to some mother's boy, or some innocent sister, and preserve them from the dark scenery which has hung in the life of the writer. Young people, I am your friend, true as steel. Boys, my heart goes out for you, for there are so few boys saved. Young women, I tremble for you, because I know the snares of the wicked one, which are being laid for you. Beware of a wolf in sheep's clothing. If this proves a blessing to the reader, give all praise to Him who lifted the author out of the places of which he warns you.

James Milburn Taylor  
Elgin, Tenn., Feb. 21, 1898

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## PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

The first three thousand of this little book, though in a very crude state, were eagerly taken by the people. Calls have come in from every side for the book to be revised and re-published. Therefore I send this edition forth to the world with prayer that it may do the good that testimonies pouring in from all quarters told the last had done.

J. M. T.  
Knoxville, Tenn.  
Dec. 22, 1900

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## 01 -- COURTING

Society of the present day is the swill tub of the devil. Some of the darkest and dirtiest deeds are within her bounds, but the same society will point her finger at these deeds if performed without. Jesus looks at the heart, and on it His eye is fixed: "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." -- 1 Sam. 16:7.

The fearful rate at which babes in Christ are being dragged into sin is alarming. Society is the big gun of the devil, by which he ensnares the young, and it is enough to make angels weep and saints draw back with horror, while the devil holds conventions in hell and drafts resolutions of commendation, to be sent at once by the fiery steed of deep damnation to the promoters of society.

I send this to the young people who want to live for Christ, For ten years I tried to live right. Five years of this time is a great panorama of scenery -- dark, gloomy, sorrowful, disappointing failures, mingled with tears, heartaches and grief. It was a continual search for something I could not find. I have spent about three years of this time in joy, peace, prosperity, satisfaction, and growth in grace. I love the young. I know by experience, observation and by the Bible that the most detrimental thing to the religious life, spiritual advancement and success of the young is the associating of Christian boys and girls with unsaved ones. Reader, are you being ensnared by this trap of hell?

It is part of the devil's program for saved boys to associate with unsaved girls; and still a greater piece of his machinery for Christian girls to keep company with unsaved boys. I will show you that it is damning souls. It is dragging the church into formalism, and making the League and Endeavor places of courting.

I will speak of the young lady first, and make her more prominent, because the devil doesn't want me to, and because his colleagues will raise serious objections. I love for the devil to object

to my work, and shout over his ill-will. I never intend to live in peace while I am declaring war, and wielding the sword. Devils may howl, and wicked men persecute, but I will strike sin wherever I find it, even in the most popular phase, until I see the purgative flames of God's holy fire sweep forever from existence the kingdom of the devil, and see him snatched as an intruder from his throne, where he rules as God of this world, chained and locked in hell, and the Lamb that was slain descend and

"Every kindred, every tribe,  
On this terrestrial ball,  
To Him all majesty ascribe,  
And crown Him Lord of all,"

while "All hail the power of Jesus' name, and angels prostrate fall." Therefore I have no apologies to make for what the Lord may lead me to say in removing the mask from the old slimy serpent that beguiled the first man, and since then has been a successful promoter of the same cause, and is today doing a more cunning business even than he did in the Garden in the beginning. I hate the devil, and all his cunning, crafty, alluring and seductive deceivableness, whereby he is causing sorrow, heart-aches, lives of shame, premature graves, and inhabiting hell.

Notice the Christian girl as she makes her debut. Heretofore she has been held aloof from the seductive environments of society. Her mother has kept her from slang, novel reading, evening calls from young men, Sabbath evening buggy rides, picnics and excursion tours, and the conversations of the day which would poison and tincture her mind. She has made of her a regular attendant at church services, Sabbath-school and prayer meeting, and raised her, we trust, around a family altar. Thus we find her, the evening she makes her debut, a pure, modest child of the King, wholly ignorant of the evils that then await her. But mother's prayers were forgotten as she listened to alluring tales of the pleasures of society, and promise of the best time she had ever enjoyed, and we find her entering the parlor with the blush of modesty mounting her fair face as a result of her partially nude appearance in her first evening attire. Beautiful strains of music are heard from the adjoining ball-room. The young man first presented asks to escort mother's Christian girl to the second scene of the evening. Was he a Christian? Immediately she finds herself amidst dazzling lights and glittering flash of diamonds, and without a moment of hesitation on "What would Jesus do," she finds herself in the embrace of a young man whose character is unknown, whose nerves are excited, and breath perfumed with smoke and the "refreshing drink" he has taken since entering the portals of this elegant home of some child's mother. With fast beating heart, and nerves strung high, she is pressed to the throbbing heart of her companion, as her head reclines upon his breast.

Where is Jesus? "He that is not with me is against me." Is He here? Her brain is bewildered, confused and excited, as she turns over and over again in her thoughts things never presented to her pure mind before. She has entered a fast life. She is hurried from one apartment to another, without a moment's meditation as to where she is going, only that she must do as others do.

Again the performance is changed. The dining-hall is sought. Delicious refreshments are served. The clink of wine glasses tell that wine and champagne are flowing freely. To refuse the wine and discard the champagne is to be unpopular and receive slights. Appetites are born, old ones renewed, brains are crazed, minds are poisoned, purity shrinks back. The modest young lady

has grown boisterous and loud. The blush in the parlor has been erased, and the piazza, verandah and lawn are resorted to. A promenade in the dark, and seat in the shade, and a carriage drive at questionable hours brings mother's Christian daughter home with her mind saturated with wonderful ideas of a new life.

The name of Jesus, so often called while on her knees by her bedside, is no longer a consoling word, but one that brings rebuke, and is forgotten or neglected tonight. The precious old Book, once searched with care, is no longer interesting, but one giving light on this new life is eagerly read. Is she a better Christian? Does Jesus smile and angels shout? or does the devil grow jubilant over the event?

Thus we find the result of a Christian girl associating with unsaved young men. The one has the mind of Christ, the other only the carnal mind. (Rom. 8:7.) It is impossible for their leadings to be similar, and they will not seek the same places for amusement and instruction, one having the mind, or Spirit of Christ (or they are none of His; Rom. 8:9) seeks for entertainment the revival and cottage prayer meeting, also the regular services of the church. The other, having the carnal mind, "which is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," will not be satisfied with these things, but prefers the Sunday excursion to historical places, church entertainments, popular lectures, etc. Their amusements are the ballroom, the park, the theater, where half nude women are encouraged in their life of dissipation by the money and presence of church members and professed Christians, who enjoy the unchaste conversations held on the stage. Can these two walk together except they agree? We find the Christian girl gradually won to these places of amusement, and the noble-hearted, Christian young man, in order that he may hold his hand in society with his irreligious girl, seeks the same places. Prayer meeting is neglected. Saturday night having been spent in dissipation, Sunday morning is used for rest, instead of attending Sabbath-school, as had always been the custom. Church services are slighted; communion is neglected; a back seat is taken. Mother receives slights, wounds and short words. Wine and champagne flow freely until months roll by. Balls and theaters are attended, and finally drives in closed carriages; and, alas, another place is sought rather than mother's parlor. Marks of dissipation are seen on the face of the once Christian boy or girl, who arises at 10 or 11 A. M. with a dulled brain and an aching brow. Mother must not offer reproof, or her heart will be wounded.

The young woman who has been wrecked religiously, and gone thus far, oftentimes finds herself unable longer to shield the sin of her life. Heartbroken and physically wrecked, she steps down bedecked with sorrow, shame and disgrace, while the same society that led her away from Jesus and into sin, turns its back upon her, closes its doors, and erases her name, not because she was unchaste, but because of being more unfortunate than the rest she had been unable to conceal her fall. Thus she steps out to meet the kicks, scoffs and jeers of the cold, heartless, world, and no longer the church by her side as in days gone by. Why? Because she accepted the attentions of unsaved young man.

"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks." (Eph. 6:4.) Unsaved girls are not found in the company of boys without foolish talking and jesting. The unsaved enjoy this kind of conversation. God says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14), for "what communion hath light with darkness."

Don't try to help God in bringing new plans up to convert the world. Saved boys and girls are led to the devil by keeping company with the unsaved. She says, "I will lead him to the Lord." Yes, and just when you have your plans completed he finishes a scheme to lead you into sin. I never saw a Christian girl make any religious advancement, and keep company with an unsaved boy.

After keeping the company of the girl for awhile, she is asked to sit in the parlor on Sabbath evening instead of going to church. Sometimes they take a walk, then a buggy ride, and come in at 8, 9 or 10 in the evening. These moonlight buggy rides are never suited to a double-seated rig with the girl's mother on the back seat. Yet the girl says she is winning the boy for Jesus. The unsaved boy wants light talk, foolishness and jesting. Jesus wants prayer, thanksgiving, separation between the clean and the unclean, and complete obedience. Can the two harmonize? Never. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 8:3.) Does the unsaved one accept Christ and live for Him? He may join the church; I have known this -- and he bragged about accepting a scheme to stand in with the girl. "Sweetheart religion." I hate it like I hate the devil, its father. He may reform a little, stop drinking, etc., and then tell the Christian girl that if she doesn't do just as he wants her to he will go back to drinking again. Who did he stop for? Is there any change after courtship and after marriage? I could give the names of boys who reformed to an extent to "stand in" with certain girls. Did the girls think that? I have had them tell me how they were winning the boy over, etc., and the same boy had told me about how he was fooling the girl.

Show me one out of ten; yes, one out of twenty, where the Christian does not yield, grow cold and indifferent. You may say, "God can keep me, I won't go back." He cannot keep you there. Get down and pray "Lead me not into temptation," then keep away from the tempter and He will keep you. You go where He does not want you to go and He does not go with you, but you, the unsaved one, and the devil have it. Unsaved boys rejoice many times when they see girls with whom they are associating drifting away from a strict religious life. I have known boys (many of them church members) contrive plans to get Christian girls off to something which they knew was not right, and made them depreciate the girl's profession. They would even visit the girls' mothers, and present their plans in a way that would seem right.

Since I have been preaching young men by the dozen have related such incidents to me, some of them sneering at the religion of the girl, and others expressing deep regret for being used by the devil in leading the girl away from Christ.

We will follow the Christian girl with her unsaved friend to the revival. He is asked to a step toward God, and either declares he doesn't believe in such foolishness or says, "I appreciate your interest and am giving this question some deep thought, but will study more and decide later. Your company is making a better man of me." If this won't work he will give his hand for prayer or even go to the altar. Seeking all the time to destroy the young Christian's hope of heaven, and drag her back into sin, if not shame. I have seen young people work in the altar during revivals, and in a few days the same one would come to the service with an unsaved friend who "didn't care to go up m front." A seat is found, a compromise made, and the young altar worker is seen more than half way back in the church. The head is bowed, gloom and despair envelop the very being, the spiritual atmosphere is changed, and the soul is chilled. Prayer is called for, but the altar worker don't feel like kneeling and just bows the head. Testimonies are being given, but like Peter, they

are warming by the fire of the world, and can't testify tonight; circumstances are not suited to it. Degeneration has begun. A back step has been taken. In a few services the preacher says something to which exceptions are taken; the unsaved companion is consulted, they agree, and the devil agrees with them. Attendance at church service is left off. No stand is taken for Christ. Our young Christian is left without hope, without Christ, and without salvation. Why? Irreligious company was kept.

Again, the young Christian finds the heart reaching out after deeper things of God, for heart purity or entire sanctification, but the worldly, irreligious friend objects, doesn't believe in it. The devil knows his business; he has been in the work of dragging young converts back into sin, and damning their souls for six thousand years, and he is afraid of that work of God which gives a pure heart, because it means bankruptcy for him and defeat for hell. He has no part of his program for the colonization of hell, and the damnation of the world in the hands of more expert demons from the world of eternal night than that part of associating religious young people with irreligious ones. It is to the advantage of the irreligious so-called friend to object to this work of heart purity, because he knows that from a heart filled with the love of God, and perfected in love toward God, cannot flow love for frivolous, foolish, idolatrous, worldly amusements. The unsaved one knows, as do all, that a person who loves God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, whose life is consecrated to Him, will not attend worldly amusements and chum with worldly people. Unsaved ones only find pleasure in worldly things, and ere long it can be said of the Christians with whom they associate, "Birds of a feather flock together." Liquids seek their level, and so with man; he seeks those things which harmonize with the condition of his heart, and the man or woman who has Jesus in their heart seek things which are Christ-like, spiritual and heavenly.

To leave religion out of the question, can these two continue their associations one with the other? The devil himself knows they cannot without one is won by the other, which is always the result sooner or later. Does the religious girl win the irreligious boy for Christ? Does the religious boy win the irreligious girl for God? If the devil had nothing more than this to trouble him he would lean back in hell, cross his legs and shout, while the other demons would grow jubilant in the ashes because of victory in the name of Beelzebub.

What are the results? Ere long the seat at the prayer meeting is vacated, and two seats filled at the opera or at the worldly entertainment. The poor are no longer visited and told of Jesus.

"Oh, for a closer walk with God,  
A calm and heavenly frame,  
A light to shine upon the road  
That leads me to the Lamb."

"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,  
How sweet their memory still,  
But they have left an aching void,  
The world can never fill."

A gay little company have gathered together to spend the evening with worldly music and reveling. These gatherings are moved from one home to another, until that burning love for Christ is quenched to a great extent. A lovely form with rosy cheeks and delicate hands is escorted to the instrument; she has a sweet voice and sings in the choir. Will the irreligious friend seated by the young Christian hear a sacred piece sung and played? No; it would not be appropriate for the occasion. (Good Lord, deliver me from the occasion when it would not be appropriate.) But what

is heard? Those fingers are quick -- music begins -- a waltz, a Schottische and the German. Then the forms are seen on the floor embracing each other and stepping to the music. Then it is found the Lord's prayer has not been kept hot on the lips, "Lead us not into temptation." Why cannot Jesus keep here as well as elsewhere? Because you never find Him at such places. Our young Christian is found on the floor in the midst of a host of friends (?) They would not have been found in a ball-room, but this is a "select" party. Yes, it is; the devil made the selections, and was never better pleased over a piece of his fiendish work than on this occasion. These small parties are the swill tubs of hell, to be carried after a short while to the hog-pen -- the ball-room -- which is the warehouse or plunder-room from which the houses of prostitution are supplied.

A religious girl kept company with an irreligious boy; they were to be married. She talked to him about doing better, and I saw him in different revivals at the altar, seemingly very penitent, but he could never find peace, and no one could find the secret of his trouble so as to help him. In a meeting where he was at the altar regularly the girl consecrated all to God, and received a pure heart. (Matt. 23:19.) She told the young man, "I think well of you, but for the present we must stop, as I cannot marry or keep company with an unsaved person." (2 Cor. 6:14.) He immediately ceased coming to the altar, and was found there no more, but began his outbroken life again. The girl run well for a while, but wavered a little, and began her association with him again. Was she winning that boy for Christ? No. But he and the devil were winning her. Young people, you know this to be true. Will you longer league with the devil in the promotion of his fiendish work? Will

was a fable, but I will live in a way to show those about me that it is a reality, and that it satisfies me.

You may say, "I believe in young people enjoying themselves." So do I. But have you no way of enjoying yourself only with the irreligious and their pleasures? I have a better source and quality of enjoyment. "He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." (Psa. 107:9.) Does your source of joy do this? "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." (Psa. 37:4.) Are we delighting ourselves in the Lord when we search these worldly places for pleasure?

I have known Christian fathers and mothers to insist on their religious daughters marrying irreligious boys. Parents, you cannot disobey God, or have someone else do so, without causing sorrow. I have never known this to fail. I have known boys to marry irreligious girls, and thereby be led from a "life hid with Christ in God," (Col. 3:3) to a hell on earth. They raised children to be demons in hell. I know religious girls who married irreligious boys and their lives were changed until marks of sorrow and deep disappointment were left on their countenances. Who fills the uppermost room in your heart? Whose fancy do you try to fill? Is it Jesus, your Lord, or some unsaved friend?

Young people, I am your friend, true as steel. I know by experience that you will never find what you are searching for in worldly company. Stop at once; be in the company of volunteers who are dispatched by the Captain of the Hosts of Israel, and say, "Here am I, send me." The battle must go forward; the victory must be won. Our parents, the old soldiers of the cross, are falling in the lines. We must go forward. Answer to the roll call; receive your commission; be drilled on your knees until you are able to have their mantle fall on you. Fill their vacancies as they drop out, one

by one. Press the battle to the gate of the enemy, and see our loved ones and associates brought to Christ. Let us receive, as from the Lord, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in faith, in spirit, in purity." (1 Tim. 4: 12.) Then we will be enabled to exclaim at any moment, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20.)

Incidents which occurred in one meeting I held, are worth giving to the reader. Five Christian girls, who had manifestations of the Spirit, all kept company with irreligious boys during the meeting. They spurned the preaching of sanctification, and took back seats with their "gentlemen friends." The meeting closed. A few months elapsed, and all five of these girls, four of them living in less than two blocks of each other, refused to take a stand for Jesus. Those who could, married to shield their shame. The others are groping in darkness and disrepute. Would this have been true if the girls had found their associates among the people of God?

Undue liberties are taken by young Christians of opposite sex. (1 Pet. 2:16.) These liberties; though innocent at first, are made to breed contempt. This is begun by the young people educating themselves to believe that the love of Christ, which makes them one in Christ, erases certain lines of distinction and separation which should hold in reserve one sex from the other. The periods of meeting one another grow more frequent, until the newness is lost, and with it to a very great extent the proper respect, until brother and sister, or Mister and Miss are no longer used, but it's John, George, Susan and Mary. This is a slight but very distinct inroad of the devil, by which he sows seeds of undue liberties. This may continue by rehearsing incidents, in a way which at first made the head drop and the countenance fall. These things should not under any circumstances be talked of with the opposite sex, however pure their hearts, or devoted their lives. Indeed we question whether prolonged conversations of this kind even between husband and wife should ever be held. Very improper periods of association may be had, such as young people make and keep with one another during a series of revival services, which cannot fail to divert their minds, and cause them to lose a seriousness which they should carry to their rooms.

Remember, we are speaking now of Christians. An improper caress, a light touch of the hand, an improper handshake, and clinging to the hand in a caressing way which will bring impure thoughts, flattery and flirting, which leads to deceit. This is only another system of lying, and must not, yea, cannot exist in a heart where Jesus reigns. This will eventually lead to deceiving mother.

If we were filling the office of a mother we should raise serious objections to a daughter keeping company later than 9:30, even with the most consecrated young man. We doubt very much as to the conversation being profitable or edifying to either for a longer period. Not a few begin a life of degeneracy in mother's parlor; both young men and young women. A young man with pure motives will never insist on extending the time, if the hour is set by mother. He may court mother's confidence and good will, and even spend some time during the early part of the evening in conversation with her; but mothers, as you prize purity, fear God, and love your daughters, ask Jesus to help you while you have their lives in your hands. The parlors in many homes are used as traps, or dead-falls, where great troupes are enlisted in the fearful army that's dragging our sisters down into the thralldom of impurity. Mothers are going to be held responsible for this.

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## 02 -- ASSOCIATES -- By Mrs. James Taylor

There is nothing that so makes or mars the character of a young man or young woman as the companions they choose. The more intimate we become with any character, the more we mirror that character in our own lives. Hence the great importance of a wise choice. Show me the kind of company a young woman keeps, and I will tell you what kind of a girl she is.

It is much easier to name the beautiful things in those we love than the blemishes, but after all it takes a real friend to tell us of those things in our character that appear as blemishes. Some one has said: "Count yourself richer that day you discover a new fault in yourself; not because it is there, but richer because it is no longer a hidden fault. And if you have not found all your faults pray to have them revealed to you, even if the revelation must come in a way that hurts your pride." If I succeed in impressing the heart of any young man or young woman with the fact that the company they are keeping does not elevate their lives, and help them to purer, nobler living, to God give the praise, even though it cost the bosom friend of some heart who reads these lines.

Some one asks, "How are we to help others unless we associate with them?" And a bright girl says, "My best friend promises to quit drinking and gambling if I will only marry him," or, the habit he pledges to give up may not be one so gross as this. Ah, my precious young reader, by all means try to inspire those around you to live as He would have them live, but you can never do this by getting down on a level with them. True, Christ our example went right down into the gutter after the fallen, and "The servant is not greater than his Lord," but He didn't stay there and make Himself one with them. The lives of many sweet, noble girls have been blighted by that pledge, "I will do better after awhile."

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### The Companions That Mar Our Lives

Avoid the friend, by all means, who has an idea that young men love the girl who is giddy and gay, caring for nothing but money and clothes, and spends most of her time planning dresses that she believes will please those she fancies are her admirers. The heart of any young man that is worth winning goes out after the girl who does not parade herself as show goods; she is not fashionable, and generally not rich, but what a large, pure, womanly heart she has. She will not ask for a carriage, nor a fine house, but is willing to do her own work, as far as possible, and wear simple dresses, making them over, if needful. The world needs more girls who can teach men that happiness does not depend on money. There would be more happy homes in our land today if girls would spend less time shopping, and more in making home attractive for their brothers. A truly refined girl is well dressed even in a plain lawn or muslin. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."

One is always afraid to trust the man or woman with a sharp tongue; those who can never see a good trait in others, but delight to magnify their faults. How much better to associate with those who love to dwell on the beautiful and good in the characters of those around them. A girl

who makes pretensions to love the friend who has called to see her, and yet as soon as the door is closed draws a sigh of relief as she begins a perfect tirade of criticism on the innocent one, is not the girl to trust. A tongue of this kind, and a frivolous insincerity generally go together. The common talk of the girl of today is largely idle gossip. The young women of our land have a wonderful power in molding the lives of young men for good or evil, but so much time that should be spent in training their minds to think, and their hands to perform the loving ministries that make women a blessing to the world, is whiled away in books that only tend to drag her down, or spent in idle gossip.

As some one has said, "Talk about things, not people; a stupid girl who cannot talk at all is better far than a chattering girl who can talk of nothing good or useful." A little story read some time ago comes to my mind just now. A philosopher was requested by the king to serve for him and his friends a sumptuous dinner. When they arrived they found nothing but tongue. He had tongues of every animal that could be found that was used for food; tongues fried, baked and broiled. "This is your best dinner?" said the king. "This is my best, for the tongue is the best thing in the world," replied the philosopher. "Well, I appoint another feast, and I wish you to serve the meanest dinner you can possibly get up," said the king. So the feast was prepared and when the guests went into the dining-room again they found nothing but tongues. "How is this?" said the king. "When I asked for the best you gave us tongues, and when I asked for the worst you gave us nothing else. Is the tongue the worst as well as the best?... Yes," said the philosopher, "There is nothing so bad as the tongue. It can bless or curse, bring joy or sorrow, peace or war; it can lead to virtue, or seduce to vice; it can utter truth, or speak lies; it can be harsh or mild, rough or smooth, refined or vulgar, pure or impure."

successful instrument in the hands of the evil one in blighting mankind; or, in the hands of a tender Saviour she can be used as the most efficient of all His servants in bringing sunshine, joy and peace wherever her presence is found.

And then there is the flirt. A young man or young woman who will flirt, leave nothing but a path of sighs and tears as they go through life, trying to have "a little harmless fun," as they call it. Certainly such a character is of no use to God or man, until some higher power wields a mighty influence over it. A young man who will purposely win the heart of a sweet, trusting girl, only to cast her aside as a plaything of which he is wearied, is a scoundrel of the deepest dye. And the young woman who knowingly wins the confidence and love of a young man who trusts and believes in her, in order to count him "another feather in her cap," scarcely deserves the name woman; and she is certainly far beneath the dignity of a lady. But this isn't all. Every day, and oftentimes among young people with good intent, flirtations are carried on that cause many heartaches, and frequently lives of sorrow.

A clasp of the hand, that knowing expression from the eyes; light, jovial expressions of friendship and even love, carried on to such an extent that many young people do not expect the truth from one another; while others, more trusting, suffer untold agonies as the result of somebody's "fun." No young man or young woman who ever has a thought of what Christ-likeness means has any time to flirt, by word, look or act. Nine times out of ten the girl or boy who flirts

spend all their spare moments, and even those they cannot spare, burning midnight oil reading novels. How eagerly they grasp the latest novel until their minds are weakened and narrowed.

My dear girl friend, have a purpose in life, and strive to be useful. My heart has often gone out in tender pity as I passed through the long rooms of some factory at the noon hour to find girls sitting behind their looms; poor tired girls with aching bodies, many of them with widowed mothers and orphan children to support, reading dime novels. My heart longed to give each one something to read in their few spare moments that would be an inspiration and a help. What the working girl needs, as well as the girl who lives a life of luxury and ease, is not the production of our late novel writers, but something that comes from the heart of a noble man or woman, that will broaden their minds and purify their lives.

There is still another girl, known everywhere, who is a dangerous companion; the girl who misbehaves in church. The girl who goes to a religious service purposely late to attract attention, and parades down the aisle with such a jingle of jewelry and fan, and swish of silk skirts as to annoy those who are trying to worship. Then before the service is half over shows impatience as though it were all perfect bore; and by nods and winks and gestures, and oftentimes whispers, she succeeds in annoying thoroughly everybody around her, unless it be a giddy friend by her side, who is so unfortunate as to be thrown in her company. A girl's religion should make her happy and joyful, but it should be so sacred to her that in church she feels she is in the presence of God, and that she is there to learn of Him.

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### 03 -- 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:

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

(a) God forbids it. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." I 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 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 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 bonds 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 welcomes God's ministers, the other dreads them; one wishes to rear the children for God, and 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 of disposition, personal beauty, 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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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 mismated and mistaken. The bright morning dew-drops 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.

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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 whom you need and who needs you, and with whom you can be 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 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 fullness of God's favor, and strive to win the wandering one to God.

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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 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. 11:13-21.) -- Original.

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