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A Mixed Marriage  
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# *A Mixed Marriage?*





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A MIXED  
MARRIAGE



*by*

RICHARD GINDER

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# A MIXED MARRIAGE

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RICHARD GINDER

If you're a Protestant, for heaven's sake don't marry a Catholic. If you're a Catholic, don't marry a non-Catholic. And if you're Jewish, don't marry a gentile. Whatever you are, marry your own!

Why? Because marriage is a world-without-end bargain. It's the way God provided for the propagation of humankind on earth.

The animals don't marry. No wedding ceremonies are held in barnyards or zoos. Guided solely by instinct and opportunity, the animals simply cohabit promiscuously.

But we men and women are better than animals. We have intelligence. They don't. We think. They can't. That's why no horse has ever yet been able to throw a saddle across a man's back. . . .

Our power to think—a spiritual power—points to our possession of a soul, a thing which, being spiritual, can never die.

Making babies, then, is quite different from making furniture. A man can build an end-table and stand it in the corner. If he goes away and forgets all about it, the end-table won't be any the worse for wear. But when a man fathers a child—what a difference! He's helped produce a human being, an item that will live on and on, ultimately in heaven or hell, forever. And the eternal destiny of that infant will depend largely on its parents.

That's why Almighty God made marriage basically a contract. It's an exchange. The boy gives himself to the girl in return for her gift of herself. But because of the high purposes of this contract, God has made it unique.

The children are the first consideration. Boys are attracted to girls and vice versa by an instinct that leads to the having of children as surely as the top of a sliding board leads to the bottom. Affection craves union, and union results in offspring—a child, endlessly precious in the sight of God and destined to live forever.

### **The Child Needs The Parents**

There are some types of biological species that have no sex—or, should we say, types in

which the female conceives without the co-operation of the male. For us, God has disposed things otherwise. God has made us different, men from women, to necessitate that co-operation, to spread the load, divide responsibility, and guarantee every child a father as well as a mother.

The child needs both if it is to have the best possible opportunity of leading a normal life. If Mother is the heart of the family, then Father is its head; and in its education, the child needs both head and heart.

When we speak of education, incidentally, we don't mean a choice between Harvard or Princeton, public or private schools. We mean training in religion—decency, honesty, truth—all the things that turn the child from a little savage into a God-fearing member of the community. Who taught you to keep your hands off other people's property?—to be clean in thought, word, and action? Wasn't it your good mother and father?—and wasn't your home the greatest influence in moulding your character and making you the type of person you are today?

The first purpose of marriage, then, is the procreation and education of children.

### **Sex In Marriage**

The second purpose provides a legitimate

relief for the sex-urge. We all have it, but it would be a hideous world if we used it promiscuously. There are some using it that way right now, polygamists, taking their women successively or tandem-style, like horses hitched to a wagon, but the comforting fact is that those people are in the minority. It's the great majority of decent-living people who keep this country what it is—a splendid, honorable nation.

It all fuses together, the love of a boy for a girl: they love with a pure, disinterested love, finding that love consummated and brought to its most beautiful climax in the most intimate union possible to human beings. And at that very moment, they are close to God, presenting Him with a body into which He may breathe yet another human soul.

That is the only use of sex ordained by the good God—the only use that isn't sordid, base, and animal. This use is consecrated, an expression of mutual love.

Finally, the marriage contract meets a basic need of the human heart; it satisfies that craving for companionship. All of us long for the ideal friend, one who will journey through the years with us, sharing our joys and our sorrows, our hopes and our disappointments; one who will know us through



and through, who will go on loving us in spite of our shortcomings.

Boys and girls are built for marriage not only by sexual differentiation but by temperament as well. Girls know the art of gracious living; they are home-makers by instinct. Whereas men are rough and angular in their way; they can work like horses; they are natural-born bread-winners. But they need sympathy—lots of it! The two types complete each other. Paired off, they have all the equipment to start a home and people it with children.

### **A Unique Contract**

These three purposes—children, sex, and companionship—make marriage a very singular type of contract. It is literally unique. There's nothing else like it under the sun. Hence God has decreed that it be mutual: each gives himself generously and entirely. It is perpetual: once it has been entered into, there can be no going back; it is dissolved only by death. And it is exclusive: this boy for that girl and no other girl; that girl for this boy and no other boy.

These three qualities of the contract best protect the interests of all concerned: the children, first of all, by insuring them the love and protection of their parents, together with

the stabilizing influence of a home, as long as they'll be in need of it. One need hardly refer to the tragedies of homeless, parentless children, robbed of their birthright by the divorce courts.

As for the mother, whatever the sacrifices she may make in vitality and physical beauty on behalf of her children, she can count on the lifelong companionship and devotion of her husband. The father too knows that regardless of his fortune or condition through the years, he will have his good wife at his side, his best and most faithful friend.

This very quality of permanence makes marriage a union not lightly to be entered upon. But once the union is in force, it helps husband and wife ride out many a storm that would destroy a less permanent bond. They just have to make a go of it. She's all he has for life. Together or separate, they're married until death.

Every marriage is a contract of that sort, whether it be made in China or Bulgaria, by savages or civilized persons. It is mutual, perpetual, and exclusive.

But between baptized persons, it is still more. It is a sacrament. It is a clear title to God's special help in leading the common life, one of the sacred seven instituted by Jesus Christ during His residence on earth.

## Unity of Religion

In view of all this, it isn't hard to see why there should be a unity of religion between husband and wife. Marriage, as we said, is intended to provide lifelong companionship. The wife will be looking into her husband's face, morning after morning, for ten, twenty, maybe fifty years. And how can there be real intimacy if neither can talk about his religion, the thing that's closest to his heart?

Take the case of a Catholic marrying a Protestant. Let the Catholic drop the Mass, the Blessed Mother, the Poor Souls, St. Joseph, and all parish activities from his thoughts and conversation, and what has he left? It's a pretty bleak outlook for him! And he'll face a host of more or less embarrassing questions all his life long: "Why can't you eat meat on Friday? Why can't we have breakfast together before you go to Communion? Does Sonny really have to serve Mass? It gets him up awfully early, you know. . . . What! Another special collection? Don't you think the children ought to try the public school this year for a change?"—and so it will go on. . . .

### Birth Prevention and the Catholic

More serious for the Catholic is the prob-

lem of having children. Birth prevention is a mortal sin, and it appears to take a lot of good will on the part of even devout Catholic couples to keep God's law in that regard during these pagan times. Suppose, then, that friend husband or wife lays down the dictum: No children for the first five years; or, Our family is large enough now; or, Let's get a new car this spring instead of paying all our money to the hospital.—If the Catholic doesn't win that argument, he's cut off from the sacraments and in danger of hell.

Equally serious is the scandal given to the children. A main purpose of marriage, remember, is the religious training of the children. You are a Catholic, say, and your husband or your wife is a Baptist. The children have as much right to think the Baptists have the true faith as to think that you have the true faith. Father and mother enjoy equal authority with their children; and the children, applying the only logic they know, can hardly be blamed for concluding that, Baptist or Catholic, each church is equally deserving belief—which is nonsense, of course. One or the other is true. Not both!

### **The Promises**

Every marriage of a Catholic with one not

of that faith involves the signing of formal promises. The couple agree:

1. To contract marriage indissoluble except by death, according to the rules, regulations, and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church, and in no other way.

2. To have all the children of their marriage duly baptized and properly instructed, educated, and reared according to the rules, regulations, discipline, and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

3. That the Catholic party to the marriage and all the children born of the union may at all times without let or hindrance of any kind freely practice and exercise the Roman Catholic Religion; and in the event of death they shall be buried in a Catholic Cemetery and in no other.

In addition, the Catholic signs promises that no other marriage ceremony than that performed by a Catholic priest will take place; and that he will do his best by word and example to convert his non-Catholic partner to the Catholic Faith.

This instrument, duly signed and witnessed, is presented to the Catholic Bishop before he will even consider issuing a "dispensation," without which, of course, the Catholic can only enter into a merely civil marriage.

## The Protestant's Dilemma

About those promises: A devout Lutheran, say, considering marriage with an equally devout Catholic, is in a dilemma. If he is convinced that Lutheranism is right and Catholicism wrong, how can he conscientiously sign an agreement permitting his children to be reared in what he considers a false and erroneous creed? Unless he signs, there can be no marriage. And, on the other hand, he could not violate his conscience by signing insincerely.

Such a couple might attempt marriage before a Lutheran pastor or some civil official. But that puts the Catholic on the spot. His Church teaches that there is no marriage for a Catholic unless it be before a priest. He would not consider himself married by such a ceremony. For him it would be nothing more than a civil licensing of lewd and lascivious open concubinage. He is in the state of sin. The indoctrination of a lifetime is not lightly to be flouted. His whole psychology is outraged. He has a guilty feeling. He cannot receive the sacraments of his Church. For him there can be no happiness in the union—certainly an explosive situation. His conscience and all his past training tell him either to renew his marriage consent be-

fore a priest, or to separate and resume life as a bachelor.

### **“Suppose I Fall In Love?”**

“But suppose I fall in love with a Catholic or a Protestant?”—Falling in love, it seems, is ninety-percent biological. It’s a fever that sweats out too quickly to serve as a lasting foundation for marriage. It may last a few months or a year, but rarely longer. It’s animal attraction. Picture the swooning Adonis and his mate after fifteen years of marriage. Now where is the heaving bosom, the tremulous whisper, the passionate kiss? Is he still racing after her with a dozen American Beauties in his fist? Does she still touch her ear-lobes with “Ecstasy” before descending to lay the chops in the skillet? Not a bit of it. That has all boiled off, and all that remains is whatever there was of good sensible affection and loyal friendship in the association.

No one *has* to fall in love, remember. There is such a thing as governing one’s affections. Priests do it, nuns do it—all of us do, to a certain extent. One might admire a person like the Princess Elizabeth, for instance, but only a very dim-witted person would permit himself to fall in love with one so unattainable.

Certain people—those not of our faith—are just not marriageable as far as we are concerned. We think of them as brothers and sisters, but never in connection with marriage. We rule them out beforehand, as we do members of our own family, or the mothers and fathers of our friends, no matter how good-looking or charming they may be.

### **The Deep End**

Again, in every friendship of every sort, one is always aware of how deeply one is getting involved. And there is a point in every affair when the boy or girl says: "This is it. This is the point beyond which there is no turning back. I still have it in my power to pull out of this, but if I go on, I'm off at the deep end." That's the time to start praying for light. And if it's an affair with one not of your own faith, for God's sake turn back!

The best way to be sure of marrying rightly is by mixing with the right set. A Catholic, for instance—and it might as well apply to Protestant and Jews—should travel with Catholics. If he is in the market for a wife, he shouldn't so much as walk a non-Catholic girl home from the movies. He should get in with a Catholic crowd and study the possibilities. He should look at non-



Catholic girls with a friendly eye, but never with an eye to marriage.

In conclusion: To insure married happiness, if you're a Protestant, don't marry a Catholic. If you're a Catholic, don't marry a non-Catholic. And if you're Jewish, don't marry a gentile. Whatever you are, marry your own!



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