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THE LOOPHOLE

By Arthur L. Vess

"I am not afraid that the people called Methodists will ever cease to exist in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out. -- John Wesley

The Revival Herald
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Revised and Third Edition

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The many expressions of appreciation and the increasing demand for the message of this booklet calls for a Third Edition. The effect and reactions to the Former Editions were about as expected, except in a few exceptions, which were very interesting and revealing. Those who believe in the old fashioned Bible standards of true holiness have been very pronounced in their endorsement and appreciation.

As the name of this booklet suggests, the writer has also made every effort to stop up the leaks and "loopholes" through which holiness people are so rapidly leaking out and drifting back into the world, and becoming a part of those who hate, deride and condemn the holy standards of truth. Those acquainted with Church History know that the Church has always drifted gradually back into the world, here a little and there a little, until the lines of demarcation between the Church and the world have become extinct.

As the spirit and wisdom of the world press in, they brand holy principles and standards as "narrow," "nonessential," "radical," "foolish," "legalistic," etc. Just as "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," just so the wisdom of God is foolishness with unholy and earth-minded men and women. There is still a radical difference between God and the devil, sin and holiness, the Church and the world, time and eternity, heaven and hell. The devil is wise and knows how to select the most plausible arguments to win his case and souls. In order to make room for all kinds of worldly adornment and vanity, he begins with the Wedding Ring, by making it a kind of domestic and marital charm or symbol. He knows very well that if our wives and mothers wear the wedding rings, that they cannot oppose vanity in their children or fellow church members. Satan knows that if our ministers do not oppose the wedding ring, that they will not preach against other forms of worldliness and pride. At least, the writer has never known of a preacher who permitted the wedding rings to come out against kindred forms of worldliness. How can he?

In this book the writer hopes to furnish a handbook for pastors, evangelists, teachers, and other Christian workers who have to deal with the jewelry problem; and to give information and courage to those who are faced with the problem in their own lives or homes. "This book should be in every home and church library."

The writer of these lines admits that some good mothers and wives wear the wedding ring, but that their goodness is not increased by such; neither is their wrong example decreased but increased by their morality. The nice respectable dram drinker sends more people to the ditch and more souls to hell than all the gutter snipes. All we ask of those who read this booklet is that they be humble and honest with themselves, and willing to conform their lives to God's holy standards, whatever the cost. Let us pray and obey while we read.

Those of us who see the direction of the tide before the tidal waves roll in on us, and dare to take our stand against jewelry and other forms of worldliness, are branded as "narrow-minded" and are pushed aside.

When a man who is loved and appreciated by the masses of our good people is pushed out of our schools, campmeetings, ministerial conventions, and other places of usefulness by a few officials who hold the power over our people, what is wrong with them? Are they

"narrow-minded" or "narrow-souled"? Is this persecution, or just an imaginary "persecution complex"?

It would not be quite so bad if worldly-minded men and women were not being put into more and more places of influence in our schools and churches. We first become modern, then modernistic. All forms of compromise are the seeds of modernism.

One of the great men in our largest so-called holiness denomination said to us in a letter, "I feel like a stranger in my own church." What next? Read Church History.

Why do we not do something about it? Why do a man's own friends (?) forsake him when he tries to do something about it? Are we all on the way to the Judgment? Read 2 Tim. 4:1-8, now.

Rev. Wilson Douglas and a number of his old-fashioned Nazarene Brethren have been responsible for the publication of the Third and present Edition of The Loophole. May God bless and reward both him and them for this vision of the great need of "True Holiness" in these drifting times. May God give us more who are willing to come right out into the open and scatter "Scriptural Holiness over these lands, before the Atomic explosions end our earthly habitation. People will not be so anxious about their reputation then. Why should we now? We shall soon be in eternity.

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01 -- WHY THE CHANGE?

Whatever else may be affirmed or denied, one thing is certain: That there was a time when the jewelry question was settled in the Holiness Movement. There was no question as to our stand on the subject, not even the wedding ring was excepted. The wedding band was just classed with all other kinds of jewelry, and considered the property of formal churches and of the world. Of course this time was before our preachers learned to shield certain people and shun certain portions of the Scripture. This was in the times when holiness was synonymous with revival power and glory. This was when holiness was hated and spurned the world and worldly churches. This was the time when the old time preacher valued the human soul above his own reputation, salary, place or power. "In those day came" the old time preachers, full of faith, holy courage and power, guided by a supernatural wisdom. Every man looked alike to them because they represented God, and souls.

But you say, "Yes, but the times have changed"" Have they? or have men changed? Has holiness changed or has sin changed? Has the pride and vanity of the human heart changed? Why are many of our so-called modern holiness churches so formal, dead, worldly, fashionable and earthy? How many real revivals have you seen or heard of in these modern times? How many ministers or laymen impress you as men and women of prayer and power? How many are more interested in earthly topics, possessions, friends, and ease, than they are in God, souls, revivals and heaven? How many holiness people impress you as persons of piety and power?

Not long since two keen young men, recent students of a certain holiness school, but members of the "popular churches" said to the writer: "We have traveled as members of a quartet in many holiness camp meetings, and the thing that surprised, shocked and grieved us more than all else, has been the utter lack of any devotional life or spirit among modern holiness camps and people." Yes, times have changed. At another camp two intelligent ladies widely acquainted said, "It is so difficult to find preachers for our camps and revivals who have an unction in their message and a burden in their souls for the souls of others. They have a set of sermons they get off with plenty of wit and humor, (in and out of the pulpit), but that is about all." Another old line preacher, when asked how a certain conference of a holiness church was progressing, replied, with a sad countenance, "Well, about the most impressive thing about the ... Conference is, that every one vies with the other to see who can tell the best joke and get the biggest laugh." What more could have been said of any organization of the world? The writer is no recluse or long-faced pessimist, but he does know that there is more to holiness than volleys of folly; and that in a ruined world there is something to be seriously concerned about -- part of the time.

Yes, times have changed, but for the worse. Before we go further, let us have a little class meeting with ourselves. Have I changed? Have you changed? Does Christ mean to you and me what he once meant, -- the source of all our peace and hopes? Do we live in the sacred holy fellowship with him as in other years? Did you and I ever have convictions which have now been surrendered? Have we surrendered them because we are more or less devout, prayerful, and heavenly minded? Have we left the "narrow way?" Do we rejoice more in suffering for Christ and holy principles, than we do for the praise and endorsement of this old world, shallow Church members and compromisers? Do we still feel tender? or do we resent the old time truth, and find it hard to love those who "dare to preach the truth," -- as we once experienced it? Have you or I been "disobedient to the heavenly vision?"

Yes times have changed, but who has changed them? The principles of holiness are as immutable and as unchangeable as the Character of God who is the source of all holy principles. The law of gravity still holds the planets in their courses. Men may change their courses, friends, habits and character, but the moral principles upon which holy characters are builded are as unchangeable and as inviolate as the character of God himself. Let us not fool ourselves: "God is not mocked; this vanity, pride and love for the fashions of the world have no place or endorsement before a holy God or a holy people. Holy hearts are not clamoring for special license which leads to looseness and laxness. Holiness of character tends to a more careful walk with God, and a more complete separation from every questionable thing. This is the kind of a change that the holiness movement is needing more than any other thing. "Shun the very appearance of evil."

What has caused this change in sentiment and emphasis on the jewelry question? Why must our sisters and mothers who have been the backbone and examples of our holy living and simple adornment, be allowed and encouraged to lead the way back to vanity and pride for our younger generation? At least ninety-five percent of our married women do not wear the wedding band because they have convictions against it. Why break down their conscience by laxness in the interpretation of our disciplinary rules against jewelry? Those who have changed their minds about the jewelry question, have also changed about many or all other questions of Christian separation. If our devout mothers are allowed this special privilege (?), why not allow it to our fathers, sons and daughters? Is it our holy women, or our compromisers who are demanding this

change? Is it our most spiritual preachers who want more laxity? If the preachers demand the change, they should set the example by wearing the ring so that all women everywhere will know that they are safely married. God have mercy on such shallow thinking, -- and thinkers.

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02 -- WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?

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I. The Old Testament

If the great leaders and holy prophets of the primitive, Old Testament times, saw and rebuked the destructive female vanity as revealed in all forms of jewelry and immodesty, what excuse should our leaders and preachers of modern times have for coddling vanity and excusing the excesses of pride? After being instructed by the New Testament writers, and the words and examples of all times, are we less alive in our minds and consciences than they were?

The mixed multitudes, with their vain notions and jewelry, clung to the ancient Israelites in their journey out of idolatrous Egypt toward Canaan. Being like the nations about them, got the Israelites into more trouble than all else. The same problem faces every Christian and Church today. What has driven God out of all the modernistic Churches, if it has not been conformity to this corrupt old world? One group of the Israelites gave up their jewelry to a compromising preacher with which to mold the "Golden Calf;" while another group gave up their jewelry to build the temple and preserve its honor and divinity. To which crowd do you belong?

Isaiah's Condemnation -- Isaiah 3:12-26

Without smooth words, the Messianic prophet, Isaiah, warned the proud, vain "daughters of Zion" against their grinding the faces of the poor in order to bedeck themselves with vain jewelry and fine clothes. He was old fashioned enough to come right out into the open and name their instruments of vain pride. He had not "learned better sense, nor found "bigger texts." He named "tinkling ornaments, bracelets, chains, ear-rings, nose jewels, rings, curling pins (irons), etc." Isa. 3:16-20. He lists rings along with all the other heathen jewelry without any exceptions for the wedding bands or "leg bands." He was speaking directly to married women who had sons and husbands who were in the wars of that time. He says their vanity was the cause of the wars. The vain demands of modern women have been a major cause in our present war. In Java the vain American flappers danced while Japanese soldiers conquered the island. Because of these things, "Your men shall fall by the sword, and your mighty men in war." No nation has ever survived the immorality due to the vanity of its women. Shall we as Holiness Churches follow the road which has destroyed Rome and many other great nations?

In Revelation 18:11-14 we have a description of the modern Church, as the modern Babylon which tumbled into oblivion and hell. Here John speaks of "The merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, silk, scarlet, odors, ointments, wine," and other wealth and luxuries, as the cause of the fall of the modern Church. This is being fulfilled before our eyes.

There are only a few modern, more or less despised holiness churches which have partially escaped this awful pride, vanity and condemnation. Then must we join the Babylonian Church by permitting our women and men to join in the wearing of gold and superficial ornaments as symbols of their purity and piety? Shall we permit emblems of Satan to mark our loyalty to God? Which are more loyal to God and their husbands, those who do, or those who do not wear the wedding rings? Honesty allows only one answer.

* * *

II. The New Testament On The Ring Issue

In the New Testament we have many general passages which may be applied to the subject in hand, such as: "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." "He that is the friend of the world is an enemy of God." "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it." "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you." There are many other passages which cover the principle, but let us be more specific.

Saint Paul's Ruling

I Timothy 2:8, 9, 10, 15. "In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or (not with) gold or pearls, or costly array. But which becometh women professing godliness, with good works, etc." In verse eight we observe that this admonition to married women on dress and jewelry is as obligatory as it is for "men to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." Praying men and modest, sober women without vanity, are here coupled in equal importance. Praying men do not endorse vanity and pride in women.

In verse fifteen, Paul plainly reveals that he is speaking especially to married women and mothers. We wonder why he did not think to make the exception for the wedding ring or put in a "bigger text." He knew that if our saintly wives and mothers wore the rings, all others would wear them. Why not?

Saint Peter's Standard

In First Peter three, verses one to six, we read: "Likewise, ye wives (married women), be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they may also without the word, be gained by the behavior of their wives; beholding your chaste conversation (behavior) coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and the wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man (nature) of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner the old time holy women also who trusted in God adorned them

selves, being in subjection to their own husbands Even as Sara obeyed Abraham calling him lord whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well and are not afraid with any amazement."

Let us make a careful and outline study of this passage, using as the intended subject:

How To Win An Unsaved Husband To Christ

I. By showing to him all due respect and consideration. v. 1

II. By careful, holy living. vv.1, 2

III. By leaving off all vanity in adornment. v. 3

IV. By heavenly adornment and radiance. v. 4

V. By following the example of other holy women, Sara as an example. vv. 5, 6

I. First in order and importance, a woman must show all proper respect and consideration to her own husband if she is to have any influence over him as a wife or Christian. A willful, rebellious or disrespectful attitude will drive him away so that she can never win him to Christ. A real husband loathes and abhors a mannish, bossy wife. She must win him as a wife before she can win him as a Christian. She is to respect him above all other persons, but not worship him as her god. She must be careful to avoid all appearances of undue friendship with other men, good and bad, even toward her pastor. A fine, Christian wife or husband who has to live with an incompatible and sinful companion, may let the desire for pure, Christian affection become a snare to their souls. That godless, brutish husband may take warning lest he drive his pure wife out of his life and arms into the bosom of another lover. Such as been done. The pastor of such wives will have to observe unusual care lest he offend the unsaved husband or blight his own character and influence. "But let the wife see that she respect her husband" at all cost, or all her efforts to win him to Christ will utterly fail.

II. By careful, holy living, in every manner, she may win him. This will require more than for the wife who has a Christian husband. To live holy in a home where all the aims and desires of the husband and wife differ, requires abundance of grace and patience. Sainthood has proved that a woman who can live holy here, can live it anywhere. Her husband may ignore the preacher, the Church and all else; but he must live under the daily rebuke and invitation of the holy life of his wife. "That they, without the word, may be won by the behavior of the wife; beholding her chaste conversation, coupled with fear." It takes much grace to live with a sinful companion. She may occasionally have to say, "Husband, forgive me for not holding up under pressure," but do not get discouraged; when he cools off, he knows where the blame lies, though he may not admit it then. The trials may be many and hard, but when she sees him tumble into the altar and pray through; or, when he calls her at midnight to pray for him, the "toils of the road will seem nothing." Then to see the change in his temper will make her glad that she kept sweet or said, "Forgive me." When he breaks out in prayer, she will be glad that she kept the family altar up without him. When he goes with her to worship, she will forget the times she went alone. Living holy will accomplish miracles.

III. She is to win him by leaving off all worldly adornments and show of vanity. The vanity of worldly women is the amusement of all men everywhere. The wife must leave off all these things, or leave off the salvation of her husband, children and others. He may protest, but he knows that none can be true to Christ until she has left off all sinful persons and things. If she mocks her piety with her vanity, he will do it with his lips. You may offend your husband by leaving off your wedding ring, but you cannot afford to offend God, who only can help you to win your companion. Only God can and will save him on his own terms. If you cannot give up your idols, he will not give up his. If you will stand for right in the right spirit, even an ungodly husband will see your "boldness and take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus." You may win him by surrendering privileges, but you will never win him by surrendering principle. You will drive God out and your companion away. The man must accept God's standards just as the woman does. The woman cannot hope to bring her husband to all God's standards unless she holds to them herself.

Back to the Word: "Whose adorning, let it not be the outward adorning of the plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, or the putting on of apparel." The word is very pointed here, and refers directly to mothers and wives. You can never win him by putting on gold and fine clothes, with or without his consent; but you can drive him away by surrendering to his or your own pride and vanity. Remember, that the wearing of gold is strictly forbidden as a means to winning your husband to Christ. St. Peter did not say to put on gold to win your husband, but to put it off. A thousand dollars reward for the wife who won her husband to Christ by use of a ring or any other charm. Many husbands have been driven to hell by the vanity and pride of their wives, but none have ever been won to Christ by such folly. Many a woman has gotten the dress or ring she demanded, but lost God and her husband.

IV. Win him by heavenly adornment and radiance. A resigned, radiant countenance in the hour of trial will do more to win an unsaved husband than the glitter of gold. The radiant, angel face of the Martyr Stephen won the "chief of sinners." Saul of Tarsus could not behold the shining, victorious face of Stephen and hear his prayers for his persecutors and get by with it. He got such a dose of Stephen's radiance until he later tumbled from his horse, on the road to Damascus, where God found his man, and his man found God. And again we read: "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, which is in the sight of God of great price." It is not what we put on for a show of love or loyalty; but that which radiates from the inner life that affects men and moves God. It is that hidden sincerity revealed in holy conduct, rather than any outward tag of loyalty. A pure, incorruptible heart, and a meek and resigned spirit need no outer symbol. An outer show of religion or loyalty contradicts its sincerity. Like humility, it is an unconscious quality. To be able to remain quiet under pressure, and to have hidden virtues, is the most convincing evidence of true piety known to man. No jewelry of any sort is needed to prove the love and loyalty of a wife to her husband; nor of the Church to Christ; but inner purity, which affects all the outer radiance and conduct, is demanded of Christ of his Church and by husbands of their wives.

V. The wives may best win their unsaved husbands by following the example of other holy women, of all ages, who have been uniform in the inner graces and outer adornments. All over the country and around the world, and through the ages, saintly women have had certain marks of purity and piety. None have needed any outer and voluntary show of their virtues. Listen: "For

after this manner the old time holy (sanctified) women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands." Here Saint Peter makes a sweeping statement: that holy women of all ages have adorned themselves in modest apparel, without the wearing of gold or fussing with their hair. In the "old time, holy women," with power with God and man, have been marked for their freedom from the shackles of worldly fashions and show. Holy women, holy on the outside, because they are holy on the inside first, need no placard. The writer of these lines will pay for the time and traveling expenses of any honest man or woman to travel all over the nation, to our churches and camps, if he or she finds that the saintly women are clamoring for, or wearing the wedding band, or any other ornamental jewelry. Women who "trust in God" are worthy of the trust of their husbands and all others; and need no tags of gold to remind themselves or their husbands of their loyalty. If they are pure inside, they need no ring; if they are not, the sign is only a covering for their sin.

The soldiers of our recent war testify that their easiest victims were those who wore the wedding bands. It is an easy matter to put on or remove the wedding ring as the occasion demands. If our chaste wives who wear the wedding band, only knew the vile suggestion of the finger in the ring in its heathen origin, they would remove the ring, regardless of their religious standards.

Why do the same compromisers who see no necessary relation between inner purity and outer adornment, demand an outer and heathen symbol as a proof of inner marital affection? "Wisdom is justified of her children."

Finally, Peter gives Sara as an example of the old time, sanctified women who loved and respected Abraham and worshipped God. The demand for divorces in the world, and the demand for wedding rings in the holiness movement, show that something is radically wrong with the love and loyalty of our modern wives, -- and their husbands. A revival of purity in religion will destroy this inner pollution and its outer shams.

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A Testimony

A man in Illinois, who was saved the first time in his fifties, was asked why he got saved at home. He replied, "My wife has been so different of late, she lived me under conviction." When his wife was asked what had made her so different as to win her husband to Christ after all the years, she answered: "I read in 'The Loophole,' the chapter on 'How to Win an Unsaved Husband to Christ.' I tried it, and it worked." There is no substitute for holy living, on the inside and the outside.

This soul is worth the book. We hope that it has hindered no sincere soul.

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03 -- COMMON ARGUMENTS ANSWERED

Those who desire and defend the wearing of matrimonial jewelry, offer the following arguments in defense of their untenable position. Let us examine them in the open. But before the diagnosis, let us state that they never use the holy Bible nor quote the most outstanding preachers and laymen in defense of their position, because they cannot.

First, they claim that the wedding ring shows a mark of respect and loyalty of the wife for the husband. When the Law was written on stones and in all kinds of ceremonial exercises and symbols, the hearts were cold and barren; but when the law was written in the hearts, these forms and symbols passed because they had no place or meaning. When our wives and husbands have to label themselves with all kinds of signs and symbols to remind themselves and others of their love and loyalty, something has gone wrong with the matrimonial, love principle of the heart.

Any woman who really loves her husband, needs no cheap, material tag of her love and loyalty to him. In fact, such a symbol is a reflection on her inner motive and should be resented. Heart love makes finger loyalty unnecessary. Does a mother have to wear a ring to keep alive her love for her children? Why does she not wear a ring for each child? She does not need such.

The ring neither sweetens her temper nor purifies her affections. If the wife must have a constant and outer reminder of her love to her husband, it cannot be said, "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her so that he shall have no need of spoil."

Is the ring one of those "externals" which the compromisers object to?? They do not believe in "externals."

Second, it is argued that the wedding ring protects the wife against the approach, reproach and insults from other men. If she has no other way of conveying her marital relations to others, then she had better tag herself at once. Four young men were once being entertained in a home where there were several young ladies. Two of the young men were married. The young ladies were much interested to find out which two of the young men were not married. One of them guessed the first time which two of the young men were married. When asked how she knew, she replied, "They act like they were married men." Confidentially, the writer was one of the two young men who unconsciously "acted like it," and he still insists that if all married men and women will act like they are married, they will need no tags.

A woman once refused to take off her ring for the sake of the standards of the Church which she wished to join. But she had previously taken it off in order to secure work in a restaurant where married women were not employed. Wicked men, knowing the rule, often asked her for dates, tried to flirt with her, etc. Did she date or flirt? I do not know, but she did something for the dollar that she would not do for Paul, Peter, Christ and the Church. If not wearing the wedding ring would give people money, prestige, etc., those who make wedding bands would have to go out of business.

A pure, neatly and modestly dressed woman will encounter less embarrassment from men than ringed wives with questionable manners. Men even respect single women whose deportment demands it.

If one covenant relation demands a ring, why not all? Why not wear a ring for the lodge, the Church, the class, etc.? Have one ring marked, "Jesus only" and the other, "Husband only." How on earth did the poor husbands know their wives before the wedding band came into fashion, Why were women more virtuous then than now? Answer, please!

Of course the most devout women and men rarely, if ever, wear rings of any sort for any reason. How can they, when the Bible nowhere commands it, but everywhere condemns it?

Third, some even argue that the wedding ring is so sacred that all should wear it. Chapter and verse, please. The Bible only enjoins two sacred ordinances in the New Testament. But you say, "My husband is so sacred." Then why not worship him instead of his symbol? Is he so unreal that he must be symbolized to be realized? So is the ox sacred in one country, the cat in another, and the ring in another. Which do you worship? Amusing?

Fourth, some will even dare to reply, "Yes, but the wedding band is worn by all who live in English Territory, -- in Canada, etc." Too bad, so many English women in America who never saw English soil. A pure, Christian lady who traveled around the world without the protection of a brass band, says that the English people showed her the highest of respect as a noble, married lady. Well, here is the explanation: people usually respect those who have convictions and dare to live up to them, regardless of their own customs or notions. It is wonderful to have some individuality of your own. I also understand that there are many devout married women in England who do not wear wedding rings, and that there are many who do, who are not true to their husbands. They are like many Americans.

A fine lady Missionary told the writer that she refused to wear the wedding ring while working in English territory, and that the wives of other American missionaries followed her example and left them off. Another missionary told us that even the heathen take their rings off when they get saved. More than all else, we need a few more brave souls who dare to live up to their convictions and tell others so. A few more outstanding leaders of this type would mightily bolster our battling evangelists, pastors and churches in this day of vacillation and compromise. No one would compromise if the battle never got hot. Too many have "optional convictions." They do not want to impose their convictions on others who are free to think for themselves. If you do not have any convictions to impose on others, what do you preach, teach and testify to? No wonder we drift. Why not make all laws and rules "optional?"

The Methodist Church, born in England, did not permit the wearing of rings of any kind until she drifted away from God, and back to the world.

Finally, other women reply, "I have convictions against the wedding band, but it would offend my husband if I should remove it." Where did you get your convictions? from God or from your husband? Tenderly -- now, it is true that some Christian women do have a problem here, but should they stifle their own God given convictions for any man? Can they do it and survive spiritually? Should we not be willing to suffer for Jesus' sake? Blessed are ye when (married) men shall revile and persecute you.

"Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven." The old-time saints got their greatest joy in suffering for Jesus. Why not? He died for us! An unwillingness to suffer for our convictions is the cause of most of this compromise among us along this line. "He that saveth his life shall lose it; but he that loseth his life for my sake and the gospel's shall find it," here and now, enriched, deepened and preserved. If I were Jesus, I would bless those who dared to suffer for me more than others. Would you not? You may have to choose between the blessings of God and your husband. If you smother your convictions, God will leave you, and how can you lead your husband to the God which you have forsaken? The unwillingness to suffer, brings so much silence and evasion along the lines which bring the reproach and frown of the world and the blessing of God. Put God first; all others in their order. Wife can you leave off Church, prayer, and all else just because your husband does not endorse, or objects to such? In the most kindly way possible, let him know that he is second, only to God.

Some good women have an abnormal fear of their husbands relative to the wedding ring, but they fear not to contradict him in other things. Rev. Wireman tells of a woman who had a great struggle over her wedding ring for some time. When she finally gave it up and told her husband, he only laughed and said, "I had often wondered why you had not taken it off long ago." The trouble might not have been with her husband! Most men have some sense, with or without religion. If they do not, they surely are not worthy of worship.

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04 -- THE COST OF THE WEDDING RING

The average wedding ring would cost about \$525.00. [In 1955] At least from one-third to one-half of the average church membership is made up of married women. Just as the women are recognizing that they have "equal rights" with the men in smoking cigarettes, just so, the married men are awakening to the fact that they have the same right (?) to protection by the charm of the wedding ring, which is supposed to keep away the opposite sex, and keep them true to their companions after marriage. Since the wedding ring has such a moral power over the married women in keeping them pure (?), they would naturally insist that their husbands wear the same label of protection. This combination of married women and men will bring those who do, or will soon wear the ring, up to about three-fourths of our membership. Of course, those so in love to get married will not want to put off "cheap rings" on those they love, nor wear such cheap things to protect them (?) from going astray after other lovers. This means that men will purchase rings, both for themselves and for their betrothed, in keeping with their dignity and devotion. (A converted jeweler told me that a ring selling for \$10, usually cost the jeweler about 50 cents, -- some dignity, matrimony commercialized.)

If rings keep married people pure, they should have the same good effect on single people, -- a great discovery (?), the delinquency cure (?).

Let us figure a little. Jewelers tell us that the plain wedding band costs about \$15.00. The jeweled bands cost from \$60.00 to \$125.00. A very low average would run about \$25.00 per ring. In a denomination of 30,000 members, the wedding rings would run about \$500,000; in a church of 60,000 members, the rings would -- run about \$1, 000,000; in a church of 90,000, the wedding

bands would amount to about \$1,500,000. In the more modern and "worldly" churches their wedding rings would cost from \$5,000,000 to \$300,000,000. In other words, our holiness churches would pay out from one-half a million to three hundred million dollars for charms to keep them true to their supposed Christian companions, and to protect them from roughnecks who do not know the difference between pure and impure wives, except by the wedding band. Is it possible that we are going to tolerate and support customs of such enormous cost to keep our supposed Christian wives and husbands from capturing or being captured by other lovers? Where does the "blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses from all sin" come in? Has it "lost its power?" Where has the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" any power to keep us from sin, if we have to wear the same marital charms as the world or heathen to whom we send the Gospel of Jesus Christ? It begins to look like they are heathenizing us, instead of our christianizing them. What could be done with the millions sacrificed to our matrimonial god, the wedding ring?

But you reply, "But many or most of those who belong to my church do not wear the wedding ring." But if we allow it to one person, we shall have to allow it to all. Please remember that a great Church, with its millions of members and billions of dollars, once was as much opposed to jewelry of all sorts as the most spiritual churches are today; and that those most spiritual will soon be where that Church is now, if we let loose and let go. If you permit the wedding ring, you stand with the millions of worldly church members who desecrate their millions to vanity and pride, while their preachers are unconverted and often atheistic, their members lost, their services cold and dead. They began to let down in the "non-essentials" until they have no "essentials" left. Take warning and beware.

Let us explode a few more bubbles of folly by good sound reasoning. If wedding rings are essential for the women, the men who are out in the world and exposed more than the women, should have at least one or more rings. From physiological reasons and customs, a man can cover his sins much easier than the woman. Custom makes it easier for men to escape punishment and embarrassment. Therefore all men everywhere should be protected with rings so large and conspicuous that all women will sit up and take notice of their virtue, radiating out through their rings instead of their personalities? What wonderful protection. (?) Yes, yes, all men who may stray from home and virtue, should be "ringed," just as the hog which chances to stray from his pasture must be ringed to keep him from rooting up his master's crop or lawn. You say, "such folly." We say, "Amen," for hogs and men. If rings will keep married people pure, our unmarried surely need them. If those who have loving companions need them, what about those who have none? If we permit the wedding rings, we shall have no testimony against the class rings, lodge rings, and all other forms of vanity and waste.

Think of the churches and schools which could be builded and maintained with money spent on our own vanity. Think of the missionaries who could be supported around the world with cash wasted on vain professors. Think of the war widows and orphans, and the starving, freezing millions the world over who are dying for bread. Is there not some power to keep our husbands and wives pure, other than heathen charms, in order that this money might be spent for starving souls and bodies of multitudes the world around? But, of course, we do not want to be narrow or unreasonable in our pleas and demands for human souls and bodies. We would not want to risk or rob our Christian (?) husbands and wives of their protection and purity just for the mere souls and bodies of poor underprivileged heathen, or our fellow citizens. However, if our husbands and

wives could find enough grace or something to keep them pure, then those millions could be diverted into other channels. But if they just cannot keep pure without their rings, it would be folly to rob them of their purity just for the heathen. We are trying our best to be reasonable? I Kings 18:27. We do not want to be narrow and strain at the "gnat" of a ruined world and forget the virtue of our husbands and wives, so dependent on the wedding ring. "Bear with me a little in my folly" and "narrowness." If I could prove to you that our wives and husbands could be devout and scriptural in their standards, and at the same time save millions for our lost and dying, would you lift truth up a little in your estimation. for the sake of Christ and souls?

Make a canvass with me of those whom you know and trust as most spiritual. Do we not find that those most in love with Christ and souls are least interested in and bound by the customs and ways of men? Who is it that keeps the home fires alive on our altars and the light shining in distant lands? Is it not those so narrow as to dare to travel the "narrow way" whatever others do or think? Or, is it those more liberal and worldly-minded in their standards, interests, and allowances? Before Almighty God, demand an honest answer, and transformed conduct. But you reply, "We are not so narrow as to condemn others for their judgment and conduct." Your wisdom should make you very gracious in tolerating those not so wise. No one can accuse others of being foolish and narrow until they credit themselves as being wise and broad. "The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God," and the wisdom of God is foolishness with the world. Of course, we shall not yet think of demanding or side tracking this matrimonial money for the salvation and education of our children, and of multitudes around the world, if it will unduly expose or destroy the love, loyalty, and marital virtue of our own helpless husbands and wives? We want to be considerate -- not narrow. It is better to be narrow and deep than broad and shallow.

Yes, another suggestion. Why not inform the poor heathen that they are making an awful mistake in giving up their rings and other idols, and exposing themselves to lust and vice? But our most faithful missionaries tell us that the heathen do not know any better than to give up their rings and low morals when they get saved. Why not send them more rings and teach them to be broad and liberal like many of their American brothers? and sisters? Or, better, have them come over and teach us, while we pay the bill with ring money? Of course, the heathen might reply, "We have tried rings and all such things, and we only fell into deeper immorality and sin; so we have decided to give up all and try Christ in His simplicity and holiness. Give us Christ and you may have the rings and all such things! If the churches filled with rings and all such things are so worldly and dead spiritually, why not stop up the "loophole" lest we come to this place of torment and folly? Do you know a spiritual church which is filled with wedding rings? Is so, join it. Do not try to drag the rest of us down with you.

The salvation we offer to all men cost the blood and suffering of the Son of God. Can we not give up the trifling things of time in order to invest all in the salvation of men? Five hundred thousand dollars would support five hundred missionaries one full year. Think of the churches it would build and support here in our land! It would support two thousand students for one whole year in preparation for sending salvation around the world. Add to this the cost of all the other follies and vanities which go along with wedding rings and all such things, and you will multiply many times the amount taken from the Kingdom of God's Son to which you and I profess to belong. "I'm going through; I'll pay the price whatever others do. I'll take the way with the Lord's despised few; I'm going through, Jesus, I'm going through." What about you?

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05 -- OUR BEST DEFENSE

The purpose of this chapter is not to deliver a condemnation against all leadership; such would be unfair and ecclesiastical anarchy. No group of men desire the love, loyalty and support of all more than our true religious leaders. Such is indispensable, if they or we are to succeed. No group of men are more misunderstood and misjudged than those who must be accountable to all our people, because they are servants of all. It is our business as their followers to try to understand and co-operate with them in every possible manner and vice versa. They our leaders, must make or break our religious movements because they represent the sum total of all our prayers, influence and efforts. This being true, how all important it becomes that we exercise all our wisdom, plus that promised divine "wisdom," in the choice of our leaders, -- for their sake and ours. It is not leadership to which we object, but the wrong kind of leadership, -- "the blind leading the blind," or those who see. In fact, our loyal leaders are suffering more than others, -- from the "higher-ups and from the "lower-downs" combined. Let us love, support and defend them.

The co-operation and unity existing between our leaders and our people must be based on only one thing, namely: righteous principle. No leader has any right whatsoever to expect or claim the love and respect of his church who is not inwardly and outwardly, privately and publicly committed to the principles of that church, whether they be major or minor principles. No individual can be loyal to his church without being loyal to such consistent and consecrated leadership. No intelligent, true hearted Christian can be loyal to holy principles and support a leader who is not loyal to such holy principles. Supporting a man, program or institution blindly, -- just because of personal affiliation is the most dangerous kind of support. This is too much like supporting a political candidate or party, rather than right principles. Such promotes blind loyalty and destroys intelligent, spiritual co-operation for holy principles. The Apostle Paul stated the great principle when he said, "Follow me as I follow Christ," and no farther. Men of like holy principle have no trouble getting along together. "The Holy Ghost is the conservator of orthodoxy," because he unifies the hearts of men in holy fellowship, based on kindred minds.

Before all else, our best and only sure defense against the tide of compromise now flooding us, is the careful choice of our leaders who are to be entrusted with the enforcement of our rules and standards, in the fear of God and in love for men. This applies to the local church, conference, and denomination.

We may legislate and adopt rules, but unless we select leaders in our conferences and Denominations who will carry them out, we have wasted our time and efforts. Our pastors and churches may put forth noble efforts to defend our faith and uphold our standards, but unless our leaders strengthen encourage and defend them, they will sooner or later be led away by those "who have crept in unawares," and have smoothly misinterpreted and destroyed our standards and churches. Our evangelists may pour out their lives and shorten their years in revival efforts, with good present results, but unless our leaders back them up in their efforts, they labor in vain so far as any permanent work is concerned. Only spiritual leaders can and will back up spiritual preachers and churches. If we wear out our lives in the defense of spiritual principles, and then go

to our Annual and General Conferences, and blindly select smooth diplomats as our leaders, who know how to evade our principles and hold the favor and support of our people, we have lived and labored in vain. Silence on our standards is the first and most deadly way to destroy them. Leaders who do not speak out in certain terms in defense of all our principles, are not safe leaders. Our pastors and evangelists need the bold and kindly example of fearless leaders. Truly it has been said, "Better is an army of stags led by a lion, than an army of lions led by a stag." "If the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch." The same thing happens when the blind lead the seeing.

Spiritual life and insight into character sees beyond fine manners and pleasant appearances of ecclesiastical politicians. Is it not high time for us to awake out of our sleep, and select only spiritual leaders? If our people would line up with God rather than candidates, our choices would be different in some cases.

Some years ago the fundamentalist group, in a modernistic church, mustered enough votes to pass a fundamentalist resolution. The modernistic leaders rejoined, "Let them pass their resolution, but let them remember that we have the machinery for enforcement in our own hands." Good resolutions, fine rules and laws are of little value in the hands of those who secretly oppose them. They will let them die of neglect. Our good citizens lost Prohibition because we voted the law in, and then left it in the hands of smooth politicians to enforce it. They refused to enforce it, and then cast it out because it was not enforced. Eternal vigilance is the price of constant and final victory. Only those who privately and publicly endorse good principle, can be trusted to enforce them. Those who sacrifice or smother their holy principles to get into office, will do the same to remain in office. Those who do not defend their principles every place, will not do so effectively any place.

Holiness churches by all means must select holy men and women as our leaders, whose very lives express our principles. They must be pre-eminently spiritual to enforce spiritual principles and standards in this drifting age. The time has come when many feel that spiritual men and women will do for evangelists and pastors, but that they are just a little drastic, eccentric, and out-spoken for the leaders who must mold our people and determine our destinies. "Then is the offense of the cross ceased."

We often hear, "Well, he or she is spiritual, but not a business man or woman." Why not say, "He or she is a good business executive, but not safe because not spiritual?" This sounds more sane and Christian. Unsanctified talent is the most dangerous thing facing our churches today. Those educated in inoffensive policy, rather than in holy principles, are destroying our foundations and souls. Can a person not be spiritual and have good business sense? Compromisers demand compromise leaders though they let their own families starve and their debts go unpaid. Expert financiers will never suit compromisers, though they are spiritual. Does spirituality take away a man's business integrity and intelligence?

Our leaders must be those who are frank, open, honorable and fair with all classes and individuals. Holiness will stand the open forum. Of course a leader must be careful to weigh his words and acts beforehand, but not for his own interests and defense. The Scribes and Pharisees gave Jesus a lot of trouble because they were masters of diplomacy, while he did all things in the

open. An open, honorable soul has little show in battle with smooth diplomats. They will sooner or later nail him to the cross. Men who form "political rings" and smother out those who do not agree with them, are dangerous leaders. The vilest criminal has a right to be heard in our civil courts before he is punished. But what can we hope for, when our staunchest defenders of the faith are crowded out of our churches and its institutions, without being allowed to state their cases, and that of the church; while smooth traitors are crowned as innocent and dependable? In the smoothest, complimentary manner, these traitors praise their victim in order to win the confidence of his friends, so that they can use little whitewashed hints and suggestions to destroy his good influence, without letting their sincere hearers suspect their own true character, or real and vile motives. This is the nature and history of ecclesiastical diplomacy.

Our leaders must be men of vision and initiative, willing to pay the price for progress. They must not be satisfied with running the machinery without the finished product; not satisfied with holding our own. We must be determined to retake what the devil has captured and enslaved. Our leaders must inspire confidence and action. Real men want to follow those who are going somewhere. Cowardice and duplicity will never produce. They must be spiritual, intelligent and strong; know how to weigh facts unselfishly, make proper decisions and prosecute them to success. Pacifists can never win a war. Peace at any price is too expensive. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." A spiritual leader must be loved and respected by holy men, and feared and hated by carnal, self-seekers, if he is to please God and deliver men.

A true leader must have an understanding heart and a tender spirit; but those who hate truth will not recognize him as such. He must know how to meet men of every type on their own level because he lives there. He is not what the world calls a good mixer with every crowd and solution; but must maintain his own individuality and personality.

The time has come when there are two strong groups in the holiness movement: those who hold to the Bible standards of true holiness, and those who have been neutralized by the world until they no longer want spiritual things. This makes it difficult for a true leader to maintain his convictions and position. The two crowds often make it almost imperative for one to carry water on both shoulders, and live on the fence to get or retain office. At least, he must remain agreeably silent on all controversial questions, regardless of how vital and fundamental they may be. No real man can take such a compromise attitude. We need more spiritual leaders to stand with those we do have; but how shall we secure them? It is hard to get along with God and the devil both. They have never learned to be congenial under any circumstances. Their principles contradict.

Finally, whatever we may do, let us never elect those who seek office. However "cute" they may be in their little hints, or whatever persons they may use as their tools, let them alone as most dangerous. Holy souls never seek their own but Christ's -- "Love seeketh not her own." Whatever good qualities they may have, they will use them for self and not for Christ and others. Fair, impartial men, who defend the downs and outs as well as the ups and ins, can be trusted and followed any time or place.

Above all, our leaders must be men and women of present deep piety, sound minds, holy principles, unselfish and devoted to truth and Christ; with a passion for souls, the purity of the church and the glory of God, whatever the cost in death to personal ends or interests. From the

local church to the General Conferences, let us select spiritual leaders; for only spiritual leaders will gather around them spiritual people and retain our spiritual power and heritage. When the church has been led by great spiritual, evangelistic, loving, fearless, loyal defenders of true holiness, like St. Paul, Luther, Knox, Wesley, Fox, and Finney she has been a great saving power in this dark world. But when led by smooth, suave, tactful, self-seeking diplomats, the men of the world have sold the church to the world.

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06 -- WHY A DEFINITE RULING?

Most Holiness Churches have no definite statement as to the teachings of the Bible against jewelry, particularly the wedding ring. This leaves an open door for those who wish to misinterpret the doctrines, and to let in jewelry, and eventually, all kinds of worldliness. Those who wish to compromise, and then to eliminate our rules on jewelry, make a great fuss over the fact that "our rules always have been sufficient and should not be tampered with," -- until they gain the majority so as to rule out our rules against their vanity.

In a denominational gathering, the denominational board refused to endorse a specific amendment against the wedding ring, while they claimed that the Bible prohibition to the wearing of jewelry included the wedding ring. They admitted that God had ruled it out, but they were not willing to take sides with God and rule it out, lest they hinder or destroy God's church. The chairman of the gathering had put his name to a denominationally printed interpretation against the wedding ring, while he was writing confidential letters to officials and pastors, telling them that his Church did not rule out the wedding ring, and that it was "okay" to take them in with the wedding ring on. This is why they do not want a definite ruling. If narrowness prohibits such double crossing and two-faced duplicity and hypocrisy, let us remain narrow. If an old crook or drunkard should pull off such a trick, it would be no crime to expose him privately and publicly. But when a high churchman does it, it is a terrible crime and disloyalty to say anything about it (?). The higher up a man is, the lower down he is when he sells his principles and his church for his own ideas and ambitions. If a man cannot come out into the open, he ought to get out of the Church and join those who make their living by underhanded dealings. Let all of like principles and ambitions flock to the defense of such, but the Holy Ghost and holy men cannot do it. Our holy leaders will not tolerate such.

This all goes to prove that our holiness denominations need water tight rulings against such ecclesiastical traitors, just like the bank needs thief proof vaults against robbers. (John 10:1) It is better to be narrow and straight than broad and crooked. Only crooks do not like straight teaching and preaching. Any holiness church that tolerated such double doings in the name of denominational peace and unity is bound for the broad way that leads to destruction.

Let us note a few reasons why every holiness church should have a specific ruling against the wedding ring, and all other such vanities.

1. When any doctrinal statement is so indefinite as to admit two or more contradictory interpretations, it should be so amended as to express specifically what is intended.

If the prohibition of the wearing of jewelry is stated and any questions as to what is included in the wearing of jewelry comes up, then state plainly that it does or does not include the wedding band. We all know that one of the chief ways of destroying testimony or laws is by misinterpretation by shrewd and skilled lawyers, or ecclesiastical compromisers. Thus they destroy the law and avoid the reproach from direct opposition. Those who are honest and believe in a thing, want it stated in the most plain and definite manner possible. If we are honest, why not? If we want to keep rings out, let us shut the door and put up the sign -- "No Admittance."

2. If more than one contradictory interpretation is permitted on the wedding ring or any other teaching, double standards and confusion among the leaders, pastors, and churches will be the result. Those who want to destroy the law and save their own reputation, seek to do it in an indefinite and confused manner. If the vast majority oppose the wedding ring, why not rule it out and save further conflicts and confusion? Stop the leak or "loophole" before the dam bursts and sweeps us all away.

3. If the wearing of the wedding ring is left optional, the more "modernistic" preachers and laity will be subjected to criticism by the majority of our holiness people, who neither wear nor endorse the wedding ring.

4. If it is left optional, it will put our spiritual preachers and laity under fire from the carnal, worldly-minded element. The unprincipled and earth-minded group will use all kinds of unfair methods, that holy people cannot use, to suppress holy persons and principles.

5. If left optional, it will cause confusion when those wearing rings attempt to transfer from one church to another where the ring is not tolerated. Those who do not wear rings can transfer to any church without confusion. Then, why not let all leave them off in the interests of Christian unity, as well as for Scriptural reasons?

6. Some may argue that it is too small a matter for a disciplinary ruling. If it is such a small matter, why is it condemned in the Bible? And why do most devout and spiritual people have definite convictions against it? If it is such a small matter, those with "broad" minds should not mind to leave them off in the interest of Christian utility and avoid the "confusion" they so oppose. They want the rest of us to smother our consciences in silence for the sake of ecclesiastical unity; why not put a little crimp in their "broad minds" for the same reason? In these days of compromise and backslidings, a definite ruling will plug a dangerous "loophole" in our doctrinal defenses, crucify pride, and exalt humility. If the present rulings keep them out, how do they get in? Let us be consistent in all our publications, rulings, standards, and practices. Why not settle the question once for all and keep down this ever increasing conflict and confusion? There was a time when the wedding ring had no priority, why the change?

7. Our present indefinite and general rulings in our church manuals and disciplines are not keeping rings from slipping into our churches all over in an ever increasing number. It is time to stop the leak which is widening into rivers of pride, vanity, and waste. If we tolerate them, they will destroy us. Those pleading for tolerance would and will drive every one of us out if we let this matter rest. (The reactions to the first issue of this booklet ought to open the eyes of many.)

They are only playing for time, by trying to side track the issue until they have strength and votes enough to put their proposition over, and to put out those who have given their lives for our Bible standards. Let us act before they attack and defeat us.

8. But some may argue, "But the present rulings are sufficient in my church, conference, or section, and should be for all others." Yes, but what should be is not so, and those who are strong ought to come to the rescue of those who are fighting a losing battle. A great Christian leader stood up in a general conference not long since and plead for some kind of a definite ruling to help him in the fight against this vanity in his section of the country, but he was ignored. Your church or conference may need help soon. Not long since a leader who was supposed to be definitely opposed to the wedding ring, wrote me that general rulings had kept his conference clean for more than a "hundred years" and should be sufficient for the future.

The holy man who followed him in office wrote me later that he was having a battle to keep his young people all over the same conference from using the wedding ring in marriages. Well, it takes more than "past history" to keep a drifting man or church from selling out to this "present evil world." In fact, the man who argued for the "past hundred years" had already sold out for office to those he once denounced. Why cannot the masses open their eyes?

9. A definite ruling will not hinder or offend those who believe the truth; "for rulers (and rules) are not a terror to good works (standards), but to the evil." "If God be God, serve him; if Baal, then serve him." When the Bible plainly condemns the wearing of "gold, pearls, and costly array" by married women, and specifies the wearing of the ring, why can our churches not be just as specific as the Bible in their rulings?

A great church which once had rulings against rings and ruled them out, not long since ruled out their restrictions against dancing by leaving it up to the individual conscience, -- another way of saying, "Dance all you please." When this church swept the world in revival power and glory, she permitted neither rings nor dancing. Now she is filled with infidelity and atheism. In fact, she was once a great holiness church. Let us take notice and take warning and precautions in definite rules before it is too late. When this great church was slipping, she used the same arguments for tolerance of vanity that our leaders are using today. Let us not remove, but mark well our "ancient and holy land marks" which separate the Church from the world.

10. Some may argue that it will take more than rules and legislation to keep our churches clean. Granted, but though it takes more than legislation to keep men from stealing, lying, and murder, who would agree to take the laws off the statute books against these crimes? Who can enforce laws not on the books? Just as it takes specific laws to keep criminals and their lawyers from destroying our laws and liberties; just so, it takes the same specific and plainly stated laws in our churches to keep compromisers and common sinners from taking over and driving out those whose lives and standards are in harmony with the Holy Scriptures.

All know that the demand for jewelry and all other forms of worldliness are creeping in on us more and more. It will soon be too late to make definite laws and too late to keep those we do have on our records. It is in or out, now or never. Those who delay the action are playing for time to destroy us and our standards. They are doing it now.

11. A definite ruling will put the entire Church back of those who want to enforce the Scriptural injunction against ornamental jewelry of every sort. It will not leave our doctrines to the judgment and misinterpretation of one or more individuals in key positions. Thus a loyal and true majority cannot be over-run by a favored minority. There will be no neutral grounds for the sowing of tares. It is a sin to be neutral (neither) when holy principles or persons are involved. There can be no holy principles without holy persons to possess and propagate them. We are not pleading for the exceptions or those who are trying to tear down our standards instead of climbing up to them; but we are pleading for the great majority of our holiness churches and people who do not wear or endorse wedding rings or any such things. Let us all remember that the older denominations have always finally drifted back to the world, and not in the opposite extreme. If you want to leave the Church at the mercy of compromisers, leave the matter optional or general; if you want to preserve the purity and simplicity of the Church, be definite and make rules which cannot be misunderstood or be misinterpreted. But how shall we do it? Just say: "The wedding ring and all other ornamental jewelry will not be permitted." This short sentence will stop the leaking "Loophole," end all arguments and keep out future conflicts, confusion, and compromise.

When our leaders, from the bottom to the top, line up together because of common, holy principles, we are safe; but when they line up together to put and keep themselves and their friends in office, our cause is lost; and our men and women of principle will be held down and driven out. We trust that no leader will need to feel that he is condemned in these pages.

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Note

Since this book was first written, some of our major Holiness denominations have ruled, or are now ruling, in favor of the "wedding ring." Despite the unworthiness of the writer, this book has become like prophecy written into history.

About the greatest ecclesiastical crimes one can commit is to observe present indications and foresee future developments, and to see behind ecclesiastical curtains and inform and warn the people relative to concealed plans and maneuverings. If his character cannot be defamed successfully, he is branded and advertised as being mentally unbalanced or insane. Well, it is consoling that these powers will not have charge of the final Judgment, but will meet their records there like the rest of us. (Godly leaders are not classed with the above.)

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07 -- THE FINAL SUMMARY ARGUMENT

Of all which we have tried to say in this booklet, this is the sum:

1. The Bible nowhere hints of the wearing of jewelry for any reason, not even the wedding band. Its prohibitions against the wearing of jewelry are always to married omen, who are to be examples.

2. The most devout men and women, everywhere and for all time, have had definite convictions against wearing ornamental and symbolical jewelry.

3. All great spiritual awakenings have put special emphasis on the putting off of all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and Christian separation.

4. All greater Churches which once linked spiritual power with simplicity of life and deportment, first began to drift in the outer conformities as they drifted in their inner life. The two are inseparable. Essentials become "non-essentials" when we begin to drift. Sheep and goats have different appetites and "essentials."

5. All the great, bold, outstanding preachers and leaders of all ages have demanded definite separation from the world along lines of earthly interest, jewelry, etc. Among these were Paul, Peter, Isaiah, Savonarola, Madame Guyon, Lady Huntington, John and Charles Wesley, Martin Luther, George Fox, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody, "and such like." The men who have let down the standards and spiritual power, have mocked at the separation of the Church from the world. This should make us think and act now. To which crowd do you belong?

6. The clamor in the present modern holiness movement for the "liberty of human judgment" rather than that of conscience, has come at a time when even those who demand the change, admit that we are drifting rapidly back to the world. Transforming revivals and spiritual power wane in proportion to the rising demand for compromise in jewelry, worldly adornment, associations and fellowship.

7. The preachers and other leaders who demand a shallow, chautauqua type of preaching, lean more and more to the world, and are demanding a let down in preaching and teaching against vanity and pride. They are seeking places of ecclesiastical power, where they can cut off the old fashioned persons and principles from among us. This has been the history of the Christian Church in all ages.

Of course our modernistic holiness leaders are not alone in their demand for more liberal terms for jewelry, immodesty, etc. There is plenty of room and plenty of company in the "broad way." On their side are arrayed all the modernistic preachers who deny the Virgin Birth, the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, the Blood Atonement, Regeneration, Sanctification, separation from the world, etc. But this is not all, for the millions of sinful, fashionable church members are on their side. On the outside of the modern popular churches are the multitudes of the harlots and flappers of the great sinner world who stand with those who demand compromise in jewelry, etc. If there is no reflection in having these on their side, it certainly gives them no spiritual distinction or saintly recommendations.

8. The most spiritual men and women of the Holiness movement have very definite convictions against wearing the wedding ring, etc. We challenge any man to dispute it. If we do not stand with the spiritual, where do we stand?

9. Those who do stand for the wedding rings, are silent on, or demand other forms of worldliness which go along with it, or follow in its train.

10. The same argument used for the wedding ring can be used for all other forms of vanity and sin in the churches. The wedding ring is the "loophole" through which all the rest of the tribe will later be let into our ranks with immunity. Let us stop it up now.

11. The arguments for all kinds of vanity are based on human judgment, human sympathy, human relations, etc. Those who oppose such are called narrow, fanatical, etc., by those who count themselves broad, wise, etc. Fear, vanity and love for the world, are at the bottom.

12. Neither the Church nor the state require the wedding band as a symbol of the marriage relation. It is the demand of the world.

13. The enormous cost of the wedding rings, running into the thousands and millions of dollars, while the world is lost, missionaries are away from their fields, and millions are dying of starvation, condemns the Church, and waste, in a world bankrupt financially and spiritually.

14. The Wedding Band is the loophole through which all other kinds of jewelry, vanity and waste will come in to drive God and the saints out, and establish the devil in the sanctuaries of the holiness movement. The tide has swept on until some of us are now becoming strangers in our own Churches which we have given our lives to build and preserve.

15. The standards of the denominational leaders will determine the final standards and destiny of the entire church. This should make them tremble under the dire responsibility. A leader of years of experience said the other day, "The Church first rots at the head." This is not a reflection, but a warning. With all the weight, responsibilities, and cares involved, plus being the strategic object of the devil, every leader should keep humble and diligent in all holy conduct and example. If our top leaders fail, their example and deadly influence will encourage unholy men to destroy our standards, and discourage our holy men who are already fighting against great odds to hold up our holy standards. Our leaders, you had better get out than to sell out, for thus you barter all our souls. As the leaders go, so goes the Church; as the Church goes, so goes the world. If you become ambitious and self-seeking, you lose your grip on God, though you may hold it on our souls. If you are more anxious to hold your place than our standards, you are our traitors. Please, for the sake of souls, hold the fort while we hold up your hands in prayer and loving confidence. The rest of us are responsible for the selection and continuance of our leaders.

16. Among our most responsible leaders are those entrusted with our educational institutions who are to train our workers and leaders for the future. As go our schools, so goes the future church which is molded in our schools. If our school officials and faculties are not selected with utmost care and consideration for their spiritual and moral standards, what will become of those entrusted to their care? If our school officials and instructors are trained and molded in hot beds of atheism, how can they train and mold our students with faith in God and his holy truths and principles? If holy schools are demanded to save our students for true holy standards, why not demand the same for our teachers? If we do not awake to these molding principles in time, we shall in eternity. Why can we not see now?

17. Other Holiness denominations which have let the wedding ring in have been flooded by every form of worldliness. Why reproach them for their standards, as many of us do, and then follow their examples? Let us be consistent.

18. Finally, our officials and pastors all over are being faced and embarrassed by this matter. If we ever intend to make a definite ruling, now is the time, before those who favor the wedding ring gather enough influence to license it. It is no time for looseness, laxness and indifference. Let us act now and save future embarrassment and compromise.

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Note:

At the General Conference just after this book was written, our leaders argued that our present ruling against jewelry included the wedding ring, and that no definite statement was necessary. At our last General Conference, our leaders argued that our ruling against the wearing of jewelry never did include or forbid the wearing of the wedding ring.

We wonder what they will contend for next week, following June 22, 1955.

Another and larger Holiness (?) denomination, which met just before the above, ruled out their former ruling against the wedding ring. A group of their leaders got together on the holy Sabbath day during their General Conference, and maneuvered schemes to destroy their ruling against the wedding ring, and succeeded in their schemes.

Are they not traveling in the same direction as the Roman Catholics and all backslidden Protestant Churches?

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08 -- ENFORCING THE RULING

These days, it is a common thing for our pastors to ask, "What shall I do about the reception of members wearing the wedding ring?" The writer has a very sympathetic feeling toward pastors facing this problem under present conditions, and hopes to offer some suggestions which may be helpful.

John Wesley's instructions are very sane and practical. Let us use them as our guide.

The general principle is as follows: "Should we insist on the rules concerning dress?" Answer: "By all means." This is no time to give encouragement to superfluity of apparel. Therefore let none be received into our churches until they have left off the wearing of gold and superfluous ornaments. In order to this:

"In visiting the classes be very mild, but strict."

"Allow no exempt cases; better one suffer than many."

His standard: "Let NONE be received into our churches until they have left off the wearing of gold and superfluous ornaments." "The Bible does not make the exception." Then 'Let none be received,' certainly refers to the women wearing the wedding ring. If our mothers and wives do not set the example in refraining from jewelry, who can enforce the rule and who will follow it? Any pastor or other person who receives into his churches those wearing any sort of rings, violates the Scriptures.

The method to be employed: 'Be very mild, but strict.' Be very firm, but kind. If we are mild without being strict, our softness will let many slip into our churches contrary to our rules and future blessedness. If we are strict and firm without being mild and kind, our harsh manners and methods will drive away some who might be won to Christ and our church. Of course, none can be mild and kind enough to please those who want us to let down our standards to let them or their friends into our churches without meeting the conditions. No matter how kind and tender we are, they will accuse us of being too hard and strict. Let us not get discouraged, but just remember that "they said, He hath a devil," -- and hold up the standards to keep the wolves out and the lambs in. We must save our standards for the sake of souls; neither has any value without the other. The greater danger in this world of compromise is in being too soft. It takes grit, grace and brains to be strong, tender and intelligent. Expect that some will be our enemies, while others will enter in and be saved. Theirs is the final decision.

The principle to be held up: "Allow no exempt cases; better one suffer than many."

The exempt cases cause the complete breakdown of law, in church or state. If we exempt one person, why not another? If we let up on one rule, why not on all rules? To make a rule or law optional, destroys that rule, or law. This is as destructive as it is irrational, and the only defense is to "allow no exempt cases."

The rule usually breaks down with special persons and cases which may claim exemption on account of their talents, wealth, influence, relatives, friends, as descendants of charter members, etc. Remember that the more influential a prospective member is, the more destructive will be his wrong influence when once in the church. Let us have the grit and grace of John the Baptist who demanded of the Scribes and Pharisees who came to his baptism, "fruits meet for repentance." If the daughter or wife of a prominent member is allowed to wear the wedding ring, her example is more powerful and destructive than that of a more humble member. We never make exceptions for the poor or ignorant. Why should we for any? Let Herod's wife or daughter line up or line out. God makes no exceptions.

"Better one suffer than many." Let us beware lest our sympathy or undue consideration for the person before us, blind us to the welfare of all the present and future church. How can the pastor and church hold up the standards on other lines if we let down on the wedding ring? Our whole discipline and church stand or fall together. If we have no standards, we have nothing to offer anyone at any time. If our standards do not suit you, it is easier to find those with lower standards than with higher. Exceptions and exemptions embarrass the pastor and church, and bring

reproach from thinking people on the outside. It is the first dram that makes the drunkard, and the "exempt case" that makes a prodigal church. If you permit one or more ringed members in the church, how can you keep others out? We do not need to be admonished to be soft, but we must pray for "boldness to speak the truth" and hold up our standards for all.

We must present a united front from our local churches to our General Conference. If the chain breaks any place, our defense is gone. If all our denominational officials stand firm, and our conference officials hold their grounds, while our pastors and evangelists indoctrinate and enforce our rules, our churches will remain spiritual and united. Otherwise, they will decay and we shall fall apart in confusion and destruction.

"Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is guilty of all." Again, "Whosoever shall break the LEAST of these, my commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." Major emphasis must be put on major truths; minor emphasis must be put on minor truths, but none can be neglected. Sometimes special emphasis must be put on minor neglected truths to bring them back to their place and power, but so many are not willing to suffer this reproach. It is not so easy to bestow more honor on the less comely parts," but it is necessary. "The stone which the builders rejected became the chief corner stone." The character and intelligence of the builder is reflected in his choice of materials. "Let us condescend to men of low estate" (standing) and we shall have little temptation to make "exemptions."

Those who encourage neglect or violation of a rule or standard, later argue that it should be removed because it is not enforced. If it is right, it should be retained and enforced. Removal will not correct the evil prohibited, but only license it. If removal is substituted for enforcement because of violation, we endorse the evil principles involved rather than the good. If all good rules or laws had been removed upon violation, the Decalogue and all other moral or civil laws would long since have been removed. Specific statement and strict enforcement is the only defense of moral law and government. Rebels never endorse or enforce holy laws.

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09 -- "I AM THE WEDDING RING"

Note -- This Dialogue may be used and acted out in young people's meetings, missionary societies, etc.

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Part 1

"I am the Wedding Ring, who are you?"

"Why, I am the Class Ring, not so few."

"But what right have you here? Do you not know that this is the church?" said the Wedding Ring.

"I have as much right here as you. Do I not worship too?" retorted the Class Ring.

"But you are worldly, sinful and vain, while I am sacred and true," replied the Wedding Ring.

"Why are you so sacred and I so sinful? Are not both made of gold that perisheth?" argued the Class Ring.

"True, but it is what I represent that counts. I stand for love and loyalty of wife to husband."

"But do I not stand for intellectual attainment and love and loyalty between class mates? I remind my wearer that he is educated."

"But if it were not for me, none would suspect that my mistress were obligated in marriage to her husband."

"But for ME, none would suspect my master to be educated."

"Nonsense; if your master were really educated he would not need to be labeled. That's cheap advertising," replied the Wedding Ring.

"The same back to you; if your mistress and her hen-pecked husband really loved each other and showed it, you would have no place. It is warm love that binds hearts; not cold gold," retorted the Class Ring.

"Not so hard, but I must have a constant reminder of my love and loyalty to my husband to keep my love warm, and to keep away other lovers," interposed the mistress of the Wedding Ring.

"Mistress, where did you come from? If I had been you I would have kept still," snapped back the Class Ring.

"But I had to defend my ring, husband or no husband, church or no church."

"But you have ruined all the arguments of your idol, your Wedding Ring. You have confessed that a dead ring cannot keep your affections from other lovers, nor theirs away from you. You need something on the inside to keep you pure and true," concluded the Class Ring.

"You win, you win; I lose, but I shall try my luck on another," cried the Wedding Ring.

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Part 2

"I am the Wedding Ring, who are you?"

"Why, I am the Lodge Ring," said the other.

"Well, what are you doing here? This is the church, not a lodge hall," replied the Wedding Ring.

"You are impudent, narrow and foolish too. My master worships in the lodge hall and in the church also," answered the Lodge Ring.

"Why does he not wear a Church Ring too? Does he worship his lodge god more than his church God? Most men do."

The Wedding Ring went on saying, "Tut, tut," with a strut, "but I represent the sacred love of a wife for her husband, and protect him from the intrusion of other lovers."

"No more of that; did I not hear your argument with the Class Ring? A pure wife must be protected from other lovers? Such folly."

"But you must be reasonable and stop meddling," cried the Wedding Ring.

"You impudently brand all the rest of us rings as worldly and vain. May I ask you one more thing?" replied the Lodge Ring.

"Yes, just one more and no more," replied the Wedding Ring, ill at ease.

"Why is it that a supposed Christian wife who claims to belong to the called out ones, and be separate from this vain world, uses the same symbols to represent her love and loyalty that the men of the world use to show their loyalty to organizations which do not even recognize Jesus Christ? Answer me; if Christ cannot save the church from the world, how can He save the world through the church?"

"I lose, I lose; have it as you choose. But I shall try one more opponent. But I shall let my mistress do her own talking. I am tired of being made the dunce for her vanity," sighed the Wedding Ring.

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Part 3

Vanity came bounding in and exclaimed, "Oh Mother, look at this beautiful ring which Jane gave to me. I shall never forget her for this."

"My dear child, do you know that it is vanity and pride that makes you want to wear that sparkling ring, and that many more will be thrust on you as you grow older," replied her mother.

"Why M-o-t-h-e-r, I am so surprised and shocked at you. You have always worn a ring; why can't I?" demanded Vanity.

"But my darling, Vanity, can you not understand that there is such a difference in your ring and mine: my ring stands for all of my love for your father and my husband which is very sacred."

"Yes, but Mother, this ring represents my love for Jane and her love for me. Is not our love sacred too?" asked Vanity. "If rings will keep you pure, they will keep me pure."

"My Child, you cannot understand until you are older, but all my love for your father is wrapped up in this ring."

"I never will understand as long as you wear that ring. But your love for Father must be wrapped up in that ring or a 'napkin,' for you have been so cold toward him all this week. You never speak to him unless you want some money or something done. Sometimes Jane and I do fall out and fuss, but we soon get over it. I'll wear this ring as long as you wear yours," replied Vanity, peeved.

"Not so severe, Vanity; none of us are perfect, and we all sin every day; but there is a difference in your ring and mine," replied her mother.

"You may sin every day, but there's no use pouting ALL day and week too. Poor old dad looks so tired and discouraged when he comes in from work. But Mother, one more question: Why is it that all the dancers, and movie stars wear wedding rings just like you do, and some of them have been married four or five times, just like the Woman of Sychar who had no husband because she had five husbands? Rings do not keep them true to their husbands, or pure and virtuous. Can't you find some more respectable way to show your love for my poor old Dad," pleaded Vanity.

"Oh my Child, at last you have awakened my poor cold heart. Please forgive me, if this ring has so tempted you to pride and vanity. I see now that I have used the name of your father to defend my pride and vanity. If my ring offends you, I shall wear no more rings while the world stands."

"But, Mother, what will Father think when he comes home and finds your ring and all your love for him gone?" inquired Vanity.

"Vanity, he shall find a different kind of love in place of the gold ring and the cold heart. I shall have for him kindly words of confession and love from a true heart, cleansed from pride and vanity that needs no dead symbol," tenderly replied Mother, with a trembling voice.

That evening when Mr. Mainard returned home things were so different. The house was tidied up to greet him; the table was filled with the things he liked, and that a tired man needed at the close of day. Mrs. Mainard met him at the door with tears wreathed in smiles, and the following conversation ensued:

"Darling, I have taken off the false symbol of waning love, and have decided to love you so that you can feel it instead of just seeing it. I want it to fill my heart and break out in all my words and actions toward you. Vanity awakened me by her childish sincerity," said Mrs. M.

"That sounds mighty good, wife, but I am all bewildered. You talk so differently, and everything seems so lovely and home-like. If this is what we are to have in place of the wedding ring, I suppose we shall not fall out over it, or even miss it," tenderly replied Mr. Mainard, half confused.

"Yes, husband, if you can forgive me for the past, I promise you that the future will be different. Besides, I have decided to sell this diamond and give the money to Mrs. LaVan, our poor neighbor who is dying with Tuberculosis. I am sick of consuming so much on my own vanity while so many are in need all about us. Also I have determined to set a better example of true motherhood and Christianity before my Children, especially Vanity who was named after my chief weakness."

All was silent for a moment while Mrs. Mainard wiped the slow tears from her eyes and Mr. Mainard looked up and out the window to hide his feelings, now creeping up into his eyes.

Then Vanity broke the silence and cried out, "Oh Mother," then waited with trembling chin until her throat cleared up more, and went on, "Mother, your confession and new example has awakened and transformed my life. I see my own vanity. My nature is changed and I want my name changed. You have taken away the stumbling block and set a new ideal for my life. I want to take the money over to the sick woman we have neglected so long for our vanity." "For so much as ye have done it unto the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me."

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THE END