Marriage In Honour, by W.G. de Vries, Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, Man.1976, pp.186.

We are living in an age of sexual revolution. Old norms are rapidly disappearing. Everything is brought into the open. The divorce rate is rising and so is suicide. Sex experiences are openly talked about. You would think that modern man would have cured all sexual and family problems. Not so! Our society is in a sorry state. Many books are published to give us advice and suggestions. Every bookstore has a shelf with a great variety of secular titles on sex, marriage and the family.

Evangelical Christians have also joined the rush to provide us with a flood of books on these subjects. Unfortunately, many are not worth reading. Happily, Dr.de Vries' book is different. It is a thorough and readable work that gives forthright directives for young people's preparation for marriage itself, sexuality, family life, and life without marriage. In this present Babel of ideas and suggestions on sex and marriage, it drives us back to the word of God. The problems of today are looked at and discussed from a Biblical stance.

The author is an experienced Dutch Reformed (Art.31) pastor. He knows problems and questions not just through reading, but also through first-hand experiences. The section on Forced Marriage is a good example. The author says: "There is almost no sin which is more severely punished by its consequences than a forced marriage. People's judgment of this is often cruel and merciless. When someone falls into sin in this field, it is eagerly gossiped about. It sometimes haunts the two people all life long. How wrongly and heartlessly people often judge ...Would someone's misconduct morally be worse than someone's pious slandering of his neighbour?... Is a girl who has to get married a greater sinner than a Reformed person who is indifferent about the church and office of all believers? Is, then, no confessions of guilt necessary at all with a forced marriage? Of course there is, but then in a Christian talk between the people concerned and their minister and ward elders, a talk not only in which a spirit of gentleness prevails, but also in which it is made clear from Scripture exactly what their sin is. It must be a talk in which the minister and elders stand beside the two young people and help them to come to a true insight into their guilt and to an honest confessions of it." (p.82,85)

We are not only given directives, but we are also warned against the often persuasive influences of our secular society. We are to seek the Lord in all things and abide by His norms.

Dr.de Vries' book is excellent, but it has one weakness, and this is shared by many works of a similar nature. The section on marriage and family lacks creativity. We are given helpful hints and words of admonishment. But how can we make family life more exciting, attractive and God honouring? Creative family living does much to prevent problems so many Christian families are experiencing today.

The Dutch original has already gone through its fifth printing. I hope that this English translation will sell so well that reprints will be necessary also in Canada. When this does happen. I would suggest that the translator deletes the references and illustrations

pertaining specifically to Dutch customs and practices. They are not very helpful for our setting. Furthermore, the translation and style could stand some improvement. An index of Scripture references would also enhance the usefulness of the book. I trust that Marriage in Honour will be read by our office bearers, youth leaders, engaged couples and that it will find its way into the homes of many families.

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