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GOD'S PLAN
IN SEX

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By

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"Sex Relations Without Marriage," etc., etc.

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God's Plan in Sex.

I do not propose to write about the horrors of sex. I am perfectly well aware, and I think you are too, that God has so arranged things that when a nation gives way to licence, it pays a terrible price for it in disease and in a general and fatal loss of well-being. But that is not *my* subject.

Nor do I propose to say hard things to any man alive. I do not think they really help.

What really urges me to write is a growing knowledge which has come to me in the last ten years, of the enormous amount of embarrassment, perplexity, and confusion of mind, of doubt and puzzlement, which afflict most men and women in the modern world, in connection with this subject. I am inclined to think that most people alive, either have been, or now are, bothered by the subject of sex. It means to them unanswered questions, unsatisfied curiosity, unsolved problems. It has brought into their lives difficulty, misunderstanding, mistake and, sometimes, shame. It hangs over the life of many people like a dark cloud, and they do not know where to turn for counsel. They are too shy to ask for advice; and they do not like going to meetings.

Now, I believe that sex is not God's mistake, but God's plan—that it is not by accident that sex is one of the central, permanent and profound interests of the human race everywhere and always. I do not think it is a mistake, or a deplor-

able thing, but God's plan, and therefore I believe that sex properly understood and rightly handled is a factor which, perhaps above all others except religion, adds colour and beauty and worth to human life. If we understood this side of life, and how to get out of it what it is willing to render us, we should enormously enrich life and increase its happiness. We should go far to solve many of the problems of this civilization. That is my conviction. Put it in this way if you like—what we really want in connection with sex is to get our theology right. We have to get the thought of God rightly related to this whole subject, and if we do that we shall find the way of life. If we do not do that, we shall never go right.

I invite you to face this interesting fact. As you probably know, sex is connected with the vilest degradations from which human life has ever suffered. Lust run wild will produce agonies and cruelties, and sordid degradations beyond all description. The blackest pages in history are due to lust run wild. But look also at the other side. Many of the finest idealisms of which men and women have proved themselves capable, many of the noblest loyalties, are connected with sex. It is intimately bound up with all that is fine in chivalry; it has been productive of the finest and most lasting devotions that the human spirit has ever displayed; it is intimately connected with creative art, with poetry, with all that is most beautiful and most stable in family life. And when you fully realise that, you come to know at once that there is some tremendous divine significance in sex. You learn that when God so made us male and female, with these sex instincts, He was not simply complicating life, but providing a possibility for a great enrich-

ment of human existence. I believe if you and I got a firm hold of that fact it would make all the difference. I am utterly tired of hearing over and over again in this connection only warnings and terrors, and the word "Don't," "Don't," "Don't," in all sorts of forms and connections. I believe if we could only see that some great good thing of a positive kind is within our reach, and that there is a way open to us in this connection along which we may have life at its best, we should get to the only hopeful and helpful attitude of spirit. I believe we are all anxious to find such a way—all of us.

I will tell you one thing life has taught me. I was appointed by the War Office to lecture on this subject to the Army, and was therefore very, very intimately involved with our soldiers in that terrible time, and in connection with the terrible subject of venereal disease; and although I saw enough to make my heart very sore, the final impression left upon me by all that contact with ordinary humanity was just this, that nearly all men want to go straight. They don't manage it, but they *want* to go straight; they are longing to get hold of life in the right way, and get the best out of it. That desire is deeply rooted in nearly every human heart. That is what I found. Therefore, I repeat, if we could get for this whole side of life a positive, constructive ideal, and a real understanding of its possibilities, I believe the manhood of this country, and of every country, would rise to it. I believe that while men will not pay attention to mere warnings or mere appeals to their fears, and will certainly not regard the word "don't" hurled at them by parsons or anybody else, they are quite willing to endure hardness and suf-

fering if only they can find the way, which really, in the broad sense, leads to life.

And now I want to suggest to you some of the steps in that way which leads to life—that leads to getting the best out of sex. I think the first thing we have to do, at all costs, is to lift this subject out of the shadows where it has been allowed to lie, to bring it out into the sunshine, and to look at it in the light of *God*. Let us get rid of these false shames and deplorable embarrassments, which have prevented us facing this whole side of life bravely, openly and truly. The "Conspiracy of Silence" has been a sheer cruelty. It has allowed millions of boys and girls to set out on the most difficult part of life's journey without any guidance—just as if we sent men to the sea or into the desert without chart, compass, or map, or any hints from old hands. I do not think it is extraordinary that so many have made mistakes. I do think it very wonderful that so many have got through. Yes! We have to get this subject into the open, into the sunshine; and to rid it of those false embarrassments which have prevented us speaking about it face to face and unashamed. Why should any human being be ashamed of the physical organism which God gave us? I take it you are God-fearing men; you believe in God. And if you do so, you believe God is responsible for these frames of ours, and for all the ordinances under which we live. God is responsible for the functions of the human body, and there is no reason why we should not think of them simply and happily, and entirely unashamed. Well, that is my first point. And the second point seems an extension of it. Having got the subject into the open, let us make up our minds, first of all, that we are going to know the truth

about it. I wonder how many of you were properly educated in the matter of sex? Probably very few. Parents of my generation have not been doing their duty. It is one of the special things that this Alliance of Honour stands for, that we absolutely need a thorough and a wise policy of education in this matter, extended to the whole population. If any of you have not a real, correct, first-hand, healthy knowledge of the facts of sex, then for God's sake go and get it by asking someone you trust, and don't try to go any further on this perilous journey called life until you are equipped in that way!

But while I say that to those who have not the knowledge, I want to say also—surely we might all stand together for this position—that it is really one of the fundamental duties of parents to see that their children grow up knowing the truth. Nobody else can do it as well, because this imparting of sex knowledge is not something which ought to be done on some special occasion in some portentous way. Sex knowledge ought to be something that passes into a child's mind simply and naturally, just as that child's mind begins to ask questions. It is a department of knowledge which children are quite willing to accept simply, and without embarrassment, but which once received is an extraordinary buttress and defence throughout life.

I do also want to suggest that we should stand to the truth in another respect. There is an extraordinary large amount of very dangerous and foolish talk going on just now in the world about what is called the danger of repression; and this talk about the danger of repression is very often developed until it begins to be a preaching of the doctrine that self-indulgence in the matter of sex

is a man's right, and that if he does not take care to secure it he will suffer in his health. That is probably the most dangerous and disastrous doctrine which could be preached to any nation, and as I know that the ordinary layman does not pay any regard to what ministers say on a point like that, because it is a point concerning health, about which doctors are the only people who can speak with authority—because that is so I just want to assure you that the higher up you go in the medical profession, the more definite will be the deliverances you get against that doctrine. The more authoritative the information you get, the more certainly will it be to the effect that continence never did a man any harm yet, that the most virile and vigorous men can quite safely wait for marriage, when they may achieve a really genuine sex experience; and that if they do not wait for marriage, they are going to spoil something that is very lovely. I think we do want to stand to that position with extraordinary tenacity, because I know how many and many a boy and young man has been led astray into ways which he afterwards passionately regretted, because he gave heed to that nonsense, that utter nonsense, which would have you to believe that a man cannot keep well without being licentious. But every honest man knows perfectly well that deliberate, conscious renunciation, of what a man himself cannot approve of, is one of the fundamentals of all life worth calling life. Take out of life these abnegations and renunciations, to which we are called by all that is best in us, and you bankrupt life for ever. I pray we may remember that, when we hear all this foolish talk going on about the danger of repression.

Then I would like that a third aspect of truth should sink into our minds. You know that a successful career for either man or woman in relation to the sex element in life is just part of the successful management of the whole human organism. It needs a lot of knowledge to manage so delicate and splendid a thing as the human body, and get the best out of it. And I believe we all want to stand for this, that every man in the country ought to be instructed in the fundamental principles of health—how to manage this fine thing called the human body, how to treat it so as to get the fullest efficiency out of it, and in particular, how to live so that sexual temptation may not be unduly strong, and that the rest of the man's being gets a fair chance in his life. After all it is a comparatively simple thing. Doctors will tell you that the struggle for health in this matter depends on fairly obvious things—on moderation in eating, moderation in sleeping, plenty of cold water and soap, and above all an absolute moderation, even down to total abstinence, in the matter of liquor. Further, if you want to be safe, remember at all times to enjoy plenty of open air and to take plenty of exercise. These are the fundamental conditions which make a man adequate to life in general, and which have extraordinary importance in connection with his battle for life in relation to sex.

And yet, important as these common-sense measures are, I believe there is something more vitally important still and that is that we men should learn the right attitude to the people of the other sex—to women, and the right attitude to Love. I do not believe that, until we get this right, we can get life right. May I tell you what

I mean. I sometimes hear people deploring the lost days of chivalry. I won't discuss that subject in full, but I remind you of a fatal flaw in the old chivalry—there was a good deal of patronage and superiority hidden in it, a good deal of condescension by men towards women, which is why women came so bitterly to resent it. It covered up a good deal of the old assumption that woman is an inferior creature. Isn't that a queer thing to believe? Yet some people do believe it. They believe it because they assume if any creature is different from man, then that creature must be inferior to man. An extraordinary idea, isn't it? And therefore because women are different from us they think they must be inferior to us. Well, thank God they are different from us; what a world it would be if they were not! Yet, do you know, it is this lurking idea about the inferiority of women that vitiates entirely the attitude of many men to the sex as a whole. They look upon women as delightful things to be played with in their leisure hours, to be flirted with, cajoled, and humoured. But the idea of looking to women for comradeship, for fellowship which embraces all the interests of life, for a fellowship in which there may be give and take to mutual advantage—the idea that we were meant to share the whole of life with women, does not enter into the minds of thousands of men, and that vitiates their whole attitude. It makes their attitude to women unnaturally sexual; they look upon them almost purely in that light, never having discovered them as companions for a man's spirit, and it may be, guides for his mind. I believe this revision of our whole attitude to women is really fundamental, and that when we have learned to accept them as

comrades, and honour them by accepting much from them in all of life's walks, then, and only then, shall we be at the beginning of a successful handling of this side of life.

And now to come to my crowning point, it is most of all essential that we get a right conception of what love means, and what marriage means or may mean. I am going to be quite blunt with you, otherwise I would not have taken this subject in hand. There is still lurking in some men's minds the suspicion that even when marriage is based upon love, there is something half indecent about its intimacies. As long as that lie has any kind of place in our minds we are hopelessly handicapped in this business. The truth is that when love has brought a man and woman together, and when love has joined them, so that they have minds in tune, and spirits in tune, and hearts at one, and when that process of union goes on to the last stage, and they come to have bodies united in the ultimate physical intimacy, under the control of love, the whole thing is beautiful and happy, and I would say, deliberately, *sacramental*, using that word in its strict sense; by which I mean that in this experience of physical intimacy you get expression in the terms of the body, of something that is also a spiritual fact. When you have seen that, the whole matter of married intimacy is transformed, and you begin to think of it as one of the most lovely things in life—which indeed it is. It is an experience that brings a new harmony into the whole natures of both men and women, satisfies them in a way that nothing else can, sets free their energies for creative and positive ends, and so proves itself to be a true gift of God.

But then, I warn you that that experience is

only possible on certain quite definite terms; and thousands of people who have married have never known that experience in its beauty, its wonder, and joy, because they come to marriage spoilt beforehand. Man, if you have made your heart old and worn by indiscriminate flirtation, you can never know that experience. Still more, if you have wandered at the bidding of lust into the bypaths of sexual indulgence, you have spoilt beforehand the very best thing that might have been in your life. That experience is only for couples who walk hand-in-hand in that new country, discovering it together for the first time. All previous aberrations take some of the bloom off it, and condemn them to some loss.

As a matter of fact, that is why the Christian moral standard is what it is. I don't know whether you realize that the Christian moral standard is the most severe and exacting moral standard ever put before the human race. No other religion has ever dared to ask so much. And there are plenty of people to-day who say, why must this exacting moral standard be fastened on the human race. They are calling out to have it relaxed here and there, as if in that way we might get nearer to true life. The answer is, that the Christian moral standard is what it is *because it is a glorious attempt to conserve for men and women the possibility of the best that may be*. Relax it, and you just impoverish the possibilities of life. The reason why it is worth a man's while to strive unto agony, if need be, to hold to the Christian rule, is just that that is the way you get the best out of the best part of life; and I believe if men knew this, they would joyfully accept the ardours of the struggle, that at least theirs might be the prize which is be-

yond all price. There is nothing arbitrary about the Christian moral standard; it is not, of course, imposed by a tyrannical church or by Mrs. Grundy. It is imposed by God in the Christian revelation and confirmed by the stored experience of the race which has learned that that narrow way is the way that leads to life. It is because Christ just came to give us life, and abundance of it, that He wants to tie us down so stringently to that straight and narrow path.

And yet while I say that, I want to say one other thing before I close, and it is just this—I do not think you and I can be too strict with ourselves — I do not think we can stand too unflinchingly to the Christian moral standard, but I also do not think you can be too generous in forgiveness. Many, many years ago, in consequence of a very vivid experience I had, I resolved, God helping me, that I would never speak on this subject without finishing on the note of hope and forgiveness, because otherwise it becomes a horribly depressing subject. I have never known anyone who had not made some mistakes in connection with sex, though a great many people only made the mistakes in thought, giving way to foolish and undesirable imaginings and so on. A great many also make mistakes in word, and all too many in act. Now sometimes, addresses on purity have left such people utterly discouraged, sick and sad, feeling as if something had happened to them that could never be retrieved. Well, thank God, that is not true. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," whatever he has done. I would not go on any platform in the country to speak about this subject, if I did not know that there is no man,

or woman either, whatever they may have done, for whom there is not always a way back and up into the bright world of purity once more. If you have made mistakes, take those mistakes to God, and He will forgive them. He will give you strength to go and live a new life altogether. You may even find you are more humble and more sympathetic because you made mistakes yourself, and so are more able to help others. Let no man imagine that the way up into purity is closed for him, or that there is no place for him in the ranks of those who are going to stand for purity in our country.

And now one further point. If you are going to believe in forgiveness for yourselves, and if you are going to ask it, and expect it, what about women? Do you know the cruellest thing in our whole social life? It is this—that while we are the licentious sex, it is women who have been made to pay the heavy price. Many a man goes scot-free after a life of self-indulgence, while thousands of women, for one mistake, to which they were led perhaps only by passionate love, have had a life long verdict served against them by society. That is the cruellest thing in our national life, and if we are going to be fit to stand together for the cause of purity, if we are going to be fit to do anything to remedy the evils which have come to life through sex, then, God helping us, we must learn to have *one* equally high standard for men *and* women, and if men are going to ask forgiveness from women, they have got to give it to women. Failing that we shall never have a beautiful or just social life. The reason, I believe, why as a race we have up to now so largely failed in dealing with the evils that come through sex, is that we

have been afraid to use the method of forgiveness which Christ Himself so freely and amazingly used. We have tried penalties and severities, and so have made things worse, and I believe the day of victory is coming only if we learn to exercise the healing and redemptive art of forgiveness — Christian forgiveness, not just good-natured laxity — and refuse to allow those who have gone down, it may be through ignorance and folly, to remain down.

There is a great battle before us all for our own integrity and purity of life, and there is an equally great battle before us on behalf of others — the battle of redemption, salvation and deliverance for those who, by our past cruelties, have been cast down and made ashamed. I pray God with all my heart, that this Movement may introduce a finer liberty, a larger purity, and a far more gracious forgiveness.

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- "God's Plan in Sex," by A. Herbert Grey, D.D. 4d.
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AIDS TO HEALTH AND CHASTITY



Moderation in eating and drinking. Avoid late suppers, and the use of intoxicants.

Sleep on a hard bed, and on your side—not on your back. Too little clothing rather than too much, and keep your bedroom window open. In the morning get up as soon as you awake. If you awake in the night, to urinate is sometimes a good plan.

There is no greater aid to chastity than plenty of cold water. If possible take a cold or tepid bath every morning; failing this, sponge locally, or better still—all over with cold water, and dry yourself energetically with a rough towel, rubbing the limbs from the extremities. Keep all parts of the body perfectly clean.

The bowels should be opened regularly every day.

Take plenty of exercise, and let your time be fully occupied. Breathe through the nose, and accustom yourself to fully inflate your lungs.

If you are troubled by night discharges, and they do not occur more than once or twice a fortnight, there is no cause for alarm. Should you wish for advice, visit a properly qualified medical man, and under no circumstances go to quacks.

To gain a mastery over the body, the mind must be kept pure. Don't think of wrong things, or read or look at anything that excites impure thoughts. Try and put down all smutty talk, and if coarse jests are made, do not laugh.

"Whatsoever things are true . . . honourable . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report . . . THINK on these things."

The Alliance of Honour

112-114 City Road, London, E.C.1

Founded 1903, by A. B. Kent and E. E. Bagnall

THE OBJECTS OF THE ALLIANCE ARE:—

- (a) To unite men and women in a world-wide and active campaign on behalf of individual and social Purity.
- (b) To invite public support and to co-operate with religious bodies and other organisations professing the same Objects as the Alliance.
- (c) To promote the Moral welfare of young men and women, by circulating suitable literature, and by active propaganda through lectures, cinematograph demonstrations, public meetings, etc.
- (d) To provide counsel and guidance to all who find themselves in difficulty or danger on sex problems.
- (e) To afford guidance and active help to parents and teachers on the important question of the sex-education of children and young people.
- (f) To strive for an equally high standard of Morality for both sexes, and for an enlightened public attitude on all questions bearing on the Moral welfare of the individual and of society.

N.B.—In all its propaganda the Alliance of Honour recognises the importance of Spiritual aid in the attainment of Personal Purity, and the spiritual aspect is therefore kept to the forefront in its operations, which, from the religious standpoint, are inter-denominational in character and Christian in principle.

Membership is open to all who are in sympathy with the objects of the Alliance, and desire to work on behalf of Purity. Men and women over 17 years of age; minimum annual subscription, 2/-. Juniors, over 4 years, 1/-. Honorary members, 10/- annually.

For literature, enrolment, advice on personal problems, or sex-education, write to the Hon. Secretary, or to the Hon. Secretary, Women's Section, The Alliance of Honour, 174 Collins Street, Melbourne.

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