

## H. LEO BOLES / DIVORCED, REMARRIED & BAPTIZED

**There is in the church of Christ a man and a woman who were formerly husband and wife, and were when they took membership with this congregation, but who subsequently separated and have both married again. Wife number two requested baptism, and the preacher refused to baptize her. Now, did he do right? What is the duty of the church toward the man and woman?**

There are two questions involved in this query. Did the preacher do right in refusing to baptize the woman? What is the duty of the church toward the man and woman? They may have had the scriptural cause for separation. I do not know. The query does not make this point clear. If there was a scriptural cause for separation, then the innocent party had a right to marry again and is not living in adultery. If such **were** the case **with the man** who married wife number two, then wife number two is not living in adultery and the preacher did wrong in refusing to baptize her. If neither party had the scriptural cause for separation, but separated and married again, then four parties are living in adultery—the man and wife number two are living in adultery, and the woman and husband number two are living in adultery.

I think that if I had been the preacher, I would have baptized her. I would have taught her her duty, would have pointed out her sin, and would have encouraged her to repentance; and if she had responded to the invitation for those who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and who had repented of their sins to come forward to be baptized, I would have baptized her. **It is a fearful thing to hinder or keep anyone from obeying the gospel. I do not want to have to answer for such a sin. I have had a few cases like the one described above, and I have baptized the parties and left it with them to bring forth fruit meet for repentance.**

The duty of the church in such case is to teach them the will of the Lord and encourage them to obey it. The church cannot compromise with sin; it cannot depart even a hairbreadth from the truth of God. The church should show a deep and abiding interest in the salvation of souls, both with the members of the church and those who are in the world. It should be no respecter of persons in teaching the will of the Lord and encouraging those taught to obey the will. The will of the Lord in the above case is "that all come to repentance" and seek forgiveness in the Lord's appointed way. It is the duty of the church to point out this way to erring members and all others.

It is the duty of the church, when the erring have repented and been forgiven from the Lord, to forgive and encourage the forgiven to live the Christian life. It is the duty of the church to help in Christian fellowship all who are trying to live the Christian life. All formalities and cold indifference should be cast aside and an earnest, prayerful interest taken in all who are trying to live the Christian life. (Questions & Answers, Sermon Outlines & Bible Study Notes, pp. 63 & 64)