

while the parties occupy the same house and the same room. In other words, the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches that desertion is adultery in reverse. The Confession of Faith indicates that transgression against the bond (adultery) or denying the bond (desertion) breaks the bond itself."

Thus the expression "Wilful Desertion" may have several meanings today. In the first place it may mean non-support in an economic sense. It may also mean the refusal of one or both partners to continue in the one flesh relationship, that is to say, refusal of physical intercourse. Wilful desertion may also be interpreted in the sense of emotional non-support. Thus, mental cruelty might come under the category of wilful desertion.

### III. Where There is No Remedy.

The Westminster Confession of Faith would warn us, however, that divorce must be regarded as a last resort. We are discouraged from favouring any measure which would make divorce quick and easy, and are to favour only those measures which will help families in real distress.

The foregoing quotation from the Westminster Confession of Faith would only admit as grounds for divorce "Such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or Civil Magistrate". And when divorce proceedings are undertaken we are urged to see that "A public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case".

The Church and the Civil Magistrate are both urged to remedy sick marriages and to refrain from allowing couples to exercise their own wills and discretion.

Thus, our Church does not hold that divorce is the natural consequence even of proved adultery or wilful desertion. There is an obligation placed upon Church and Society to explore every means of reconciling the partners in a sick marriage to the end that their marriage may be rehabilitated and preserved. Where there is the slightest spark of mutual love and concern, there is hope. Divorce belongs only where a marriage has died.

Respectfully submitted,

The Executive of

The Board of Evangelism and Social Action,

The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Mr. Chairman, from a procedural point of view I would ask whether your committee would be interested to hear further about certain studies that the Family Life Committee of our Church has undertaken with regard to the whole matter of grounds for divorce, and also about remarriage.

We have mentioned that we had prepared this commentary on *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, which I believe your committee now has on hand. The Rev. Arthur Gowland would be pleased to speak to this. It has not the same standing as the resolution on page 1, but it has received general approval throughout the Church.

The Co-CHAIRMAN (*Senator Roebuck*): We are in your hands rather than you in ours. Shall we ask you some questions now, or shall we hear the other members of your delegation and then have a question period?

Mr. SMITH: If the committee so wishes, questions can be asked about the brief I have just read and we could deal with the subject generally afterwards.

The Co-CHAIRMAN (*Senator Roebuck*): I think that would be a good course to follow.

Senator HAIG: Referring to the words "yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied": in what way can the Church or the civil authorities remedy such a breakdown of marriage?