

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 2000 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4UCopy.txt file on this CD.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE UNDER GOD

By L. S. Boardman

The Problem of Divorce and Remarriage
Scripturally Examined in the Light of the Original Text

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Printed Book: Copyright 1999

* * * * *

Digital Edition 03/14/2000
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

DEDICATION

To Ethel, the companion of my youth who built the foundation in my life for the sacred ministry in the early romance of marriage -- to Mattie, who sacrificed to the limit through the middle grind of life, helping me to keep in the ministry -- to Donna, who masterfully took over the task through life's golden years when my preaching was laid aside for writing: to our blessed Heavenly Father, His precious Son, Jesus, and our abiding Comforter, the blessed Holy Spirit, this book is gratefully and affectionately dedicated.

"Without Him I can do nothing;
Without Him I'd surely fail:
Without Him life would be useless,
Like a ship without a sail."
Anon.

* * * * *

PREFACE

Life with its potentials for earthly happiness is more widely and persistently sought in the marriage bond than in any other human relationship. This is as God would have it.

Happiness in marriage, however, is not a happenstance but rather is based squarely on the laws of cause and effect, i.e. the right cause, the right effect -- the wrong cause, the wrong effect.

From the very beginning of human history the enemy of man's earthly and final happiness has thrown his heaviest artillery, and brought to bear his most venomous wrath, against the sanctity and security of the home.

Unfortunately, homes do break. And in divorce and remarriage many problems arise to injure both the innocent and the guilty and deprive unfortunate children of parental security and love. One aspect of the mounting evil is of special concern to all Christians: that is, the cruelty often focused by divorce upon the "innocent partner" who ventured into wedlock with love and faith, only to have that love crushed and that faith destroyed.

This book attempts to define and to clarify some of the injustices and the Bible's statement regarding them. It is in the interest of rescuing and recovering victimized people from needless anxiety and frustration as well as seasoning our spirits with mercy toward the unfortunate that this book is presented.

Life, essentially, is what one makes it. Happiness with spiritual compatibility is a by-product. People will be happy together if they will drink from the right fountain. And, when once true happiness is achieved, the accompanying rewards are well worth all the human efforts that one has expended.

All of life's perplexing problems are not answered in this study, but we trust and pray that after the reading of it the load may be lighter and the future brighter for many.

Dr. G. Frederick Owen

* * * * *

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It gives me great pleasure to express my sincere appreciation for the warm interest, valuable advice, and helpful criticism from friends, fellow-workers, Bible students, able scholars and three precious saved and wholly sanctified marital companions.

Having brought the manuscript through its first draft, I sat for many hours with different men whose judgment I highly esteemed, and whose achievements in the ministry I greatly admired. Together we went through the manuscript painstakingly, and many valuable improvements resulted.

In this connection I am deeply indebted to Rev. Kenneth Fay and Rev. Rodney Pitts, for the hours they spent with this manuscript, going over the material, and for the scores upon scores of valuable suggestions which were most helpful. To these, I also gratefully acknowledge the helpfulness of Rev. J. E. Ray, Rev. Harvey P. Amos, and my son, Rev. Charles Boardman. I would

not overlook the great helpfulness of the wives of these good men, who also studied with their husbands through many hours of ardent concentration.

God, in His unfathomable Providence has given me three of the most devoted companions. To them, beside of GOD, I owe everything. Two are now in heaven with Jesus.

Sara Ethel, the wife of my youth, was a godly influence through those formative years of my life. From our first acquaintance as teenagers, she guided me into the ministry of old-fashioned, Scriptural, second-blessing, death route holiness. She gave up her own education to help put me through college. In my early pastorates she sacrificed, prayed, and worked tirelessly by my side.

Another debt which could never be adequately paid, goes to Mattie May, my faithful wife. She carried the heavy end of our labors for nearly fifty years and nursed me through a lengthy illness which laid me aside from the active ministry for a year, making it possible for me to start this book.

After Mattie went to heaven, all hope for any future ministry was lost, and the lights went out. Then, God in His Providence brought Donna Jean into my life, and the lights came on again, as the ministry of writing unfolded through her influence and persuasion. As a result the manuscript for this book, which had been long neglected, was finished. We trust God will use it for His glory in years to come.

However, my deepest gratitude, a million to one, goes to our dear Heavenly Father, His beloved Son, Jesus, and the blessed Holy Spirit. These first placed it upon my heart to investigate this field of study. I believe they had a hand in laying me aside from active labor, totally incapacitated until the groundwork of Biblical research, and the first draft of the manuscript were completed. God then healed me miraculously and completely after the specialist said I could not live. To Him be glory, now and forever! Amen.

* * * * *

FROM OUR REVIEWERS

Rev. Elbert Dodd, Senior General Moderator of the Bible Missionary Church, encouraged me, saying: "I read your enclosed article. It is well written and I agree with the doctrine as set forth. I never read anything so good as this on this subject."

Rev. Joseph Cook, General Moderator of the Bible Missionary Church, wrote: "Your manuscript is most excellent. I don't believe there is anything in print that can touch it."

Rev. Parker Maxey, professor, and head of the Department of Theology at the Bible Missionary Institute in Rock Island, Illinois, wrote: "First, I want to say that I thoroughly enjoyed going over the manuscript. It is one of the best expositions of the divorce and remarriage issue I have ever read. I feel that you have presented some enlightenment on this important issue that needs to get into print, and the sooner, the better. I have checked this manuscript in reference to the Greek and have found it to be free of error."

Dr. William Tidwell, for nearly a lifetime pastor of First Church of the Nazarene in Chattanooga, Tennessee, felt: "After reading the manuscript, I do not believe any reasonable objection can be found. I did not discover one. The facts are, it is by far the most exhaustive treatise on the subject I have ever seen. It is scholarly and Scriptural. If it can be gotten before the public I think it will go down in history as authority on the subject?"

Rev. H. A. Erdmann, Editor-in-chief in the department of Sunday school publications in the Bible Missionary Church, confided: "I have tried to go through your manuscript very carefully. I checked your Greek words and word-roots with my Greek Testament and find that you are correct in pointing out the different meanings of different words used, and which are so carelessly interpreted in the English language, which is perhaps the weakest language in existence when it comes to fine points of distinction. I can find no fault with your work."

Dr. S. I. Emery, for many years considered authority on the subjects of theology and Bible interpretation in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, said in a kind letter to me: "It appears to me that the material would make a worthy contribution to the literature in this field. It is certain that something needs to be offered to people who are ensnared and that in a very complicated way. If the material is presented in book form I would recommend it."

Dr. G. Frederick Owen also spent long night hours most diligently studying this manuscript. He encouraged me greatly and I highly regard his judgment. He said, "It is a classic." Dr. Owen did, however, find several weaknesses in the manuscript, and these have been corrected. Dr. Owen was the author of *Archaeology and the Bible* and a history of Israel, entitled *From Abraham to the Mid-east Crisis*. He was for many years a member of the Palestine Oriental Society, and The American School of Oriental Research. Perhaps his most renowned literary contribution is his *Archaeology* section in the *New Thompson Chain Reference Bible*. And, by the way, Dr. Owen was my major professor in college. Just to sit in his classroom proved to be a golden opportunity of a lifetime.

NOTE: The seven men above presented their review a few years ago when the first draft of this manuscript was completed. The following ones were received after the final touches were finished. L. S. B.

Rev. Timothy Can, a pastor friend of mine, wrote: "Interesting, Biblically sound. Very informative in the light of the Greek text. Your arguments are noteworthy for any honest-hearted truth-seeker, and decidedly compelling for those who halt between two opinions. Get this material out to the body of Christ, and do it with dispatch."

Mrs. Elaine Smith, a friend, writes: "This book is a very scholarly work. It takes every side and analysis into account. It is very logical and thorough, and will do much good. I was encouraged as well as enlightened. I am thankful as a believer that you were inspired to offer this research to the world."

Rev. Jack Seaney, editor of the *Preachers' Perspective*, had this to say: "Thank you for letting me peruse your manuscript. I find it is a very thorough exegesis: insightful and scholarly

with a fluency that avoids academic terminology and esoteric language, making it very readable. It would make a great addition to some resource learning center as a reference tool. The varied and refreshing presentation would contribute to people who may be working on graduate programs in areas related to the thematic material. The tenor of your thesis is in agreement with both John Wesley and Dr. Godbey, who, as you know, allow for a place of mercy in the breach of a marriage contract. I am especially impressed with the last two chapters: THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY and RULES FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE. Every young couple ought to be exposed to it."

Rev. Dale Hayford, President of the Bible Missionary Institute in Rock Island, Illinois, kindly wrote me his evaluation, thus:

"I feel honored that you asked me to read the manuscript of your soon-to-be-published book, Divorce and Remarriage Under God. As I conveyed to you verbally, this work needs to be printed soon and distributed as far as possible in the church world. Some have said that this is an issue that has never been settled. I disagree.

"The Scriptures are clear. Your honest exegesis and irrefutable logic will give clear answers to all who will honestly open their hearts and minds to this truth you have so cogently written.

"In my perusal of your work I found nothing that I did not feel was based solidly upon the Word of God. May God bless you for the painstaking labor you have expended in dealing so forthrightly and yet kindly with this sensitive issue.

"I remind you, I am anxious to see this in print and available to all who are interested in the truth regarding this oft-debated question."

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

So much has been written on the subject of divorce and remarriage that one might feel that surely another book is not needed. Has not everything been said on both sides of this question that could be said? That was the feeling of the author of this book until he was stricken with a severe illness and confined for more than a year.

During this time he searched the Scriptures for every word that he could find which touched influentially on this vital, yet controversial issue. He was frustrated by folk asking, "What is your stand on divorce and remarriage?" and having to confess, "Well, really, to be honest, I don't know for sure." Then began a diligent search for solid Scriptural ground on which one might stand and feel confident. He felt that surely there must be a common thread of truth which runs throughout the Bible, which would clear up much of the conflicting opinions. He believes that thread has been found.

After making charts of the Bible passages which needed to be studied, he consulted the Greek and Hebrew scholars for the proper definitions of the key words in each passage. From this

study, various conclusions became obvious. He then proceeded to compose the first draft of the manuscript. His sole motive in making this study and in writing this book was his passionate desire to help heal the open sore within the ranks of Christendom, as well as to ease the frustrating anxiety which hovers like a dark cloud over the lives of those who unfortunately are involved, and who have been misinformed and sometimes sadly mistreated.

The author wishes to make it clear that he has no personal "axe to grind" as far as divorce is concerned. He has never been thus involved. Three times in life he found the will of God in marriage, and the tragedy of divorce has never happened to him.

Furthermore, he wants all of his readers to know that in no way does he want to encourage divorce. He would stop all of it if he could. So would God stop it if He could. The reason God can't stop divorce, as well as many other things that He would like to stop, is because He has surrendered (while people live in this world) to the free moral agency of man. Since man acquired a sinful, depraved nature, his rebellious, carnal will prevents God doing many things He would like to do.

God does, however, help prevent divorce when both partners love and obey Him and are willing to work together to make their marriage a success. Following God's plan always brings success.

Admittedly, there will be many intentional repeats in the course of this book, which are intended to make certain vital truths more emphatic. Also, some things needed to be repeated under different circumstances, and in different locations. Sometimes a Scriptural passage or reference needs to be repeated in several different places, and under different circumstances, in order to hold and clarify the train of thought (Isa. 28:10).

* * * * *

CONTENTS

I. Fornication Scripturally Defined

II. Harmonizing the Three Synoptic Accounts

III. The Voice of History

IV. "Is It Lawful for Every Cause?"

V. "Let Not Man Put Asunder"

VI. "The Woman Which Hath an Husband Is Bound"

VII. Comparing St. Paul With the Prophet Malachi

VIII. The Pauline Approach to Remarriage

IX. Jesus and the Question of Remarriage

X. The More Excellent Way

XI. Rules for a Happy Marriage

Addendum

"Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book" (Jeremiah 30:2).

* * * * *

CHAPTER I.

FORNICATION SCRIPTURALLY DEFINED

FORNICATION is one of the most important words when studying the divorce and remarriage problem. Therefore it is of supreme importance that we start with the correct definition of the word FORNICATION AS FAR AS THE BIBLE USE OF THE WORD IS CONCERNED. Right conclusions can never be reached when incorrect definitions of vital words are employed. (For example: How could one hope to travel and reach his destination when he, knowingly or ignorantly, takes a wrong road and stays with it? He can't!)

This subject, therefore, should not be discussed until first the definition of the word FORNICATION, AS IT IS USED IN THE BIBLE, is correctly defined and clearly understood.

There could hardly be a more faulty and misleading definition of the word FORNICATION, AS IT IS USED IN THE SCRIPTURES, than that it applies to illicit sexual relationships before marriage. A false definition of the word FORNICATION, WHEN STUDYING THE BIBLE, is a handy tool to aid partisans, who wish only to make their point, disregarding the merits of the question, but it is entirely contrary to the way the word is used in the Bible. When the definition of FORNICATION AS IT IS USED IN THE BIBLE is established, and when one still insists on employing an entirely wrong definition, in order to make his point -- then he is not honestly seeking for truth. He is seeking only to win the debate.

According to all of the standard dictionaries which we have examined, including some of the abridged editions, as well as the context of the Scriptures themselves, fornication in the Bible is a GENERAL TERM, including all sins of sex which the Bible mentions. It is not confined to the sexual sins of unmarried persons.

Socrates once said, "If you would converse with me, define your terms." May we paraphrase this quotation by saying: If you would examine the divorce-remarriage question, in light of Jesus' words as found in Mat. 5:32 and 19:9 -- then we must ask you to define the term FORNICATION correctly. Define it, not in the light of secular, current usage, which would apply to modern law courts and which deals exclusively with current problems, but rather, IN LIGHT

OF ITS SCRIPTURAL SETTING, and with the use of definitions which prevailed in the days when King James Version was originated.

The apostle Peter unhesitatingly consigned individuals to eternal destruction who intentionally wrest the Scriptures in order to support a doctrine contrary to the true meaning of the word of God. He said:

They that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (II Peter 3:16).

According to this verse in Second Peter, any individual who decides first what he wants to believe, and then tries to wrest the Scriptures from their true meaning to substantiate his claim, and who pawns off his preconceived notions on others, is headed for his own destruction. We must not tamper with God's Word.

The divorce and remarriage issue is not a legal "modern courtroom" proposition with us. It is a SPIRITUAL and Moral question and has much to do with our Christian experience. Therefore, if we use the current, secular definition of the word FORNICATION, when we are supposed to use the "Bible definition," we will never correctly interpret what the Bible really teaches on this important subject. Nothing but confusion can result when the subject of FORNICATION is under discussion and a wrong definition of the word is employed, or worse yet, when the subject is being debated and the contestants define their terms differently.

Furthermore, when one studies a subject such as this, and bases his conclusions on wrong definitions, he will be accepting false teaching and calling it truth. Everyone who applies the current definition of FORNICATION instead of the Bible definition is guilty of wresting the Scripture.

As we read from the long list of naive writers on the subject of divorce and remarriage, we are startled by the obvious carelessness (hopefully it is not intentional!) in this matter of the definition of the word FORNICATION.

In defining the word FORNICATION, it must be recognized that there are two unlike definitions of this word -- in fact they are entirely different. The current definition applies the word FORNICATION solely to the sins of unmarried persons, while the Bible definition defines it as "all sexual sins, including adultery, incest and idolatry." These two definitions are listed separately in all unabridged dictionaries and the SCRIPTURAL DEFINITION is plainly identified and need not be confused with the secular one. In Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition (the unabridged), these two definitions are listed under one compound definition, but even in this case, Webster states in the second half of his definition that even though FORNICATION is ". . . usually distinguished from adultery," it "is sometimes, ESPECIALLY IN THE BIBLE, used to include all sexual intercourse except between husband and wife or concubine." Webster makes it clear that the Bible definition of FORNICATION has an entirely different meaning from the popular one, and it is the Bible definition rather than the popular one that we MUST use in studying the Bible. Much misunderstanding of the divorce-remarriage problem arises when one

defines the word FORNICATION as solely the sins of unmarried persons, while the Bible, throughout, teaches the very opposite.

Now, let us examine Webster's definition as it appears in the New International Dictionary, Second Edition:

Fornication: Illicit sexual intercourse on the part of an unmarried person: the act of such illicit sexual intercourse between a man and a woman as does not by law amount to adultery. Fornication is sometimes, esp. in the Bible, used to include all sexual intercourse except between husband and wife or concubine

One can readily understand by comparing the two parts of Webster's definition, how misleading it would be to interpret the exception clause in Matt. 19:9 and 5:32 according to the popular definition when Webster himself clearly earmarks the Bible definition as the proper one to use for Bible interpretation. FORNICATION, therefore, IN THE BIBLE, is not confined exclusively to the illicit relationships of unmarried persons, as some would lead us to believe, but refers, rather, to ALL ILLICIT SEXUAL INTERCOURSE, INCLUDING ADULTERY.

Notice that Webster makes it clear that the first half of his compound definition is connected with "law," which identifies it with current proceedings of litigation, while he uses the word "Bible" in connection with the second part of his definition, thus identifying it with Scripture.

Much needless confusion comes about because of the fact that many words have greatly changed in meaning since the days of the King James translators. We cannot, therefore, always apply today's "current" definition of a word to the translation which was made by scholars over four hundred years ago, without completely missing the true meaning of the text. By way of illustrating this point, we will examine the word "prevent" as it is used in I Thess. 4:15.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

It so happens that there are no less than four different definitions of the word PREVENT in Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition. In agreement with Dr. Joseph Mayer in his Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, the only definition of these four which parallels the original Greek of the New Testament is the first one. In this definition the word PREVENT means "to precede; outrun." In other words, we which are alive when Christ returns shall not precede, or "go before," those that have passed away, but "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds. . . ."

If, therefore, one should attempt to interpret I Thess. 4:15 by defining the word PREVENT with the use of definition number 3 in Webster, which is "to keep from happening," or with definition number 4, which is "to hinder," he would never reach the true meaning of this verse. Webster reminds us that the first definition listed here for PREVENT is "archaic." Yet, it is this very "archaic" definition which we MUST use in this connection in order to harmonize with the true, original meaning in this verse, because that is the definition the King James translators used. Webster's first definition of the word PREVENT, even though it is "archaic" now, was in common

use in the days of the King James translators. The original meaning of this word has dropped out of common use and is not in current use today. WE MUST UNDERSTAND, THEREFORE, THAT WHEN WE DESIRE TO REACH THE TRUE MEANING OF BIBLICAL WRITINGS, WE MUST USE DEFINITIONS WHICH THE KING JAMES TRANSLATORS USED WHEN THEY TRANSLATED THE ORIGINAL TEXT INTO ENGLISH. When they used a certain definition of a word, going from Greek to English, we MUST use the same definition they used in order to correctly understand what the original author was saying.

Careful selection of the right definition of a word is no less important when FORNICATION is being considered. If one should knowingly and intentionally choose a wrong definition of a word in order to make his point, HE IS WRESTING THE SCRIPTURES TO HIS OWN DESTRUCTION (II Peter 3:16). Such a deceitful approach to truth would be as tragic for a man's followers as for the man himself.

Now, let us consult a few of the standard dictionaries:

New Century Dictionary and Encyclopedia:

Fornication, the act of illicit sexual intercourse on the part of an unmarried person with a person of the opposite sex, whether married or unmarried.

IN SCRIPTURAL USE the word is also applied to adultery and figuratively to idolatry.

Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language:

Fornication, 1. Voluntary sexual intercourse between an unmarried woman and a man, especially an unmarried man: it is generally forbidden by law.

2. IN THE BIBLE, (a) any unlawful sexual intercourse including adultery. (b) Worship of idols.

American College Dictionary:

Fornication. 1. Voluntary sexual intercourse on the part of an unmarried person with a person of the opposite sex.

2. BIBLE. a. adultery, b. idolatry.

Funk and Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary of the English Language:

Fornication: 1. Illicit sexual intercourse of unmarried persons. 2. In Scriptural use, often adultery, or harlotry, or incest; hence idolatry.

Britannica World Language Dictionary: Illicit sexual intercourse of unmarried persons. 2. In Scriptural use: adultery or harlotry or incest. B. Idolatry.

American College Dictionary:

Voluntary sexual intercourse on the part of an unmarried person with a person of the opposite sex. 2. BIBLE. a. adultery. b. idolatry.

The Oxford English Dictionary:

Fornication: a. adultery, b. the forsaking of God for idols-idolatry.

World Book Dictionary:

Fornication. Voluntary sexual intercourse between unmarried persons. 2. In the Bible: a. adultery. b. figurative, idolatry.

This definition pattern remains virtually the same for all the reputable dictionaries which we have consulted, except for the abridged (condensed) copies which fail to list the Bible definition. Any dictionary which lists the current definition of FORNICATION, and fails to list the Scriptural definition, is not safe to follow when interpreting the Bible.

If the definitions from all of the English dictionaries were presented with no reference to the Bible at all, one would have to consult the Greek-English Lexicon to find the true meaning of the original words. However, the facts are -- the second definition listed, in each case, is earmarked FOR BIBLE USE.

A great deal of misunderstanding as to the Scriptural meaning of the word FORNICATION arises out of the overwhelming popularity of many of the abridged dictionaries. These abridged editions, oftentimes, for the purpose of condensing the material into a smaller and less expensive volume, have in many instances entirely omitted what we have referred to as the Bible definition of the word FORNICATION, giving only the secular, or popular definition. Therefore, when a person consults these abridged dictionaries for the definition of FORNICATION, he must be very careful or he will get only the CURRENT DEFINITION, which cannot be used for Bible interpretation.

It is obvious, therefore, that, when one is examining a word in the English translation of the Bible, he must use a definition of the English word which corresponds with the lexical definition of the original Greek from which the English was taken. And it is only the BIBLE DEFINITION as found in standard dictionaries which corresponds with the meaning of the original word in the Greek text.

Dr. Joseph Thayer, in his Greek-English Lexicon, copyrighted by Harper in 1880, says that "ADULTERY, which comes from the Greek word moy-khah'o, is to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife, while FORNICATION, coming from por-ni'-ah, variously translated as FORNICATION, UNCHASTITY, and UNFAITHFULNESS, is illicit sexual intercourse in general" p. 532.

The Old Testament is very clear in its use of the word FORNICATION. Throughout the seventeen historical books of the Old Testament the word FORNICATION appears only once (II Chron. 21:11), and this is an account of Jehoram, who forsook the Lord and led Jerusalem and Judah into idolatry.

Moses, in all of his dealings with sinful Israel, used the word adultery exclusively, making no reference whatsoever to FORNICATION.

Throughout the five Old Testament books of wisdom and poetry, the word FORNICATION does not one time appear. We refer to the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

In all of the writings of the sixteen Old Testament prophets, with all of the sins they unsparingly denounced, there are only two who ever used the word FORNICATION. Isaiah used the word only once (Isa. 23:17), and in this instance he was speaking of the city of Tyre that would commit FORNICATION with the wicked kingdoms of the world. Ezekiel mentions FORNICATION three times, all in the 16th chapter of his prophecy, and in this connection he makes the word equivalent to harlotry, whoredom and adulteries. Throughout this chapter the prophet is speaking, not of sexual sins among humans, but rather of God's people, Israel, having SOCIAL INTERCOURSE with the wicked nations about them, and becoming involved in their worship of idols. It is conclusive, therefore, that the word FORNICATION, as it was sparingly used in the Old Testament, had no reference whatever to the sexual sins of unmarried persons, but referred primarily to idol worship and socializing with the heathen -- becoming morally and spiritually corrupt thereby.

The New Testament, even though its use of the word FORNICATION is, in a general sense, much different from that of the Old Testament, still it is no less forthright in its clarification of the accepted meaning of the word. In four instances -- Matt. 15:19, Mark 7:21, Galatians 5:19 and I Cor. 6:9 -- the words ADULTERY and FORNICATION are listed on an equal basis. The parallel listing of these two words has led some to believe that the words must be opposite in meaning. They further reason that, being opposite, and adultery, as we know having reference to infidelity to the marriage bond, FORNICATION must of necessity have reference to pre-marital sins. This, however, is a hasty and badly-mistaken jumping-to-conclusions. It runs counter to all of the reputable authorities, as we have noted, as well as to the tenor of the Scriptures themselves. The parallel listing of these two words in the above passages merely confirms the fact that they are NOT identical in meaning. Their being listed on an equal basis does not mean they are opposite. For example, in Gal. 5:19, 20, LASCIVIOUSNESS and IDOLATRY are listed on an equal basis, but no one would think these two words are opposite in meaning. Actually these two words are very similar in meaning: LASCIVIOUSNESS being an unrestrained lusting after material things, while IDOLATRY is a worship of such things. In this same passage, HATRED and VARIANCE are given parallel listing, but instead of being opposite or radically different in meaning, there is actually a very striking similarity between them.

In order to make it clear that it is not awkward to have ADULTERY and FORNICATION listed on an equal basis in a single sentence, let us consider Mark 7:21 in two different

approaches: first, let us quote this verse as it appears in the Authorized Version -- then follow it by substituting for the words ADULTERY and FORNICATION their rightful definitions as stated in the Greek Lexicon.

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, ADULTERIES, FORNICATIONS, murders.

Now for their definitions incorporated within the same verse:

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, ADULTERIES [unlawful intercourse with other men's wives], FORNICATION [illicit sexual intercourse in general], murders.

It cannot be denied that ADULTERY and FORNICATION somewhat overlap in New Testament usage and in at least one instance they are used interchangeably. We refer to Rev. 2:20-22, as follows:

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which callest herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit FORNICATION. . .

And I gave her space to repent of her FORNICATION: and she repented not.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit ADULTERY with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

This quotation has reference to a certain Jezebel who was teaching in the Thyatira Church. You will notice that verse 20 states that this woman seduced God's servants to commit FORNICATION. In other words, THEY committed FORNICATION with her. Verse 21 states that SHE also committed FORNICATION. Conclusively, verse 22 sums up the whole illicit affair under the heading of ADULTERY. Let us further draw our reader's attention to the fact that the very same deed, involving the very same individuals, which is called FORNICATION in verses 20 and 21, is called ADULTERY in verse 22. Nor is this a translator's error, because the former, FORNICATION, comes from the Greek word por-ni'-ah, while the later, ADULTERY comes from moy-khyoo'-o.

The New Testament, also, the same as the Old, is void of any suggestion that fornication is associated exclusively with the sins of unmarried persons. On the other hand, there are various passages which use the word FORNICATION in connection with married persons. We refer to Jude, verse 7, for example, here the apostle refers to two entire cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, which had given themselves over to FORNICATION. In this connection he was not speaking of idol worship but rather of sexual uncleanness among themselves, even to the sin of sodomy, for this was the sin for which the entire population of these two cities was destroyed.

Furthermore, Jude used the word ek-porn-yoo'-o, which is the most flagrant form of FORNICATION, and which Dr. Thayer defines as, "A lust that gluts itself, satisfies itself

completely; to go a whoring, give oneself over to FORNICATION." It is a self-evident fact that Jude used a Greek word which stems from the same root (porn) as does por-ni'-ah, both of which are translated FORNICATION in the King James text. Ek-porn-yoo'-o, how ever, is the stronger of the two words, being A LUST THAT GLUTS ITSELF, and Jude applies it to the entire population of two cities with no difference between married and unmarried persons.

God surely would not have destroyed both innocent and guilty for the sins of the guilty without giving the innocent an opportunity to escape, since He promised Abraham He would make allowance for the escape of the innocent. Had ten righteous persons been found in Sodom, God would have spared the entire city because of the intercessory prayer of Abraham (Gen. 18:32). However, since ten righteous could not be found, God destroyed the guilty ones, allowing the innocent, or RIGHTEOUS, to escape with their lives if they should choose to do so. THEREFORE, THE ENTIRE CITY OF BOTH MARRIED AND UNMARRIED PERSONS, EXCEPTING LOT ONLY, WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTERS, WAS GUILTY OF WHAT JUDE CALLED FORNICATION.

Three times in the Book of Acts (15:20; 15:29; 21:25), Luke lists the restrictions which the Christian council at Jerusalem levied in a general way upon the entire membership of the Gentile churches, and one of these restrictions was that they should restrain from FORNICATION, meaning, in this case, immorality -- all sexual sins in general. There would be little point in the council's insisting that only the unmarried persons in the church remain sexually clean with no reference whatever to the married people in the membership.

Furthermore, Paul clearly states that the type of FORNICATION which was practiced among the Corinthian Church members (I Cor. 5: 1) was that of a man having his father's wife (his stepmother). The woman at least, in this instance, was a married person and the affair is called FORNICATION.

In Matt. 5:28 Jesus further substantiates our claim that ADULTERY, as He used the word, applied to both married and single persons when He said:

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Now, the word "woman" in this verse is translated from the Greek word goo-nay', which technically means "wife." Therefore, Jesus literally was saying this:

But I say unto you, That whosoever [married or single] looketh on another's wife [goo-nay] to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Upon observing these words of Jesus, it is made clear that an unmarried man can commit adultery as well as a married man can. Had Jesus tried to distinguish between His use of adultery and fornication. He would have said:

But I say unto you, That any married man which looketh on another's wife to lust after her hath committed adultery. . . while an unmarried man guilty of the same lustful gaze hath committed fornication.

Again, in I Thess. 4:3-4, Paul uses the word FORNICATION, making it synonymous with sexual sins in general, and idolatry; and applies it in a personal address to EVERY ONE OF YOU (married or single) in the Thessalonian Church.

A few hold to the notion that FORNICATION applies exclusively to persons who are engaged to be married, but not yet married. To substantiate this claim, they cite the case of Joseph and Mary. Joseph was merely ENGAGED or betrothed to Mary when he learned she was with child, and he had the thought in mind to put her away privately (Matt. 1:19). However, the Scriptures nowhere use the word FORNICATION in connection with Joseph's hasty conclusions as to Mary's alleged conduct. Had Mary been guilty of the sin Joseph suspected, then FORNICATION could have been rightfully used concerning her, but that still would not have proved that the word FORNICATION could not also be used in connection with married persons, especially when it is thus used consistently in the New Testament.

While working on this chapter on the proper BIBLICAL definition of the word FORNICATION, it began to dawn that a serious error was making deep inroads into the thinking of many good people because of their wrongly defining the word FORNICATION. It became obvious that much of the misunderstanding and confusion as to the problem of divorce and remarriage was due to the smaller, condensed COLLEGIATE editions of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, which so many people were using, and were being led astray as to the true Bible definition of the word FORNICATION. I then wrote the publisher and presented the problem which we faced concerning such a widespread wrong understanding of the divorce-remarriage issue, caused by the incomplete definition of the word FORNICATION, which appears in many of the smaller, abridged editions. Mr. P. B. Gove, General Editor of Merriam-Webster, acknowledged the weakness in the Collegiate edition, as to the definition of FORNICATION.

He replied, "Thank you for your letter of January 24 pointing out what can happen when a satisfactory definition such as appears in Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, at fornication is condensed. We agree that any definition passed for us by inclusion in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary should not be misleading. . . . Of course we cannot hope in a dictionary to be exegetical as well as lexical, but we will see what we can do sometime to make it clear that the words 'except for fornication' (Matt. 5:32) are not restricted to illicit relations of the unmarried."

Therefore, all writers on the divorce-remarriage issue MUST shy away from the abridged dictionaries which fail to give the Bible definition of the word FORNICATION. They must consult the unabridged editions or they will get a wrong definition and a wrong understanding of the Bible on this important subject. As a result they will be led astray and will lead others astray also. "Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?" (Luke 6:39).

Dr. James Strong, in his Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, defines FORNICATION as harlotry, adultery, incest and idolatry. The word ADULTERY in the Greek has but one definition, while FORNICATION has several.

Let me repeatedly warn: for anyone who builds any Scriptural doctrine on a wrong definition of any important word, we hope for the sake of his eternity-bound soul he will seek forgiveness of God and never knowingly do such a thing again, for even though his logic may be right, his conclusions will be wrong. Result -- a wresting of the Scriptures unto his own destruction (II Peter 2:1).

I shall never forget a true story which my Uncle Charley Hagan told me more than sixty years ago: When he was about eighteen years old, he and another lad got hold of a pistol and some shells. They went to an abandoned farm to determine, on a small wager, which one was best with a pistol. They sat up an old, fallen-down barn door, put a mark in the center for a bull's-eye, and stepped back for the contest. The other lad shot first and he came so close to the bulls'-eye that my uncle thought to himself, "I don't think I can beat him, but maybe I can fool him." So, while the other lad was intently watching the target, my uncle shot right over the top of the barn. Then this conversation followed:

"Man! you didn't even hit the barn door!"

"Don't tell me I didn't hit it. I can out-shoot any man in this county."

"Well, if you hit it, where did you hit it?"

"I don't know, but I know I hit it." Then after a short pause, he continued, "You know, on second thought, I must have put the bullet through the same hole your bullet made."

That sounded possible. That meant that it was a tie, and they would have to shoot again to break the tie. The next time the other lad didn't do as well and my uncle beat him. That was a case of missing the mark on purpose. He won the contest but he had to cheat in order to do it.

Now, for the application: Everyone who takes a wrong definition for the word FORNICATION, KNOWINGLY, to win the divorce-remarriage debate, certainly is using a SHAMEFUL FALSEHOOD, and according to I Peter 2:1, is cutting himself off from eternal life in heaven. How could anyone get any consolation in winning a contest when he has to cheat in order to win? Hopefully, anyone who has committed this crime against the Bible and God, did it in ignorance, but even then, the misleading books and pamphlets and tracts are out there in circulation, working untold havoc to the cause of Christ, and to the peace of mind for those who are unfortunately involved in divorce and remarriage.

A SOLEMN WARNING: It would be a total disaster to one's eternity-bound soul to give the wrong definition to the word FORNICATION, AND DO IT ON PURPOSE, in order to win the debate, and silence the opposition. It is very dishonest for any person to handle the Word of God deceitfully (II Cor. 4:2), trying to make the Bible say what they want it to say.

In concluding this chapter on the definition of fornication, AS IT IS USED IN THE BIBLE, we must insist, in the light of the true Scriptural usage, the Bible NEVER ONE TIME associates fornication EXCLUSIVELY with pre-marital sins.

This author believes, in all sincerity, that the position taken in this chapter on the Biblical definition of fornication may become a settled conviction with all honest seekers after truth. "Honesty is [always] the best policy." It is ALWAYS unfortunate when HUMAN REASONING is followed, instead of SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY.

EXPLANATION

Why is it necessary to first establish the correct definition of the word FORNICATION? It is necessary because the great majority of writers on the subject of "Divorce and Remarriage" base their thesis on the wrong definition of the word FORNICATION. If one would stick rigidly to the wrong definition of the word "FORNICATION," having it refer solely to premarital sins, then we would have Jesus saying that His exception clause in Matt. 5:32 allowed divorce only because of sex sins which occurred before marriage, and that would be absolutely false.

* * * * *

CHAPTER II.

HARMONIZING THE THREE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS

When I became aware of the fact that there is scarcely a more controversial issue among people of otherwise harmonious views within individual Christian groups than the divorce-remarriage issue, especially as it revolves around the remarriage of the "innocent party," I asked, "Does not the Bible give a consistent answer to this much-debated question?" Immediately there came to me an avalanche of Scriptural quotations from people of opposite views, each one thinking he had forever closed the discussion by projecting his opinion on the subject with, "Thus saith the Lord."

Upon investigation I learned that certain isolated passages from the Bible were lifted out of their context, examined only from the English, ignoring the Greek and Hebrew from which the English was translated; and the different verses were not related to each other, while other verses related to the subject were ignored. Then, under these conditions I observed that some Scriptures, sometimes, seemed to contradict others. However, this very faulty approach to Bible interpretation is the very thing which creates strong differences of opinion with regard to the divorce-remarriage issue. This seeming conflict within the text leads to the conclusion that, since the Scriptures cannot be essentially unsound, one group or the other must be misunderstanding the true Biblical position.

These glaring inconsistencies prompted me to venture into an exhaustive search and analytical study of the Scriptural passages which bear on this subject, with the thought in mind of finding a common thread of harmony which I felt surely must run through the Word of God, thus giving us a common ground of mutual understanding and consistency.

Since Jesus is the final authority on this issue, any valid approach to it begins and ends with harmonizing the statements of Jesus when facing the Pharisees, as it appears in Matt. 19:31-2; Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:14-18.

This "harmony method" of interpreting the Scriptures, to which Dr. Hastings says the Catholic Church has always objected, is the only honest and safe approach which can be made to any problem arising out of the varying records in the synoptic Gospels. An examination of one of these accounts, standing by itself, may present an incomplete picture and create problems when the whole picture is not taken into account. This faulty approach to the Scriptures can, and often does, lead to conflicting interpretations of the Scriptures.

We have, therefore, set up these three Gospel accounts of Jesus' dialogue with the Pharisees in the forthcoming chapters in parallel columns, allowing blank spaces where one writer omits some detail of the story which another records. We must consider the entire picture, paralleled and harmonized into a composite whole before our deductions can be reliable. Fragments of truth, standing alone, are not always safe to follow.

We need not be surprised at the variations in these three synoptic accounts when we consider the fact that the Holy Spirit, whose infinite mind and heart, inspiring the human writers, allowed the truth to flow through and be colored by the varying personalities of the human writers. It is the divine authorship of all Scripture which accounts for its being always TRUTHFUL and INHERENTLY consistent, while it is the finite touch of the human pen which accounts for the variations in emphases as to details between one writer and another.

The influence of the human recorder does in no way detract from the fact of divine inspiration, which is the final source of all Scriptural truth. The truth, however, becomes PERSONALIZED AND INDIVIDUALIZED as it flows through the personality of each human writer, and, even though the accounts are all some what incomplete and are INDIVIDUALISTICALLY unique, they are, however, without essential error in historical accuracy, doctrinal soundness, and moral reliability. The Holy Spirit, who inspired all Scriptural writings, purposely adapted Himself to the individual differences of the various writers and thereby avoided a stereotyped account. If the Gospel writers were crossed up on a moral or an important doctrinal truth, then one might question the validity of their reports. However, no such problem exists when we parallel and harmonize the three synoptic accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke. It is really quite normal for an emphasis to vary from one writer to another, but there are no REAL contradictions anywhere in the varying gospel accounts when the text is properly understood. For this reason it is far safer, when one is seeking truth, to take all three of the synoptic reports and parallel and harmonize them, than to take just one as the final authority when it is obvious that certain details are not mentioned.

In fact, we are very happy that each of the gospel writers reported the parts of the account which most impressed him, instead of their copying from each other, or getting their heads together and agreeing on what to include.

To illustrate the need of harmonizing the varying gospel accounts in order to get the whole picture, we cite the statements which Pilate placed at the top of the cross. Matthew quotes Pilate's

inscription as saying: "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Mark merely says: "THE KING OF THE JEWS." Luke, sometime later, after listening to conversations and preaching, wrote: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Finally, John later remembered the sign as saying: "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS." Some commentators have completed the whole sentence by putting the pieces together thus: "THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

With this in mind, it becomes very necessary for us to parallel and harmonize the three synoptic accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke regarding Jesus' statement on the divorce-remarriage issue so that we won't be lifting out one brief, isolated statement from the whole, knowing that one fragment, lifted out of any conversation, might never do justice to the whole conversation, or be a safe support on which to establish a workable creed.

It is very intriguing and enlightening when we get all of Jesus' statements together on the divorce and remarriage issue, and when we notice what Jesus FAILED TO SAY as well as what He DID say. For example, Jesus never even slightly hinted that divorced and remarried people should separate and become celibates for the rest of their lives. Nor did He ever even faintly suggest that such persons live together as BROTHER and SISTER, as some have advocated. In fact, there is ample evidence in this book, with Scriptural proof, that God condemned separation with much stronger language than that of divorce. (See Chapter VII.)

The author of this book confesses that he doesn't know where some people get such advice as they hand out to others who are already divorced and remarried, or those contemplating remarriage. They certainly do not get it from Jesus or any other Bible authority. Such unfounded advice, certainly, if generally carried out, would create more problems in the church world, in the individual lives of those already involved, and in society in general, than anyone could ever hope to correct.

Whoso despiseth the word [God's Word] shall be destroyed (Prov. 13:13).

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Matt. 24:35).

* * * * *

CHAPTER III.

THE VOICE OF HISTORY

* * *

[At this point, the author displayed Matthew 19:7-8, Mark 10:3-5, and Luke 16:16 in three vertical columns, left to right respectively. The reader may view this chart by opening hdm0152a.jpg in the Graphics\Charts folder. This can be achieved from our menu by clicking on the 00C-View Graphics folder, and then clicking on the Picview option. Once the Picview program opens, use its functions to open the Graphics\Charts folder, and then click on

hdm0152a.jpg. So that the reader can better follow the author, should it be decided to skip opening the chart, I have inserted the 3 passages in respective order below. -- DVM]

Matthew 19:7-8 "They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so."

Mark 10:3-5 "And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept."

Luke 16:16 "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."

* * *

Our readers will recognize these three Scriptural passages as being taken from the three varying accounts of Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees over the divorce and remarriage problem, as were those of the previous chapter. These three Scriptural accounts are here paralleled and harmonized. Because of the historical and dispensational significance of these passages, it is necessary to harmonize them before one can understand or interpret them correctly. Any two or more Scriptures which, on surface reading, seem to contradict each other, must be harmonized and reconciled before they can be understood and interpreted correctly.

When one reads these Scriptures carefully, he will notice that Jesus, historically speaking, was making reference to three distinctly different periods of time. The beginning period is mentioned in Matthew 19:8 (above) where Jesus referred to the period FROM THE BEGINNING to the time of Moses. The second period was from the time of Moses to the advent of John the Baptist, found in Luke 16:16. The third period reached from the advent of John the Baptist to the end of the Gentile dispensation. This third period has not yet ended. Each of these three historical periods has its own individualistic Scriptural view on the divorce and remarriage issue, which was and is acceptable and applicable only when applied within its proper historical period, and not in another.

The middle period is known as the period of THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS, and extends from the time of Moses to the birth of John the Baptist. Luke makes reference to this middle period of history in verse 16 (above) saying, "The law and the prophets were until John." There seems to be no disagreement as to the Scriptural CONCESSIONS on the divorce and remarriage issue which Moses put into effect during this middle period. Moses, because of the hardness of their hearts granted men permission to divorce their wives, as the Pharisees put it to Jesus, FOR EVERY CAUSE. This is explained in detail in Deut. 24:1-4, and was the Scripturally accepted position on this subject, and was to apply only for the duration of this middle period of history. Therefore, it was Scripturally permissible during this middle period from Moses to John the Baptist for a man to divorce his wife and marry another if he merely hated her, or if he found some uncleanness in her, or if she merely found no favor in his eyes.

Jesus, in Mark 10:5 (above), referred to this allowance of Moses as a PRECEPT employing the original word en-tol-ay' which means A CHARGE OR INJUNCTION, implemented by one who had been placed in authority. Therefore Moses definitely made a change in regard to the divorce and remarriage policy from what it had been in its ideal state from the beginning. This was not a change in the basic Moral Law itself, for Moses, as we have noted, had no authority to alter the Moral Law, but the change was made merely in the SOCIAL ORDINANCE, associated functionally with the application of the Moral Law.

Jesus, in Matthew 19:8 (above), tells us that FROM THE BEGINNING (that is, from creation) to the concession of Moses, God had never intended divorce any more than He had intended to make allowance for any other deviation from the ideal which He established in the Garden of Eden. When Moses faced the problematic social conditions of Israel, he found that men had become very hard of heart, and had, therefore, fallen into a perilous condition with many social problems. We must recognize the fact that Moses, because of the wicked hearts of Israel, permitted many concessions which were out of line with God's perfect plan for men from the beginning, but the hardness of their hearts caused Moses to permit the lesser of two evils as the only way out of the dilemma into which sin had enslaved the people. This is often the case where people have become enamored in social maladjustments. It was because of the dilemma which sin created that Moses worked out a social regulation regarding the divorce-remarriage problem which was a deviation from God's original plan, and yet a necessary and acceptable concession, designed to hold the structure of society on an even keel during that very difficult period. This concession was a SECOND BEST arrangement granted to those who had missed God's FIRST BEST. It was a LESSER OF TWO EVILS, which was to be in vogue until such time as Christ should come and set up more ideal arrangements through the New Covenant, which would put the Law of God upon fleshly tables of the heart. Divorce and remarriage were not in the original plan of God from the beginning, but when sin came, with its social corruptions, Moses made certain adjustments to iron out many of the otherwise unsolvable problems which sin had brought upon fallen humanity. When Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount He instituted reform on this, as well as on many other vital issues, saying, "Ye have heard that it has been said of them of old time. . . but I say unto you. . ."

Jesus was not criticizing Moses for the concession he had made, but instead, He put the blame on the Pharisees themselves. It was not God's heart, nor was it the heart of Moses, that was hard, but theirs. If Moses had not instituted this concession, permitting this deviation from the perfect ideal, he would have forced his people into much more serious domestic problems than he did by granting the concession, in that the law was weak (Rom. 8:3).

The plurality of wives, during these Old Testament times, which was another permitted concession AS THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS, was never in God's original plan, but it was permitted and practiced by the best of the ancient worthies and was not frowned upon by either society or the Scriptures during this middle period. Nor was one with several wives and concubines considered an adulterer. During this period a man was not considered an adulterer unless he molested another man's wife, even though he himself was married to more than one. David was not accused of adultery until he took the wife of Uriah, even though he himself already had several wives. These concessions can best be understood in the light of the bitter wars in which the men were killed, and which created a social imbalance, keeping the men far

outnumbered by the women for great periods of time. This plurality of wives had not been God's plan from the beginning, but when sin came and brought war and death, it became a permitted practice which seemed to create fewer problems than to have great numbers of unmarried, childless women. Only once was David guilty of adultery, and that offense was forgiven.

Previous to this second historical period, known as THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS, which granted divorce for just about every cause, was what is called the PRE-MOSAIC, or THE EARLY PERIOD, which included the antediluvian (before the flood) period and the patriarchal times, overall extending from creation to the time of Moses. Jesus, in acknowledging the relaxing of Moses' concession on the divorce issue, in Matthew 19:8 said, "From the beginning it was not so." In other words, He was saying that divorce was not allowable FOR EVERY CAUSE previous to Moses' concession. The Bible is silent as to whether or not divorce was allowed for the cause of ADULTERY during this Mosaic period, but this we know: FOR EVERY CAUSE it was not then allowed. In fact, the word divorce, in any of its forms, fails to appear in the Bible previous to Lev. 21:14, and when it here appears, the four patriarchs -- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph -- were all gone, and Moses was on the scene. So we see the problem of divorce had never been faced as far as the Scriptures were concerned until Moses faced it, 2,550 years after creation. People were wicked, too, in that early antediluvian period, for it was their wickedness which brought on the punishment of the flood, and, according to Jesus, they were ". . . marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark" (Matt. 24:38).

At least one book, namely the book of Job, was written during these early patriarchal times, and it makes no reference whatsoever to divorce or remarriage. Moses, in his writings, deals with the men and problems of the patriarchal times, but he was silent on the subject of divorce until he was through with all association related to this early period.

Now we turn to the third historical period (the period in which we live). This period began with the coming of John the Baptist, and extends throughout the CHURCH age. Here we find the principle which Jesus laid down as a working system for His followers.

In Luke 16:16 (above) Jesus stated that "the law and the prophets were until John." When John appeared on the scene, God closed the Old Testament dispensation and ushered in the New. The appearance of John the Baptist not only marked the close of the dispensational records, but it also closed the book of the Civil and Ceremonial Law with its social ordinances and concessions. John acknowledged this change in his KEYNOTE SPEECH introducing Jesus Christ and the New Covenant to the world. The New Covenant, with John as its "forerunner" and Jesus as its Messiah, supplanted the Law of Moses with GRACE AND TRUTH (John 1:17). Moses, from this time on, ceased to be the final authority on any social or moral issue, and the followers of God were henceforth to look to Jesus for the answer to every important question. Jesus, in fulfilling the Law of Moses, introduced to the world His position with regard to divorce and remarriage, which was only for the cause of fornication (sinning against the marriage vow). FURTHERMORE, FORNICATION, AS WAS NOTED IN CHAPTER ONE, IS NOT CONFINED (IN THE BIBLE) TO THE SEX SINS OF UNMARRIED PEOPLE, BUT TO SEX SINS IN GENERAL, INCLUDING ADULTERY AND INFIDELITY.

We now live in this third historical period, and so long as we are within the range of this Gospel era, all divorce and remarriage, EXCEPT IT BE FOR FORNICATION (unfaithfulness to the marriage vow) is forbidden, but divorce with remarriage allowance for the innocent party when the partner has sinned persistently against the marriage covenant is Scripturally acceptable.

When John the Baptist appeared on the scene, God closed the Old Testament dispensation and ushered in the New. The appearance of John the Baptist not only marked the close of the old dispensational records, but it also closed the book of the CIVIL AND CEREMONIAL LAW with its many SOCIAL ORDINANCES AND CONCESSIONS. John the Baptist acknowledged this as his KEYNOTE SPEECH introducing Jesus Christ and the New Covenant to the world. The New Covenant, with John as its forerunner and Jesus as its Messiah, supplanted the Law of Moses with GRACE AND TRUTH (John 1:17). Moses, from this time on, ceased to be the final authority on any social or moral issue, and the followers of God were henceforth to look to Jesus for the answer to every important question. Jesus, in FULFILLING the Law of Moses, introduced to the world His position with regard to divorce and remarriage, which was, ONLY FOR THE CAUSE OF FORNICATION, Biblically defined.

We now live in this third historical period, and so long as we are in this Gospel era, all divorce and remarriage, except it be for fornication (unfaithfulness to the marriage vow), is forbidden, but divorce with remarriage permitted for the innocent party, when the partner has sinned persistently against the marriage bond, is allowed.

Forgiveness for the innocent party is not necessary. One who is innocent is not guilty and needs neither punishment nor forgiveness. Punishment or forgiveness are only for the guilty.

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill (Matt. 5:17).

Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it (Luke 11:28).

* * * * *

CHAPTER IV.

"IS IT LAWFUL... FOR EVERY CAUSE?"

It has been assumed that Jesus, in His encounter with the Pharisees on this occasion, closed forever the door on ALL divorce and remarriage. Let us see if this is true.

At the outset we will examine the first verse in this discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees, using the first verse in Matthew's account paralleled and harmonized with the nearest equivalent in Mark and Luke, plus Luke's additional observation and evaluation of the Pharisees' wrong attitude. Their attitude throws a great deal of light on what Jesus was saying. We will notice that the phrase FOR EVERY CAUSE, which Matthew alone records, is the key which unlocks the true understanding of what Jesus said to the Pharisees on this occasion.

The reader needs to be reminded that it does no violence to the Scriptures to combine these three accounts for the purpose of harmonizing them as we have done, so as to put the whole picture together. Obviously, we have here the personal impression of the three different writers: Matthew, who was an eyewitness to Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees on this occasion, was writing from his personal records, guided by divine inspiration, which naturally would tend to be the most complete and detailed account. Mark and Luke, who were not eyewitnesses, must have written from materials they had gathered from conversations and sermons they had heard preached. This very acceptable harmony method of interpretation brings together three accounts, which, like a puzzle, fit together perfectly to complete the whole picture.

* * *

[At this point, the author displayed Matthew 19:3-12, Mark 10:2-12, and Luke 16:14-18 in three vertical columns, left to right respectively. The reader may view this chart in three sections by opening hdm0152b.jpg, hdm0152c.jpg, and hdm0152d.jpg graphics in the Graphics\Charts folder. This can be achieved from our menu by clicking on the 00C-View Graphics folder, and then clicking on the Picview option. Once the Picview program opens, use its functions to open the Graphics\Charts folder, and then click on consecutively hdm0152b.jpg, hdm0152c.jpg, and hdm0152d.jpg graphics. So that the reader can better follow the author, should it be decided to skip opening the chart, I have inserted the 3 passages in respective order below. -- DVM]

Matthew 19:3-12 "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. 10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. 11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. 12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

Mark 10:2-12 "And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Luke 16:14-18 "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. 15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. 16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. 17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. 18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

* * *

In this story of Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees, as told by the three evangelists, each in his own words, it becomes very clear that Jesus was pressed into this discussion on the subject of divorce and remarriage by His enemies, the Pharisees. We must keep this in mind when we examine both the question they asked, and the answer Jesus gave them. We must remember that these Pharisees were sticklers for the Law of Moses, with its interpretations and concessions, and that their anger was burning at Jesus' preaching, which they realized ran counter to the position Moses had taken. Christ's SERMON ON THE MOUNT was a characteristic example of all of Jesus' preaching, and the Pharisees attacked Him again and again, because they resented any departure from the law of Moses. They were anxious to discredit Jesus' claims of authority over Moses, for Jesus had stated repeatedly: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you . . ."

Matthew and Mark, in their recording of this encounter, laid special emphasis on Jesus' views on the subject of divorce and remarriage. Luke, however, who refers to divorce in less detail, was further impressed with Jesus' denunciation of these hypocrites because of their treacherous motives. The Pharisees were not honestly seeking for truth, but were subtly endeavoring to justify themselves in promiscuously divorcing their wives, and, at the same time, to ensnare Jesus, and embarrass Him before His followers, particularly before His disciples.

Incidentally, it is never possible to enlighten anyone on this, or any other subject, who has previously formed his opinion and then closed his mind. The Pharisees were classic examples of this error. Let us now examine Jesus' criticism of these Pharisees for their hypocrisy in Luke's record (Luke 16:15-17).

Jesus let them know, in verse 15 (above), that their hearts were vile and their motives were wicked. He knew they were crafty and deceitful. Obviously, they wanted freedom to divorce their wives as Moses had allowed, for just about any excuse (Deut. 24:1-4). Jesus stood His ground against such leniency which had appeared in Moses' concession, and took the same position He had taken previously in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:32), refusing them such liberties. We know the Pharisees wanted to stick with Moses on this issue because they always clung tenaciously to every word Moses had said, including the MORAL COMMANDMENTS, the CEREMONIAL ORDINANCES and the CIVIL JUDGMENTS. The Ten Commandments were designed to regulate the moral life of Israel; the ordinances were to control the religious life of the

nation, and the civil judgments were planned to govern the social relationships of the people. The Pharisees were determined to cling to each of these emphases and were attacking Jesus because they realized from His preaching He was assuming authority over the concessions which Moses had established. Jesus did not challenge the Moral Law (the Ten Commandments) called the Decalogue, except to make it more binding; i.e. taking it from the tables of stone and making it a matter of the heart (II Cor. 3:3). He lifted the basic principles of the law from the rule of conduct to the seat of affections in the personality. It was the ceremonial ordinances and the civil and social relationships of the people that fell under Moses' concession in Deut. 24, concerning divorce and remarriage, and it was these phases of the old jurisprudence that Jesus renounced when He deviated from Moses' permission for them to divorce their wives, as they put it, FOR EVERY CAUSE. Jesus Himself allowed divorce and remarriage for only one cause, FORNICATION. In chapter one we learned that the Bible use of the word FORNICATION includes adultery and unchastity, and sex sins in general, including marital unfaithfulness. NEITHER JESUS NOR MOSES ALTERED THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. It was the social ordinances which they adjusted to meet the crisis they were facing at the time. Moses had no authority to alter the Moral Law, but he could alter the social ordinances, and he did. Moses was not breaking one of the Ten Commandments when he granted divorce and remarriage privileges, because divorce and remarriage ARE NOT THEREIN MENTIONED. He was merely putting more flexibility into one of the social ordinances of the day. Neither divorce nor remarriage, as long as they remain within the framework of the Scriptures, can rightfully be called adultery, since adultery is positively forbidden in the TEN COMMANDMENTS, WHILE DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE ARE NOT AS MUCH AS MENTIONED THERE. Moses, to be at all consistent, could not have forbidden one thing in the Decalogue and then granted permission for the practice of the very same thing he had forbidden in the unalterable Moral Law (The Ten Commandments). In other words, God would not have granted permission in Deut. 24:1 for doing the very thing He had positively forbidden in Ex. 20:14. Therefore, it goes without saying that God did not have divorce and remarriage in mind when He said, "THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY" (Ex. 20:14). A morally upright God, which our God definitely is, would not have granted permission for breaking the Moral Law which He Himself had instituted, and had insisted upon its strict observance. Moses felt that adultery was morally wrong, while divorce and remarriage within certain bounds were allowable. Jesus apparently felt the same way, allowing one merciful exception (Matt. 5:32 and 19:9).

To further clarify this explanation, let us notice that God, in the Moral Law, commanded, "THOU SHALT NOT KILL," and then instituted and legalized war and capital punishment. This is no inconsistency, however, when we understand that the original meaning of the word "kill" (raw-tsakh') in the Decalogue forbids only ILLEGAL KILLING, i.e. one person taking it upon himself to destroy another for personal reasons. The commandment translated "Thou shalt not kill" has no reference whatsoever either to war or capital punishment. The same principle holds good for divorce and remarriage as far as the Decalogue is concerned.

Jesus dealt the Pharisees a crippling blow in verse 16 (above) by making it clear that the law, as it applied to the SOCIAL LIFE of the Old Testament people, had served its day and had been superseded by the preaching of the Kingdom of God, into which humanity was now pressing. Jesus, in verse 16, informed them that their law had been supplanted by the Covenant of Grace, and yet in verse 17 He accused them of being so stubborn that they would remove heaven and earth

before they would allow one tiny fragment of the law, AS THEY INTERPRETED IT, to be violated. They would stone a man to death over a mere doctrinal difference of opinion, even though that would be "murder" (illegal killing-positively forbidden in the Moral Law), but they would never relinquish their social ordinances at any price. Actually, they had little regard for the Moral Law, but what they fought for was the hundreds of breakdowns which granted them certain social liberties which they coveted.

The Pharisees liked Moses' concessions, permitting them to divorce their wives FOR ANY AND EVERY CAUSE. They did not want this liberty taken from them. Jesus, on the other hand, would deny them such liberties, firmly stating that there now would be only one justifiable allowance for divorce, namely, FORNICATION (MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS). Jesus had tried all through His preaching ministry to show His authority over the social ordinances of the Mosaic period. The Pharisees, on the other hand, fought every step He tried to take in that direction. It was for the hardness of their hearts that Moses had granted them great liberties in divorcing their wives, as the Pharisees put it, FOR EVERY CAUSE, and they would murder Him if they could not line Him up perfectly with Moses. Jesus was not blind to their confederacy. He knew they were not honestly seeking for truth when they asked the divorce question.

They reasoned that by putting Jesus on the spot, so to speak, He would be forced to swing either with Moses or against him. In either case they thought they would have Him trapped, and that primarily was what they were after.

Notice, the Pharisees did not ask Jesus whether or not divorce was PERMISSIBLE. They knew full well from His preaching that He allowed divorce for one cause, FORNICATION (sex sins in general, as mentioned in the Bible). The question they raised was WHAT CAUSE, in His opinion, would be acceptable, and what would not. How far, in other words, might they go in this matter, and where must they stop? (This is a very important observation.) THEY WERE NOT ASKING FOR JESUS' COMMITMENT ON THE LAWFULNESS OR UNLAWFULNESS OF DIVORCE AT ALL, BUT RATHER, UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD HE GRANT THE PERMISSION AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD HE NOT? Would He go as far as Moses went or would He draw the line elsewhere? They were trying to destroy His influence and wreck His ministry, and that is all they were interested in.

Jesus, in giving His answer to them, was not answering the question as to whether or not it was permissible for a man to divorce his wife for the cause of adultery (marital unfaithfulness) and marry another, but rather, as to the permissibility of a man's divorcing her FOR EVERY CAUSE, and marrying another. It appears to be the divorcing of wives FOR EVERY CAUSE that they insisted upon and which Jesus objected to. There is a world of difference here, both in the question the Pharisees asked and the answer Jesus gave. When Jesus said, "From the beginning it was not so" -- what was not so? This was not so: the divorcing of wives FOR EVERY CAUSE. That was the question under consideration.

After all is said and done, Jesus must be allowed the final word concerning the remarriage of divorced people. His commitment is found in Matthew 19:10-12.

His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife [divorced -- see verses 9 and 10] it is not good to marry.

JESUS' DISCIPLES IN THIS VERSE PRACTICALLY ASKED HIM TO SHUT THE DOOR ON REMARRIAGE, AND HE WAS NOT INCLINED TO DO SO. Jesus, on this occasion, had a golden opportunity to shut the door forever on the remarriage of divorced people, and in His infinite wisdom He knew that celibacy, forced upon the average normal man, was not the answer. He understood from the creation of the first man that it was not good that man should be alone (Gen. 2:18). He left the door to the remarriage of divorced people open to all men, for all time, except for eunuchs, when He said to them:

All men cannot receive this saying. . . . He that is able to receive it, let him receive it (verses 11, 12b).

Jesus, in verse 12, went on to explain in detail that only eunuchs (men relieved or deprived of their sex drive, for the benefit of the Kingdom of God, or so born) could remain unmarried. He knew that the average man, generally speaking, could not remain unmarried without creating more problems than it would solve. He therefore applied the rule of "no remarriage" ONLY TO EUNUCHS, EXEMPTING ALL OTHERS, UNLESS SOME ARE ABLE AND WILLING TO VOLUNTARILY ACCEPT IT (Matt. 19:11, 12).

As we study Jesus' forthcoming answer carefully we recognize the fact that Jesus rigidly held to His previous Sermon-on-the-Mount commitment and at the same time answered the Pharisees' challenge by saying, "Whosoever shall put away! [divorce] his wife, except for fornication [moy-khyoo'-o-marital unfaithfulness] and shall marry another committeth adultery." In other words, He told them that only for the cause of FORNICATION [moy-khyoo'-o-marital unfaithfulness] may a man put away his wife and marry another. He was telling them: FOR EVERY CAUSE, "No," BUT FOR THE CAUSE OF SINNING AGAINST THE MARRIAGE BOND, "Yes:"

If the Pharisees had asked if divorce and remarriage were permissible when adultery was the provoking cause, then Jesus would have said, "Yes," but when they asked about divorce "FOR EVERY CAUSE" Jesus took a firm stand against such looseness, and said, "No." Every word, therefore, from Jesus, in this specific dialogue MUST be viewed in the light of the basic question the Pharisees raised, which was "FOR EVERY CAUSE."

When Jesus, in this connection said to those Pharisees, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so," He was not dealing with putting them away BECAUSE OF ADULTERY. Adultery was not the subject of the question under discussion. Jesus was asked about divorce for lesser reasons when He said what He did on this occasion. We know this is true because of the question they asked. WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAKE ANY STATEMENT WHICH JESUS MADE WHEN DEALING WITH DIVORCE "FOR EVERY CAUSE," AND APPLY IT TO DIVORCE BECAUSE OF "ADULTERY." It is

entirely wrong to take Jesus' words out of this conversation with the Pharisees in Matt. 19:3-12, and apply His answer to other passages of Scripture which are an entirely different approach to the issue being considered.

Again, when Jesus refused to shut the door on the remarriage of divorced people, on this same occasion, as we have noted, He was not referring to people divorced BECAUSE OF ADULTERY. He was dealing with people divorced FOR EVERY CAUSE, since that was the question the Pharisees had raised, and it was the question Jesus was dealing with.

Even in verse nine (above) when Jesus said, ". . . and whoso marrieth her that is put away [divorced] doth commit adultery," He still was talking of one divorced FOR EVERY CAUSE, AND NOT BECAUSE OF ADULTERY.

(It is very unfortunate that in many cases, fine shades of meaning are lost when translated from one language to another, and especially when translating from a stronger language to a weaker one. The English language, the linguists tell us, is much weaker in this respect than either Greek or Hebrew. That is the reason we must consult the Greek and Hebrew definitions of important words, when interpreting the Bible at certain very crucial points, or be misled.)

Before bringing this chapter to a close, let us reiterate the fact that on this occasion (mentioned above) JESUS DID NOT CONDEMN DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE WHEN ONE'S COMPANION HAD SINNED AGAINST THE MARRIAGE BOND IN ADULTERY. What Jesus condemned was DIVORCE FOR VARIOUS LESSER REASONS, as it was based on the concessions of Moses in Deut. 24:1, and practiced by the Pharisees.

However, if every intricate detail of every marital situation could be untangled and resolved, the fact remains that not one time did Jesus attempt to advise individuals already divorced and remarried (guilty or innocent) to employ any such drastic measures as separating (which is definitely condemned in the Bible; or divorcing again, or trying to live the abnormal, stressful, BROTHER-SISTER pattern, for which there is absolutely no Scriptural foundation -- trying to untangle the intricate involvements of the past. Jesus knew, and so must we realize and understand, that one should never try to repair something when he knows before he starts that, spiritually and socially, both for himself and others, he will likely make matters worse instead of better. That must have been the reason Jesus never attempted to tell people who were already involved in divorce and remarriage what to do to solve their problem -- nor should we!

The law is good, if a man use it lawfully (I Tim. 1:8).

I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them (Heb. 10: 16b).

* * * * *

CHAPTER V.

"LET NOT MAN PUT ASUNDER"

* * *

[At this point, the author displayed in three vertical columns. Matthew 19:5b-6, Mark 10:8-9, and a Luke column, showing Luke as "Silent" on the remarks of Matthew and Mark. The reader may view this chart by opening hdm0152e.jpg in the Graphics\Charts folder. This can be achieved from our menu by clicking on the 00C-View Graphics folder, and then clicking on the Picview option. Once the Picview program opens, use its functions to open the Graphics\Charts folder, and then click on hdm0152e.jpg. So that the reader can better follow the author, should it be decided to skip opening the chart, I have inserted the 2 passages in respective order below. -- DVM]

Matthew 19:5b-6a "And they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh." -- Matthew 19:6b "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Mark 10:8-9 "And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Luke -- Silent

* * *

It is obvious that these verses in Mark were taken from the same dialogue, which Jesus had with the Pharisees, as recorded in Matthew (above). Therefore the words from Mark (as we have noticed in chapter two) must be blended with Matthew's account to make the dialogue complete. Any dialogue which is incomplete, standing alone, as we have learned, would not make a reliable foundation on which to establish a doctrinal thesis.

These verses are frequently SURFACE-VIEWED and quoted as conclusive evidence that all divorce and remarriage, even of the innocent party, is positively forbidden. Let us examine them analytically and objectively and see if this is true.

"Let not man put asunder." What man? This word "man" does not come from the Greek word an'aym which is the most commonly used Greek word for MAN or HUSBAND, and which definitely has the masculine connotation, but is rather from the Greek word anth'-ro-pos, which, according to Dr. Thayer in his GREEK ENGLISH LEXICON, means HUMAN BEING, MALE OR FEMALE, WITH NO REGARD TO SEX. This word anth'-ro-pos, therefore, refers to any human being, man or woman. There is herein no reference to divorce, which is a court action. The thought here is illicit human intrigue which could threaten the security of a marriage between a husband and wife, if it is not checked.

Now we will hold this thought for a moment and look into the meaning of the verb translated PUT ASUNDER. What does PUT ASUNDER mean in Matt. 19:6 and its counterpart in Mark 10:9 (above)? Do they mean divorce? No, they do not mean divorce. "PUT ASUNDER" in these verses comes from the Greek word koh-reh'-o which Dr. George Berry in his INTERLINEAR LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, translates,

"LET NOT SEPARATE." Dr. Thayer says this word means, "TO MAKE A SPACE." Had the author in this instance intended the thought of divorce, when he said, "put asunclet" he would have used the word ap-ol-oo'-o, which Jesus used in Mat. 19:9, and which DOES mean divorce, instead of using the word kho-reh'-o, which does NOT mean divorce, but rather, SEPARATION, i.e. living separately, and at variance, while still legally married.

Now, combining the thoughts of the previous paragraph, we find the basic meaning of this paragraph becomes obvious. What the Lord is actually saying here, is this: "When a man and woman have been joined together in holy matrimony by the blessing of God (many obviously are not THUS joined-unscriptural marriages), let not a third party (another human being -- anth'-ro-pos) -- be it an unlawful lover or a parent or anyone who might encroach upon the sacredness of that union, with the thought in mind of MAKING A SPACE between the man and his wife -- cause them to separate. This verse is dealing with the sin of intrigue (unlawful love or unlawful interference of any kind -- hence, sinning against the sacredness of marriage). This Scripture forbids a third party interfering in any way with a marital union which God has authorized and instituted. It has nothing whatsoever to do with court action and divorce procedures, which might follow the sinful intrigue and the sad separation. Divorce (ap-oloo'-o), as a last resort, might take place after the man and his wife have already been separated (kho-reh'-o) by the unlawful interference of a third party. It is the encroachment and intrusion of a third individual that God is denouncing in this passage -- NOT divorce. If separation had not first been affected, then divorce would not have taken place. Therefore, separation (Mal. 2:16 -- shalach) is the thing that God hates worse than divorce, because it creates more problems than divorce does. Divorce, in fact, makes it possible to repair the damage, and heal the hurt that SEPARATION, with its awful potential for evil, has caused. Divorce should be a last resort of an otherwise hopeless situation. Remarriage has a remedial benefit for a lost-cause situation. It is an attempt to repair the damage that separation and divorce has caused. It can work a miracle of healing if it is not abused.

By way of summary: God, in this passage, forbids, that once a man and woman are legitimately married in God's sight, no third individual should venture to trespass upon the sacredness of that union, to interrupt its normal function or to interfere in any way.

Conversely, when either husband or wife respond to, or even encourage, a third-party intrusion, they are sinning against their companion in their heart, and are jeopardizing the security of their marriage, and are therefore at fault if the marriage finally breaks. When either one, he or she, thus encourages any third party interference, that one becomes the guilty party, and is the one who sins against the marriage covenant, and thereby falls under the stern reprimand of God.

While the illicit affair is going on in the guilty partner's heart, the innocent partner, as long as he or she remains innocent, is not blamable in the matter, and needs neither to be condemned nor punished.

THEREFORE, ANYONE WHO FLATLY CONDEMNS ALL DIVORCE, AND RECOMMENDS SEPARATION, OR INTER-HOME CELIBACY FOR MARRIED COUPLES, AS A REMEDY FOR THE UNFORTUNATE SITUATION, IS MAKING MATTERS WORSE INSTEAD OF BETTER, AND STANDS IN OPEN OPPOSITION TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE WORD OF GOD.

* * * * *

CHAPTER VI.

"THE WOMAN WHICH HATH AN HUSBAND IS BOUND"

Romans 7:1-4

1. Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law.) how that the law hath dominion over a man [anth'-ro-pos -- human being, with no regard to sex] as long as he liveth?

2. For the woman which hath an husband [hoop'-an-dros -- one to whom she is both legally married and cohabiting] is bound by the law to her husband [an'-ayr] -- to whom she is legally married] as long as he liveth; but if the husband [an'-ayr] be dead, she is loosed from the law f her husband [an'-ayr].

3. So then if while her husband [an'-ayr] liveth, she be married to another man [an'-ayr], she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband [an'-ayr] be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man [an'-ayr].

4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

It has been the contention of skeptics that Paul portrayed a Christ which was foreign to the Gospels. They have maintained that Paul's idea of Jesus was quite different from the Messiah pictured by the synoptic writers: Matthew, Mark and Luke. To this position, however, we vigorously object, for it strives to put the New Testament writers in conflict with one another, when they are not.

There are two obvious reasons why Paul is often misunderstood in these verses (above) and is thought to be in conflict with Jesus -- teaching "no grounds whatever" for divorce and remarriage, while Jesus made one merciful exception.

The first reason is that these verses (above) when being considered, are often taken out of their context and misconstrued. The other reason is failure to consult the word-definitions in the original Greek. A partisan will stick with the English and refuse to check on the definitions of certain important Greek words when he knows such definitions would weaken his argument. He will not accept any valid evidence when it conflicts with his coveted opinions. When one will accept an English word in the King James text at face value, because it seems to strengthen his argument, and refuses to accept the Greek definitions of the same word, when he knows to do so would weaken his argument, then he may make a point for the gullible reader to swallow, but he is not being honest, and the reader is being misled.

Was St. Paul, as some have supposed, in conflict with Jesus by teaching "no grounds whatsoever" for divorce and remarriage, when Jesus said there was one merciful exception? No, he was not! Let us examine the text together.

Paul, in this seventh chapter of Romans, in the first place, was not presenting the standard to which Christians are required to adhere with regard to divorce and remarriage, but instead was illustrating the inadequacy of the old Mosaic order in the producing of holy lives, and is presenting in contrast the superior Gospel of Jesus, using divorce and remarriage, and only one aspect of it, to illustrate his point.

The old Mosaic pattern, to Paul, was like a deceased husband, and the Gospel of Christ was like his widow's second marriage following his decease. Paul in this instance was not discussing the problem of divorce and remarriage as such, but was simply employing this Old Testament illustration to depict a New Testament truth -- i.e., a human example to clarify a spiritual truth. Paul is pointing out that for one to be married to Christ he must be as released from the legalism of the old Mosaic pattern as a widow is free from the authority of her deceased husband.

Paul was very careful to explain, in verse 2, that it was the woman which HATH (present tense) an husband that is bound. It is noteworthy that the woman who is divorced in accordance with Jesus' one exception DOES NOT STILL HAVE A HUSBAND, while Paul is speaking of the woman who DOES NOW HAVE A HUSBAND.

Paul, in his thirteen epistles, used the Greek word an'-ayr twenty-six times when referring to husband or man, seven times in these four verses (above). ONLY ON THIS ONE OCCASION, however, in verse 2, did Paul break away from the word an'-ayr and switch to the word hoop'-an-dros. Why did he make this switch? Notice further, that IN THE SAME VERSE where hoop'-an-dros appears, an'-ayr is used three times. It is obvious therefore that it was with a definite purpose in mind that Paul deliberately switched from the use of an'-ayr to the word hoop'-an-dros IN THIS ONE INSTANCE. In fact, this is the one and only place in the entire New Testament where hoop'-an-dros is used. Paul, without any question, must have had a strong reason for deliberately switching from an'-ayr to hoop'-an-dros. But why? What is the difference in the meaning of these two words that caused Paul, who never used the word hoop'-an-dros on any other occasions in any of his epistles, to drop the word an'-ayr and substitute the word hoop'-an-dros? This switch is startling when we notice that RIGHT IN THE VERY SENTENCE WHERE HOOP'-AN-DROS APPEARS, AN'-AYR IS USED THREE TIMES. When we examine the root meaning of these two words, and compare them, Paul's reason for making the switch becomes obvious. It was because the word hoop'-an-dros, according to Dr. Thayer, is a word of much finer distinction, carrying the idea that the woman, in addition to being legally married to the man, is also at the present time cohabiting with him, i.e. living in his home, and subject to his authority. In other words, an'-ayr simply means they are legally married (perhaps living together and perhaps not). On the other hand, hoop'-an-dros means that the man and his wife are actually living together, as well as being legally married. If they are legally married, BUT LIVING SEPARATELY, the word hoop'-an-dros does not apply to them.

By switching to the use of the word hoop'-an-dros, Paul makes us to understand that he is NOT speaking of a husband and wife WHO ARE SEPARATED, but rather a husband and wife who are ACTUALLY LIVING TOGETHER, when he said the woman is bound to him as long as he lives. She therefore is bound to her husband only as long as she is living with him. If he has taken up with another woman and forced her out of his life, she is henceforth no longer subject to him, because he is no longer her hoop'-an--dros, even though he may still be her an'-ayr, i.e. still legally married. This statement from Paul does not say that the woman is bound to her an'-ayr -- to whom she is legally married, unless she also is living with him. Only when they are legally married, and also living together as man and wife, is she thus bound, according to Paul's statement in this passage.

It is conclusive, therefore, that Paul is referring to the woman who is actually living with her husband, when he said she is bound to him as long as he lives, and she is bound to him only as long as she lives with him.

It goes without saying, that after she is thus bound to her husband, and dwells with him for a given period of time -- if they should separate later on, she would: NOT still be bound to him, following the separation. She would be bound to him, only as long as he is her hoop'-an-dros, and he would not be her hoop'-an-dros after they separate. Anyone who establishes his or her divorce and remarriage convictions on the English rendering of Romans 7:1-4 will not see the difference between the wife that is living with her husband, and the one who has been expelled or has left him.

This is a very important observation, because it is providential that Paul, in this instance, DID NOT FORBID ALL DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, as some have thought he did, since the English at this point is so misleading, making no difference between an'-ayr and hoop'-an-dros. If Paul had not made this sharp distinction between the woman who is living with her husband, and the one who is not, he then would have completely closed the door on all divorce and remarriage, and that would have put him in conflict with Jesus, who said there was one merciful exception, which would allow the innocent party to remarry.

All persons, therefore, who accept this portion of Scripture (in the English rendering) and thereby take a solid stand against ALL divorce and remarriage, place themselves in conflict with Jesus who said there was one merciful exception, and also with Paul who agreed with Jesus.

Jesus told the woman at the well that she had five husbands, but we see no evidence that Jesus attempted to straighten out her past marital entanglements or give her any advice how to make all wrongs right. Jesus knew she did not at that time have a lawful husband (an'-ayr) and He reminded her of the fact, although she had had five husbands in the past. The fact that Jesus acknowledged that she did not NOW have a husband shows He did not feel that her former marriages were still binding, once they were legally dissolved. He accepted the fact that she did not NOW have one. We gather from the implications from within this account that this woman had been severed from her husbands by divorce rather than by their natural death, because she herself refers to the whole matter as THINGS WHICH SHE HAD DONE. There are some who would say that a woman such as this must untangle all of her sinful past and repossess the first man to whom she had been married in order to be forgiven, because only the first one was actually her husband.

The other four would be fraudulent. But Jesus did not tell her to do that. He had a message for her soul, even though He had no solution for her problem. He forgave her, and that was it.

Furthermore, Paul says the woman is bound as long as her husband lives. What does this word "bound" mean in the original language? It comes from the Greek word *deh'-o* and is defined in the Lexicon as "forbidding one being illicit or engaging in unlawful conduct." Hence, illicit or unlawful conduct is the thing that is forbidden here. But it must be remembered that remarriage in compliance with Jesus' exception clause is neither illicit nor unlawful. Paul's denunciation in this passage of Scripture is not hurled against the woman who is Scripturally divorced and remarried, but rather, against the unfaithful wife who betrays her husband (her *hoop'-an-dros*) while living with him as a wife, and commits adultery with another at the same time.

Verse 3, above, states that a woman shall be called an adulteress if she is married to another man while her husband is still living. Notice that not only must he still be living, but beyond that, he must still be her husband. If her husband be dead, she no longer would be under the law of her husband. If, however, they are still legally married, but separated, he no longer is her *hoop'-an-dros*, and she no longer is bound to him. Under these circumstances, therefore, she may rightfully be divorced from him in compliance with Jesus' one exception, because she, in this case, is free from the law (authority) of her husband. The adultery which Paul forbids in verse 3 (above) is the case of having two husbands at the same time, i.e., the woman marrying a second while the first is still her husband.

Paul made it clear that it is the woman which HATH (present tense) a husband that is bound -- not necessarily one who HAS HAD a husband, but who does not NOW have one. And to be bound is the opposite of being "set free." The innocent party whom Jesus set free is by no means still bound. When Jesus allowed "putting away" (divorce) in cases of fornication (unfaithfulness-infidelity), He used the word *ap-ol-oo'-o* for "putting away." To show that one thus "put away" is not still bound, let us examine this same word *ap-ol-oo'-o* as it appears in Acts 26:32. Paul was being taken "bound" to Rome when Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set at liberty (*ap-ol-oo'-o*) if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

Notice: "might have been set at liberty," in this instance, is translated from the same Greek word, *ap-ol-oo'-o*, from which "put away" is translated in Jesus' exception clause in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. Now -- had Paul been "set free" would he still be bound? Obviously not! Then, by the same token, one who is "put away" (*ap-o-oo'-o* -- divorced) would not still be "bound," and especially when the same Greek word *ap-ol-oo'-o* is employed in both instances. Should one contend that a man or woman is still bound by the marriage covenant after being "put away" (*ap-ol-oo'-o*) he would have to concede that Paul would still have been bound and in chains after having been granted his liberty (*ap-ol-oo'-o*). This emphasis is no longer debatable. **IF GIVING PAUL HIS LIBERTY WOULD RENDER HIM UNBOUND, THEN PUTTING THE WIFE AWAY IN MATTHEW 5:32 AND 19:9 WOULD RENDER HER, LIKEWISE, UNBOUND.**

The apostle Paul further states that, "if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." This statement is very true. She would be loosed, were he dead. It is no less true, by the concession of Moses, that, if her husband had divorced her, for almost any reason, she would be loosed from her husband in Moses' day. And if she were divorced by her husband, according to

the one stipulation that Jesus allowed, namely fornication (infidelity), she would be loosed from the law of her husband in Jesus' day, and in our day. Furthermore, permitting the woman to be loosed with freedom to marry again upon her husband's death does in no way discount her also being loosed if her unfaithful husband divorce her. Moses actually made no distinction between a husband who had divorced his wife, and the one who was dead, as far as eligibility to remarry is concerned. In either case, both husband and wife were dead to each other, and were allowed to remarry, in Moses' day (Deut. 24:3).

Let us now look again at the passage in Romans 7:2, amplified:

For the woman which hath an husband [hoop'-an-dros, one with whom she is living, since her husband has not forsaken or ejected her] is bound by the law of her husband [her an'-ayr, that is the one to whom she is legally married] as long as he liveth

We will now treat Romans 7:4 in the same manner:

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead [than-at-o'-o -- put to death, mortified, killed] to the law by the body of Christ; that ye be married to another even to him who is raised from the dead [nec-ros' -- raised from a corpse], that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

In Christ's most famous recorded sermon (Matt. 5:32) He allowed that the marriage bond could be dissolved, with certain remarriage privileges.

In this Roman passage, Paul said that those Christians, even though they were still living in the flesh, were dead to the law and were married to another -- even Christ. As far as the Old Testament law is concerned, the Christians of Paul's day were considered, by the Old Testament staunch adherents, to be as dead as if they were actually a corpse and in the grave. It was a clean break from the old system. Those new Christians had been married to the Old Law from childhood, but now, according to Paul, they were divorced from it and were married to Christ.

When their ancestors violated the Law of God and committed fornication against God by worshipping idols, God called them adulterers, and divorced them for their infidelity (Jer. 3:8). But Paul makes it clear that they could NOW (though they still lived, physically) become dead to the same law to which God had at one time held them "bound," and they could NOW become married to another, even Christ. Paul explains the "dying to the law" thus:

Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ. . . that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Romans 7:4).

After becoming dead to the old law, the converts to Christ were divorced from the old regime and were married to Christ, their new Lover. They were dead as far as the law was concerned, but still alive physically. In these verses Paul taught that a husband and wife may become as dead to each other as the Christians were to the old regime. And by the same analogy a husband and wife may become dead to each other, and at least the innocent partner may marry again without acquiring guilt, according to Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:32. Either, or both,

husband and wife can become dead to their former marriage covenant, even though they are still in the land of the living.

When Jesus allowed the dissolving of the marriage covenant for the one reason, infidelity, is not the covenant thereby as broken for one as for the other? How could the covenant yet be binding on either party after it is broken, regardless of who breaks it? Even though one may be more at fault for the breaking, it is broken, nonetheless. When a legal contract is broken, everyone involved is released, regardless of who is to blame for it. God can forgive the one who is to blame for the breaking of the covenant, but from then on, there can be no sin or guilt in entering into a new covenant, as far as the old, "canceled covenant" is concerned. It is dead and gone. That was not God's original plan for humanity, but He did make allowance when it became necessary in Moses' day, and in our day also, when Jesus voiced His COMPLETE commitment on the issue, including His statement about the eunuch (Matt. 19:11,12).

The guilty party is the only one who sinned against the marriage covenant until it broke. Therefore he is the only real adulterer in the case. For that reason forgiveness from God upon repentance is his only hope of eternal life. If he repents deeply enough to receive the New Birth, he will have to become sorry for ALL of the sins of his past life, and not just this one. The gospel of Christ is ever a gospel of mercy and forgiveness for all who will repent (Luke 17:3) and forsake their evil ways. This forsaking does not mean that when one is remarried he cannot live a normal married life. It means only that HE MUST NEVER AGAIN SIN AGAINST A MARRIAGE VOW BECAUSE THAT WAS THE SIN WHICH CAUSED THE TROUBLE IN THE FIRST PLACE. All he is required to do is to avoid sinning again against his present marriage partner. Jesus said to the woman, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11).

This leads to the further consideration -- is there no hope for the final salvation of the guilty party? There are some who will tell you that there is no hope for either party unless they are willing to take the vow of celibacy, and stay with it for the rest of their natural lives. However, there is no Scripture stating or even alluding to any such unnatural pattern for the average, normal person. The truth of the matter is that when one thus involved, and guilty, thoroughly repents of the sinful past which brought on the problem in the first place, and is helpless to correct or undo his sinful mistake, yet, upon repentance, God in His great mercy forgives such an one, resulting in the New Birth experience. What then? Paul was forgiven of murdering many of God's choice ones.

The New Birth itself includes three basic elements: namely, justification, regeneration and adoption. Justification is defined as a work of divine grace which renders the penitent as innocent as though he had never sinned. In justification he is acquitted of all guilt, and is fully accepted of God.

One may ask, "How about making restitution? Restitution is very necessary if it is feasible, but it is not always possible. Such was the case with the penitent thief on the cross (Luke 23:43), the woman at Jacob's well who had a marital history which was impossible for anyone to untangle and straighten out (John 4:18), and King David, because Uriah was dead (II Sam. 11:24).

Therefore, restitution is not required in marital entanglements, when it would make bad matters worse, violate the Scriptures and accomplish nothing. We may conclude therefore that the

guilty party may become justified in the eyes of God, and should be justified in the eyes of the church and fellow Christians. There is no guilty party, once the New Birth is a reality in the heart, because justification erases the record of the awful sins of the past, and renders the guilty person guiltless. If we won't accept that proposition, then we will have to do away with one of the strong points in our Christian theology, namely, "justification by faith:" Regardless of how bad one's sinful record may be, God wills to never again remember it against that person (Heb. 10:17). This is made possible through the merits of Christ's atoning blood. That being God's attitude toward the most heinous sinner that repents, **WHY SHOULD WE FEEL THE OPPOSITE FROM THE WAY GOD FEELS ABOUT IT? IS IT NOT A FLAGRANT INSULT TO THE BLOOD OF CHRIST TO HOLD ANYONE ACCOUNTABLE WHO HAS BEEN CLEANSED THEREBY?** "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 11:9). "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellow ship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). **ALL sin! ALL sin!** "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

Sometimes the question arises: how can one continue living with a second companion while the first one is still living? Should not such ones separate and live in celibacy for the rest of their natural lives? There is nothing in the Bible that even slightly hints of such a thing. In Malachi 2:16 God said that He hateth the separation (shaw-lakh') of married people (see Mal. 2:16 in chapter seven of this book). Also, in I Cor. 7:10, Paul says for the wife not to "depart" (leave) her husband. Then, in verse 11, the husband must not leave (af-ee'-ay-mee) his wife.

By the mighty transforming power of the New Birth experience in the heart of a sinner, every guilty party, when justified by faith, would be as innocent as a newborn baby as far as his guilty past is concerned, if such a person will pay the price of repentance (godly sorrow) to the point of being accepted of God, and receive the New Birth experience in his heart. In the great out pouring of the Holy Ghost on the New Testament church, when thousands were converted, and added to the church (Acts 2:41), there is no evidence of any of them being questioned as to their marital status, or previous marital history. They were taken into membership according to what they were, spiritually, at that time, with no concern as to what they had been before they were converted. Is that not the policy that all Christian churches should follow? Is not that policy basic with the entire Scriptures? It certainly was true in the experience of St. Paul. They took him into membership on the basis of what he had become, and not by what he had been.

There are many honest souls who feel that people who are divorced and remarried are not worthy of membership in the church. Why not? seeing that "old things are passed away [and] all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17), and "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15). Furthermore, we seriously need to heed Jesus' solemn words in Matt. 18:10: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."

Also, what about mercy? Should not each of us ask ourselves the question? How would we wish to be treated if we were unfortunately involved? Would it not seem out of place to withhold mercy from one who had already received it from God? It is very wrong to deny anyone mercy, "For he [God] shall have judgment **WITHOUT MERCY**, that has shewed no mercy" (James 2:13). These words of James are frightening indeed. We **MUST NOT** withhold mercy from anyone --

worthy or unworthy, but let God decide the matter. His knowledge and wisdom are infinite -- ours are not. If one has made a mistake in extending mercy to one who is not worthy of mercy, no harm is done. God will straighten it all out in the end anyway. Moreover, would it not be pharisaical for one to censor another severely, and condemn him, who might be worthy from God's point of view? Therefore, anyone who would make this mistake in censoring and condemning one whom God has saved and approved would be pharisaical. He would fall under the stern condemnation of God, who warned us: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7). Do not unmerciful people remind us of Job's "comforters," so-called, who spent many days accusing Job of sin and condemning him? but in the end they were condemned and Job was exonerated. Censoring and condemning is always a risky business. Is it not far better to be otherwise employed? After all, won't we all need a mountain of mercy, for us to intelligently entertain a valid hope of heaven?

"Teach me to feel another's woe
To hide the fault I see:
That mercy to others show,
That mercy show to me."
Sel.

* * * * *

CHAPTER VII.

COMPARING SAINT PAUL AND THE PROPHET MALACHI

These following verses have been cited as positive proof that the "NO GROUNDS" position for divorce and remarriage is the true Bible standard. But is it? We shall see.

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart [walk out] from her husband:

But and if she depart, Let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: And let not the husband put away [leave-af-ee'-ay-mee] his wife (I Cor. 7:10, 11).

Paul, in this chapter, according to verse 1, was answering questions which some of the Christians had asked of him in a letter which he had received from them. These people wanted to know if their woman should LEAVE their husbands when they became Christians and their heathen husbands did not. Paul, in replying, is NOT referring to women who are considering DIVORCE on the grounds of their husbands' unfaithfulness to the marriage bond, but rather to women who were considering SEPARATION (living separately from their husbands) in cases where their husbands remained heathen.

In approaching these verses (above), there are two words which must be examined and correctly defined from the original Greek text. The words, in the King James translation, are "depart" and "put away." Actually, these two words in the original Greek are identical in basic meaning, but opposite in practical application. They both mean SEPARATION -- not DIVORCE

-- but they are opposite in the sense that DEPART deals with the one who leaves home voluntarily, while PUT AWAY deals with the one who drives his companion out of the home. Let us first examine the word DEPART as it is used in this passage.

The Nestle Interlinear Greek-to-English New Testament gives the English translation of the word DEPART as "TO BE SEPARATED:" That is to say: Let not the wife BE SEPARATED or SEPARATE HERSELF or LIVE SEPARATED from her husband, i.e., from the man who yet is her legal husband. No woman is justified living with a man who is not her husband, and her former husband is no longer her husband if she is lawfully divorced from him in compliance with the New Testament rules that Jesus laid down in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9.

This word DEPART is from the Greek word kho-reh'-o which Dr. Thayer defines thus: "To leave a space (which may be occupied or filled by another), to make room, give place, yield. . . ." Paul, in using the word kho-reh'-o, is saying to the wife, DO NOT WALK OUT ON YOUR HUSBAND AND LEAVE HIM TO LIVE BY HIMSELF, LEAVING THE PLACE IN THE HOME VACANT LEST ANOTHER TAKE YOUR PLACE. It is SEPARATION (living separately while still legally married), and NOT DIVORCE, that Paul is discussing and condemning in this passage. Paul is saying that the wife should live with her husband so long as he is her husband.

"But and if she depart," Paul continues, "let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband." Notice that he is still her husband. Since they have not been divorced they should become reconciled. Let her return to him since he is still her legal husband. Neither Paul nor any other Scriptural writer ever advised returning to a FORMER HUSBAND from which one had been divorced, after marrying another. For a person to do this in Moses' day was an abomination unto God (Deut. 24:4). The woman is required in this Corinthian passage to return to HER LEGAL HUSBAND from whom she had been SEPARATED, but not DIVORCED. Paul advises that the woman who has LEFT her husband should return to him and be reconciled. Dr. Thayer speaks of the word RECONCILED, from the original word kakt-al-las'-o, thus: "Let her return into harmony with her husband." Since they have not been divorced, and are still husband and wife, legally, it is a problem of the husband and wife living separately and at variance with one another that Paul is discussing in this passage -- not divorce.

Now, let us examine the original word for put away as it is used in this passage. Dr. Berry says the literal translation reads, "Let not the husband LEAVE his wife." The word used here is NOT ap-ol-oo'-o, which Jesus used in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9 for "divorce" (translated "put away"), but is af-ee'-ay-mee which, according to Dr. Thayer means, "to send her away: to go or depart."

In order to view this divorce problem in the right perspective, one must recognize that SEPARATION in the New Testament, when the original words are properly defined, is condemned far more than divorce is, since every Scripture which is translated from af-ee'-ay-mee condemns "separation" (estrangement) of married couples, NOT DIVORCE. Ap-ol-oo'-o, which does mean divorce, involves court action, and does sever the marriage covenant. The weakness of the King James text on this subject, and the cause of most confusion, is in translating both ap-ol-oo'-o and af-ee'-ay-mee, PUT AWAY. The result is that surface reading from the King James text leaves the impression that all of the Scriptures which are translated PUT AWAY mean DIVORCE, when actually, some do not.

I Cor. 7:11b -- "And let not the husband put away [K. J.] his wife." The translators who say that af-ee'-ay-mee means PUT AWAY are very misleading, and the ones who say it means DIVORCE are entirely wrong. If divorce had been intended in this sentence the apostle would have used the word ap-ol-oo'-o instead of the word af-ee'-ay-mee.

The same basic thought is borne out in the much-misunderstood statement in Malachi 2:6, which says, "God hateth putting away." One cannot know what God is said to hate in this passage until he learns the meaning of the word PUT AWAY in the original Hebrew. Dr. James Strong says the original Hebrew word here for PUTTING AWAY is shalach and means "to send away; to cast out, forsake, give up; let depart; to push away" -- hence again, SEPARATION while still legally married is under discussion here, not DIVORCE. However wrong divorce may be (and it surely is wrong), it cannot be proven wrong by any New Testament passage which employs the original Greek word af-ee'-ay-mee instead of ap-ol-oo'-o. Nor can divorce be proved wrong by the use of the old Hebrew word shalach as it appears in Mal. 2:16.

The fact that this word shalach in Mal. 2:16 means SEPARATION rather than divorce is further confirmed in Jer. 3:8, where God accused Israel of committing adultery against Him and He forthwith threatened them with drastic steps of punishment if they did not repent and change their ways. He would "put her away" (shalach), i.e. SEPARATED HIMSELF FROM HER or CAST HER AWAY. Then, as a second measure of pending punishment, He threatened to divorce her (Jer. 3:8). DIVORCE, coming from the Hebrew word ker-ee-thooth', is defined as a CUTTING OF THE MATRIMONIAL BOND. Had it been DIVORCE that God hated in Mal. 2:16, the prophet would have used the Hebrew word ker-ee-thooth', which DOES mean DIVORCE, instead of shalach which does not mean DIVORCE.

(Incidentally, some of the modern translations, including the New International Version [NIV], render verses 10 and 11 in I Cor. 7 correctly, and then reverse themselves and render verse 12 incorrectly. The NIV says, "A wife must not LEAVE her husband, but if separated. . . ." (Up to this point the rendering is correct.) Then in verse 12 the word af-ee'-ay-mee is translated DIVORCE, which is not correct. Ap-ol-oo'-o is the Greek word for DIVORCE.

God's attitude toward Israel's SPIRITUAL ADULTERY in this passage agrees with Jesus' attitude toward physical adultery in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9; i.e. divorce can legitimately be executed in cases of persistent unfaithfulness. The prophet Jeremiah will now verify this conclusion:

And I saw . . . backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away [shaw-lakh' -- forsake, cast off, push away] . . . and given her a bill of divorce [ker-ee-thooth' -- cutting of the matrimonial bond] (Jer. 3:8).

Notice the sequence in Jer. 3:8. The first step was taken by the guilty party, Israel, for committing adultery against God -- worshipping idols. The next two steps were taken by God as a means of punishing the offenders, namely SEPARATION (shalach), then DIVORCE (ker-ee-thooth), unless they should repent of their adulteries. If Israel should repent, however, and forsake her idolatries, God said He would forgive her and not carry out the punishment (Jer. 3:14-15).

It would be unconditional Eternal Security in principle, to say that God could not sever the matrimonial bond and cast us off forever if we persist on sinning and rebelling against Him. It is true that God is married to the backslider (Jer. 3:8) but not to an apostate whom He has divorced.

Those who contend that a husband and wife cannot be divorced under any conditions, must also deny God the right to divorce His people when they persist in spiritual adultery. When God practices divorcing His people for spiritual adultery, He is laying down the principle that divorce resulting from marital unfaithfulness is an established principle with Him.

The principle of forgiveness upon repentance should also be carried out between husband and wife whenever possible. Fornication or unfaithfulness should be forgiven and divorce avoided unless the fornication persists.

Notice in Jer. 3:8, God does the divorcing and He is not guilty of any wrongdoing. He is therefore the innocent party. Israel did the backsliding, lost her love for God, and indulged in illicit love. This makes Israel the guilty party. God, therefore, had a perfect right to punish her for sin by promising to divorce her if she did not repent and mend her ways.

The question frequently arises as to why God hates SEPARATION of husband and wife while they are still married, while at the same time, under certain provocations, He permits divorce (Matt. 5:32). It doubtless is because God, in order to uphold the integrity of the moral universe, must always make a sharp distinction between the innocent and guilty parties. God always condemns the one who takes the INITIAL STEP (unfaithfulness, mistreatment, brutality or desertion) in jeopardizing the security of the marriage. The innocent party is permitted to take the final step, DIVORCE, as the best path out of an otherwise hopeless situation. And this, God, the innocent One, carries out when His people persist in their spiritual adulteries. Likewise, may not the innocent husband or wife carry out the same principle which God laid down when either partner persists in physical adultery?

If our society in general should adopt the SEPARATION principle, but outlaw all divorce and remarriage, what kind of a society would we soon have? Separation (living separately) could not correct marital problems without doing more harm than good, were divorce and remarriage not allowed.

In further examining Malachi's prophecy at this point, we see that the prophet makes another important emphasis. In verse 15 he states: ". . . and let none deal TREACHEROUSLY against the wife of his youth." This word TREACHEROUSLY comes from the Hebrew word bagad, and, according to Dr. Strong, means, "to act covertly; to deal deceitfully, unfaithfully; to offend or transgress." Obviously, the INNOCENT PARTY is not the one who has committed any of these sins against his or her companion. Therefore, this passage is an indictment against the guilty party and a clear warning against the illicit conduct from either companion. It is God's denunciation of the partner who takes the "vicious initial step," UNFAITHFULNESS, INFIDELITY, that is most severely denounced.

Before closing this chapter, let us examine the verbs in the following passages of Scripture as they appear in the original Greek language. In each case the significant verb is translated as "put away" in the King James text.

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall divorce [ap-ol-oo'-o] his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is divorced [ap-ol-oo'-o] doth commit adultery (Matt. 19:9).

The Greek verb ap-ol-oo'-o is also used in Matthew 5:32 and definitely does mean DIVORCE. It definitely was the problem of divorce and remarriage that Jesus was dealing with when He made the one merciful exception in the interest of the innocent party.

Paul, in I Cor. 7: 11, states:

And let not the husband put away [af-ee'-ay-mee] his wife [send her away, bid her go, or depart; or mistreat her].

Paul's word af-ee'-ay-mee positively does NOT mean DIVORCE, but ranges in meaning from ill-treatment to expulsion or desertion.

When the prophet Malachi said, "God hateth putting away" (Mal. 2:16), he was saying that God hateth for a man to put his wife out of the home, or desert her. That is the correct meaning of the Hebrew word shaw-lakh'. It means to send away.

The Old Testament Hebrew word shaw-lakh' is the nearest Hebrew equivalent to the New Testament Greek word af-ee'-ay-mee. Neither of these words carry the meaning of divorce (severing the marriage bond), but rather, separation by ejection or desertion; i.e. living separately and at variance while still legally married.

Surely, no honest person, after being properly informed, would ever say that Malachi 2:16 is dealing with the problem of divorce, because it is not.

It is now understood that Malachi was not dealing with divorce when he said that God hates "putting away." Had he meant divorce, he would have used the old Hebrew word for divorce, which is ker-ee-thooth', instead of the word shaw-lakh', which does not mean divorce. According to Dr. Strong shawlakh' means "to send away . . . to cast away. . . forsake, or leave . . . let depart . . . loose . . . push away . . . put out . . . send away." The word shaw-lakh' which Malachi used means SEPARATION -- living separately and at variance while still legally man and wife. God hates that.

When Malachi condemned a man for dealing TREACHEROUSLY against the wife of his youth, he was not speaking of severing the marriage bond. He was condemning the practice of having relations with another woman TREACHEROUSLY (illicitly). For a man to do that, he would be sinning against the marriage covenant which had been agreed upon between himself and his wife. That misconduct is the appalling sin that Malachi cried out against so vehemently, and God hates so bitterly.

The word TREACHEROUS means cruel and unlawful behavior, which Malachi calls "treachery." When either husband or wife is sexually unfaithful, he or she is dealing treacherously. Treacherous, in this instance, means working secretly under cover, and being untrue to former vows. Working treacherously cannot be applied to divorce, because divorce is not carried on in secret, while the conduct which normally causes separation IS TREACHEROUS because it is inclined, whenever possible, to stay out of sight, secretly. Nowhere in the Bible did God ever use such a scathing word as TREACHEROUSLY against divorce, as He did against separation. Nor did GOD EVER SAY HE HATED DIVORCE.

Before closing this chapter, let us examine the phrase "put away" in verses 11 and 12 of this 7th chapter of I Corinthians, viewed in the light of their original usage. These verses have been used extensively as conclusive proof of the avowed soundness of the "no-grounds-for-divorce" position. Let us examine these verses analytically and see if this interpretation is correct.

But and if she depart [walks out and leaves her husband], let her remain unmarried [since she still is married to him]: and let not the husband put away his wife [leave -- af-ee'-ay-mee] his wife (I Cor. 7:10-11)

If any brother has a wife that believeth not and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away (v. 12).

The phrase "put away" in each of these two verses comes from the Greek word af-ee'-ay-mee which does NOT mean divorce. It is "separation" while still legally married, that Paul is condemning in these verses, not divorce. As a reminder, as we have stated several times before, the Greek word for divorce is ap-ol-oo'-o.

Why is it that God so strongly opposes married people separating? Could it be that living separately, after being married, greatly increases the danger of illicit conduct? Separation begins in the heart before it gets out into the home. It begins in secret before it becomes generally known. It would die in infancy if it didn't get nurtured. It is indeed ironical that so many good Christian people cry out so forcibly against divorce, while at the same time they never say a word against separation, while some even recommend and encourage it.

When Paul and Malachi were so careful in choosing the correct word in every instance, it is most disheartening when things they said have been so pitifully misunderstood.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life (Prov. 4:23).

But where sin abounded grace did much more abound (Rom. 5:20).

* * * * *

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PAULINE APPROACH TO REMARRIAGE

St. Paul recognized God's law, basic to human nature, as found in Gen. 2:18, which states: "It is not good that man [aw-dawm -- human being; either sex] should be alone." Paul agrees with this inherent need of human nature when he wrote:

To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband (I Cor. 7:2).

We have pointed out in chapter six how Jesus allowed divorce and remarriage where fornication was the provoking cause. Jesus, therein, sanctioned the complete dissolution of the marriage bond, as well as granting remarriage privileges, especially for the innocent party. Jesus taught that the marriage bond under certain specified conditions could be dissolved. NEITHER PARTY in such cases is still a married person. When the marriage covenant has been SCRIPTURALLY dissolved, according to the stipulation Christ laid down in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9, IT NO LONGER EXISTS.

In the strictest sense of the word, the innocent partner is the only one who can be Scripturally divorced without acquiring guilt. The guilty party brought his solitary state upon himself, while the innocent party was forced into solitude by another's infidelity. The Bible never fails to make a sharp distinction between the guilty and the innocent. The innocent victims, since they are not at fault for being alone, cannot be rightfully punished, or OSTRACIZED.

With this as a background, Paul takes his stand, basing his position on divorce and marriage upon God's basic law in Gen. 2:18, which states: "It is not good that the man should be alone." Paul knew that normally, FORNICATION can result from one being too long alone. Hence, being alone, apart from the grace of God, is not best for the average person. Fornication (sexual sins in general) should, by all legitimate means, be avoided, both in actions and thought (Ps. 19:14). It is conclusive therefore, that the remarriage of the innocent party, who could not be blamed for his or her solitary state, is acceptable. Moses, Paul, and Jesus each realized that any other status other than marriage for most persons merely multiplies problems, both for the persons involved, and for society in general.

Paul expects men and women to have wives and husbands which they rightfully can call THEIR OWN. However, when a divorce action is completed, the man no longer has a wife which he can call HIS OWN, and the woman no longer has a husband which she can call HER OWN.

When a marriage is terminated in divorce, IT IS TERMINATED, and the guilty partner is the only one who has acquired guilt in the process. It naturally follows that when divorced people remarry, the guilty party is still the only one who stands guilty before God, and there is no reason God would not forgive the guilty one of every sin he has ever committed, including this one. Adultery always leaves guilt and condemnation in its path, whether the offending one feels it or not. Therefore, an innocent person cannot be called an adulterer, or an adulteress, and it is morally unsound to punish one for an offense of which he or she is not guilty (Prov. 17:15). The innocent party, when truly innocent in his heart (providing he maintains his innocence), is in the clear before God, with neither guilt nor condemnation. However, the guilty one, on the other hand, would have to repent and stop his evil habits if he would be saved and make heaven his eternal home. Paul

realized that remarriage, following divorce, is not only allowable, under certain restrictions, but also is advisable when it is desired (I Cor. 7:27-28).

The question as to who is innocent must be defined. Who really is innocent when a marriage terminates in divorce? First, the one whose actions and motives stayed clean throughout the ordeal -- he or she is innocent. Second, he who was guilty and whose heart was full of sin, but who has become regenerated, transformed, by divine grace, and is justified before God (I Cor. 6:11) -- he becomes innocent also. He is as innocent as though the sin had never been committed. No court on earth or in heaven would condemn a person after he has been pardoned. Satan may tantalize such an one, because he is the "accuser of the brethren" (Rev. 12:10), but God won't, and we shouldn't. As far as God is concerned, the sinful deed is off the record- acquitted-remembered against the person no more forever.

Now, let us examine Paul's position on remarriage, in the wake of marital tragedy. Notice Paul's response here in I Corinthians 7:27, 28, as follows:

Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry thou hast not sinned.

The word "loosed" (above) comes from the Greek word loo'-o and means to "break up, destroy, or dissolve." What else but "divorce" could this mean? In this passage Paul is drawing attention to three different stages in the marriage and divorce problem. The first stage that Paul mentioned is the married man. Paul, using the Greek word loo'-o for "loosed," advises this man not to seek to get his marriage ended-terminated. The second stage is the man who is already divorced from his wife. Paul advises this man not to seek a wife -- not to consider marrying again. However, if he had already married again ("again" is understood), he had not sinned. How could words be plainer? When everything Paul wrote on this subject is considered, his BOTTOM LINE is that "it is better to marry than to burn" (I Cor. 7:9). Paul knew that too much of such BURNING could cause more problems than remarrying would. Neither one of these possibilities -- BURNING or REMARRYING -- were in God's original plan for mankind, but sin had created such terrible problems in the world that marrying, following divorce, would be a lot better than forced celibacy.

According to a statement in Heb. 2:11, married people who are Christians are "ONE" in the Lord, but when one willfully commits spiritual adultery against God, it destroys that "ONENESS" (2 Chr. 15:28). Likewise, the husband and wife are "ONE" (or should be), but the awful sin of adultery immediately attacks that "ONENESS" until an internal malignant condition, if not checked, can destroy the marriage. For anyone to say that the "ONENESS" cannot be destroyed is the false philosophy of Calvinism.

We would not say that the deceased ONENESS cannot sometimes be resurrected, if it hasn't gone too far, but it usually stays dead. ONENESS must be continually nurtured, whether it be between our souls and God, or between husband and wife, or it will die. When the ONENESS between husband and wife is destroyed, there probably is no greater tragedy in this world, except for the death of that ONENESS between our eternity bound soul and God.

Wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently (Acts 26:3).

Now where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Rom. 5:20).

* * * * *

CHAPTER IX.

JESUS AND THE QUESTION OF REMARRIAGE

(Insert Chart #4 HERE)

In the first twenty-two words in Matthew 19:9 (above) Jesus deals with the innocent party by His use of the exception clause. Were the exception omitted these words would be dealing with divorce as a forbidden act. However, when Jesus voiced His EXCEPTION CLAUSE He made it clear that the one getting the divorce under the terms of CHRIST'S EXCEPTION CLAUSE had not sinned, but had been sinned against. He or she is the INNOCENT PARTY, a victim of treachery, betrayed by the guilty partner. Jesus made it clear by allowing this one exception, that there is one occasion whereby the marriage covenant may be dissolved justifiably in divorce, and whereby remarriage of at least the innocent party can follow without involving himself or herself in the sin of adultery.

It has been said and written by those who take the NO-GROUNDS-WHATSOEVER POSITION for remarriage that the one exception Jesus gave here makes an allowance for divorce, but not for remarriage. Those who take this position must disassociate Christ's word "EXCEPT" from the phrase, "SHALL MARRY ANOTHER," and apply it solely to the phrase, "SHALL PUT AWAY" in order to hold their unfounded position that the exception allows only PUTTING AWAY. We shall find that Christ's one allowance applies both to PUTTING AWAY and to MARRYING ANOTHER.

If we should interpret the exception Jesus gave as making allowance only for divorce, but not for remarriage, we would have Jesus saying that divorce IN ITSELF is an adulterous act, which it is not -- even though Christ's one exception could lead to adultery -- which might result. Therefore, putting one away might terminate in adultery, but the PUTTING AWAY (divorce) itself is not adultery. However, when separation does occur, it often leads to adultery. That is the reason, no doubt, that God hates separation more than divorce (see Mal. 2:16 in chapter 7). Jesus said, "CAUSETH" one or both parties, to either react to their plight or attempt to remedy it. That is when adultery often follows either separation or divorce. When either party, or both, attempt to remedy their plight, they become vulnerable to wrong means of trying to solve their problem of loneliness, and adultery results. Therefore, Jesus had to be referring to MARRYING AGAIN when He granted one merciful exception. In such cases, the one who is innocent of all personal wrongdoing in the matter may remarry in the will of God, and no adultery will result. How could adultery result from an exception which Jesus allowed? It could not.

The disciples then said to Jesus:

If the case of the man be so with his wife [divorce was being discussed] it is not good to marry [remarry is understood] (Matt. 19:10).

This question that Jesus' disciples asked gave Him the supreme opportunity of His life to close the door forever on all remarriage, had He wanted to do so. In fact, His disciples practically asked Him to close the door, but Jesus did not do as they suggested. On the contrary, Jesus, with His unerring understanding of human nature, avoided laying down a rule to apply universally, with circumstances and people varying as they do, and assured them, thus:

All men cannot receive this saying [the saying of verse 9 above], save they to whom it is given (Matt. 19:11).

Jesus, instead of forbidding all remarriage of divorced persons, went on to explain that only EUNUCHS (verse 12) -- a neutered male person, or one so born -- can RECEIVE THIS SAYING and remain in an unmarried state. Surely this was the one time when Jesus, had He "flint rock" convictions against all remarriage of divorced persons, He would have said so.

Now, in the interest of more careful scrutiny, let us divide Matthew 19:9 into section "A" and section "B" as follows:

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication [sexual sins in general, including adultery], and shall marry another committeth adultery (v. 9a).

And whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (v. 9b).

When Jesus said, "EXCEPT IT BE FOR FORNICATION" (Matt. 19:9), what did He mean? He must have meant that the innocent party is innocent, and needs no forgiveness. Also, the guilty party is guilty of wrongdoing, and, seeking forgiveness of God, must make restitution whenever possible. However, the majority of marital mixups are about as impossible to repair as the sin of murder. Therefore the guilty party may be forgiven by God, even though he cannot make all wrongs right.

Note that the "B" section (above) would forbid all remarriage, were it not for the fact that the innocent person in the "A" section is the one who is permitted to secure the divorce. Jesus is saying here that whosoever marries the one who WAS divorced (PASSIVELY -- THE VICTIM OF DIVORCE) is guilty, and not the one who ACTIVELY does the divorcing, providing he or she remains innocent. The guilty one is the one who commits adultery upon remarriage, because the one who does the divorcing is innocent of infidelity, and the one being divorced is the guilty party. It is the guilty one -- the one who is BEING DIVORCED for his infidelity -- that is guilty of adultery when he marries again. Now, if the guilty party should divorce the innocent in the interest of making a change in partners, he would still fall under the same condemnation because it was the guilty party which Jesus condemned in this instance. There will always be confusion here, until we get it clear in our minds that the "A" section of this verse permits the innocent party to divorce the guilty one because of his unfaithfulness to their marriage covenant, and the "B" section places the mark of adultery ONLY upon the guilty party who was divorced because of his crime.

We believe the reason Jesus herein used the masculine pronoun as He did was because men, rather than women, were asking Him the question. Had the wives of these Pharisees come to Jesus instead of their husbands, then Jesus could have reversed the gender all the way through this passage and it would have reached the same conclusion.

Now let us consider the remarriage of the guilty party as Jesus deals with it in the "B" section of verse 9.

Some quote this passage of Scripture as though it condemned all remarriage, not realizing that it condemns only the guilty party who has been unfaithful to his companion, and committed adultery against her. However, we must recognize the fact that even though Jesus frowned on the guilty party remarrying, He declined to give any advice to the guilty ones already involved in a second marriage, and He clarified the statement in verse 9b with the suggestion in verse 11, saying, "ALL MEN CANNOT RECEIVE THIS SAYING. . . ." In verse 12 Jesus mentioned eunuchs as the only men who could remain unmarried without being vulnerable to sinning. It is very difficult to understand why those who hold to the "no grounds" position for divorce and remarriage, invariably will place strong emphasis on Matt. 19:9, and totally ignore verses 11 and 12, as if those two verses were not in the Bible at all. All of the pamphleteers that we have read after, who take the "no grounds" position, are guilty of this very thing. We wonder how any honest person could strongly emphasize verses 3-9 in this passage and totally ignore verses 11 and 12, where Jesus softened the blow for all men except eunuchs.

This much, however -- even the guilty party will not find one word in the Bible which addresses him to separate from his present companion, much less find a Biblical example of a married couple that did separate because they had been divorced and remarried. The guilty one will find he has sinned a sin like unto murder in the respect that he can't make adequate restitution to the point of undoing the wrong he has done. Should one divorce his present wife and break up their home, he would be adding another wrong to the wrong already done. Furthermore the moralist tells us that one "MUST NEVER DO EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME." And again: "TWO WRONGS NEVER MAKE A RIGHT." One must be honestly sorry for his sin, seek forgiveness of God, continue through life with God's second best and reach heaven at last. Some anonymous poet phrased it this way:

"God has His choice things for the few
Who dare to stand the test;
God has His second choice for those
Who will not have His best."

We must understand this SECOND BEST predicament. A certain woman in the state of Tennessee, years ago, received a definite call from God to be a missionary. But she fell away from God, took up with an ungodly young man, married him and proceeded to raise her family. After many years she got back to God. She then proceeded to live a devout Christian life, and stayed loyal to her husband and family, but she forfeited her opportunity to answer her call to be a missionary. As a result of her early disobedience, she had to accept God's SECOND BEST for her life. She was faithful in the local church, but there was no way she could ever get back to God's original plan for her life. She was permitted to live the remainder of her days WITHIN THE

REALM OF GOD, reaping the effects of one of life's great mistakes, for God's Word says: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." In so doing she had to submit to God's SECOND BEST for her life. She can, however, be regenerated, and sanctified through the blood of Jesus (Heb. 13:12), and make it to heaven at last.

The similar picture is true of all persons divorced and remarried. God's FIRST BEST PLANS FOR THEIR LIVES ARE FORFEITED FOREVER, BUT GOD'S SECOND BEST PLANS, THROUGH THE MERITS OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, RECEIVE HIS COMPASSIONATE APPROVAL.

In the light of this first and second best proposition we must remember that God cannot undo all that has happened in one's past life. One who has UNFORTUNATELY BECOME INVOLVED IN DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE MUST SURRENDER TO THE INEVITABLE EFFECTS WHICH HE CANNOT CHANGE, REPENT OF PAST MISTAKES, AND RECEIVE FORGIVENESS FROM GOD. HE MUST CLOSE THE DOOR ON THE DARK, SINFUL PAST AND LEAVE IT WITH GOD'S MERCY. For one to do this would be both Biblical and sensible.

If a divorced and remarried person were to go back to God's original plan for his life and try to recapture it (which he cannot), he would have to go back to his early youth and find the companion GOD HAD PLANNED for him in the first place (maybe the one he did first marry and maybe not). Any such fanatical maneuvering, however, is as utterly impossible as turning back the relentless wheels of time, and could lead to physical and spiritual impairment if carried out to the extreme. For the physical body to attempt to live in the present (and it must) while the mind and heart are battling with a sick conscience groping in a lost past, hunting for something that can never be found, can only lead to emotional frustration and mental illness, if not checked. To avoid such a fate one must close the door forever on the past, accept the present, and make of the future the best that he possibly can by the grace of God. He can be saved by the blood of Christ and reach heaven, but will lose much of the reward. It is infinitely sad that so many Christians so wrongfully feel that true children of God, who have been forgiven and cleansed from their sins, should wear "The Scarlet Letter" to the end of their earthly life, referring to them disparagingly and unmercifully as adulterers and adulteresses. The Bible says, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7). Will we not all need mercy, and plenty of it, by the time we get to the judgment?

"Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary."

The innocent party, when he or she truly is innocent, is not an adulterer or adulteress. And even the guilty party, when he becomes justified in his regenerated experience, through the merits of the precious Blood of Christ, becomes innocent also in the eyes of God. The very word "justification" which accompanies the New Birth demands this. As soon as one receives forgiveness of God, he is justified, pardoned, and is as innocent as though he had never sinned. One cannot be both innocent and guilty at the same time. "Justification is a legal term, used for

what God does when He forgives us, and acquits us, and absolves us of the guilt that our acts of sin have caused. He declares us to be guiltless. Hallelujah!" (Jack Seaney)

Jesus, who took a firm stand against adultery, permitted the innocent party to remarry, and (we repeat) it is inconceivable that adultery should result from any advice that Jesus gave. Therefore, the road which Jesus pointed out for the innocent party to take is safe. And it makes no difference whether one is innocent because he always avoided certain sins, or innocent because he has been pardoned and cleansed through the merits of the precious blood of Christ. One who keeps within the Bible bounds, as pertaining to the innocent party in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, has accepted the advice of Jesus and has done nothing morally wrong. This being his or her case, they are not deserving of wrong or unkind treatment from fellow Christians. Adultery has never been classified as an unpardonable sin.

Moses, in his day, did not consider adultery resulting for anyone divorced and remarried, because adultery was forbidden in the Ten Commandments, but divorce and remarriage were not. Jesus, likewise, in His day (and in our day), did not consider the remarriage of the innocent party as being adulterous, and for the same reason. When Moses forbade adultery, in the decalogue, but allowed divorce and remarriage, he admitted that certain remarriages, in his day, were not adulterous. The flexibility of the rule on remarriages varied in Jesus' day from Moses' day, but nonetheless, the remarriages that were allowed in either day should not be condemned.

"Then," one asks, "if the foregoing be true, why then has my conscience bothered me because of my present marriage relationship?" To this question we would reply: your conscience has bothered you because it has been wrongly educated on this issue. Remember, your conscience will bother you just as much when you think you are doing wrong as when you are actually doing wrong. Much confusion can result from a wrongly educated conscience, conditioned by wrong information. One's conscience is not intended to determine what is right and what is wrong. Such information must be acquired elsewhere. The sole function of conscience is merely to soothe or sting on the basis of information received, regardless as to whether or not that information is correct. When normally sensitive, therefore, one's conscience will bother him when he is doing right if he think he is doing wrong. In order to clear up one's confusion at this point, his conscience must be **CLEARED OF ERRONEOUS TEACHING** and it must be given the truth. Hence this book.

A. L. Witcomb truthfully said, "There can be no happiness without a good conscience." That is the very reason the suffering from a guilty conscience should be alleviated when it is entirely unnecessary. A gnawing conscience is a destructive fire. If a frustrated person would hope ever to be happy, let him properly educate his conscience in matters in his past life that he cannot change without making matters worse, and hurting more people than are already hurt. When it comes to nagging memories of past sins, the best policy is this: Fix it if you can without making matters worse. But if you can't, turn it over to God. He will forgive it and remember it against you no more forever. That is what trash heaps are for -- to bury the things that cannot be repaired or restored. Life would soon become unbearable if we never threw anything away.

And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him (Luke 9:35).

Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart (Heb. 4:7).

* * * * *

CHAPTER X.

THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY

In spite of the sobering fact that many married people will resort to divorce and remarriage as a means of trying to escape from their marital frustrations, and a percentage of them on Scriptural grounds, yet there is A MORE EXCELLENT WAY if one can find it.

If your marriage is "ON THE ROCKS" there are three popular ways of trying to solve the problem. One of the heavily traveled roads is to BREAK UP and WALK OUT. This means of escape should, if at all possible, be avoided. Impulsively, you may retort: "In my case it can't be avoided." You may be entirely right. Perhaps in your particular case, it can't be avoided, but have you really tried? Have you tried seriously, advisedly and prayerfully, as well as emotionally? Have you put your heart and soul doggedly into the trying?

A second means of trying to solve the problem is to painfully stay with it, endure every day of cohabitation, and hold out to the bitter end. Just quarrel on and on, with frequent explosions, and long periods of silence,, with hurt feelings never going entirely away, and not a spark of true love, human or divine, to oil the machinery of your marriage.

A third possible solution (and let us recommend this one) we will call "THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY." This way is based on several Scripture verses in the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians where Paul said: "Love never faileth" (v. 8). Love can die, but as long as it lives (or can be resurrected from the dead), IT CANNOT FAIL. God can help you to get the love flame burning again, if that flame has gone out. Some of us have actually seen it take place in the lives of certain married couples after years of suffering with mental anguish. One wife, while talking with friends, was heard to say, "I never loved my husband until I got saved and became a Christian." The only hope for a sick marriage is TO FALL IN LOVE AGAIN! If you can succeed in keeping true love alive, you've got it made! Come wind, come storm, you can wag the world, because "Love never faileth." (This eighth verse will be dealt with later on in this chapter.)

Now for the Corinthian passage where Paul said: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (v. 1).

One evening years ago, wife and I visited the floral clock at Niagara Falls, Canada. When it came near the hour, quite a group of people stood around, waiting to hear it chime. Suddenly, it started. Those chimes floated out over the evening air with such beauty it was almost breathtaking. When finally all was still, no one hurried away, but all stood for a few moments, speechless. Presently, I said to my wife: "WASN'T THAT BEAUTIFUL?"

Shortly after that I went into a store. They had five or six small brass tubes hanging from wires, so that when the door opened and closed, it hit those little tubes, and made them tinkle as they bumped against each other. I stopped, turned, and glanced at those little brass tubes, and thought to myself: "ISN'T THAT CUTE?"

Some time later I put these two experiences together and realized that there is a world of difference between being BEAUTIFUL and being CUTE. Then I thought of married life: how the voice inflection, and the facial expression, could make the difference between renewing love, and destroying it.

There is no question about it -- when we relate these words of Paul to the problems of marriage -- that love between the most devout partners can grow cold. If they don't keep renewing it, and warming it, the best words which pass between them can become nothing more than "a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." No married people should ever throw cold water on their marriage, or allow its fervor to cool, for if they do, sooner or later, if they don't become alarmed and correct the fault, or if God is not brought into the picture, their beautiful, former love will be destroyed, and possibly their home with it.

"And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not [love], I am nothing" (v. 2b). How would you feel, should you gather up a cartful of groceries, and wait while the girl is checking them out, and several customers also are waiting and watching, and then open up your purse to discover that you had nothing? If that happens to us when we are standing before God at the Judgment, we'll be worse than embarrassed. If that happens to the pure, unadulterated love that once characterized your marriage, life's greatest tragedy will already have taken place.

Many souls have ventured into wedlock with strong faith, but if their faith is not anchored in God, it could prove to be nothing but presumption, and many times it results in disaster.

If anything damaging happens to pure love in marriage, one part or the other, or both, have missed it somewhere in their personal relationship to God, because "God is love." He will keep marriage running smoothly and beautifully if He is allowed to control it.

"[Love] suffereth long and is kind" (v. 4a). The purest and most sacred love that can exist between husband and wife is that which is under the surveillance of God. His love is that which is "shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. . ." (Rom. 5:5). Anything less than God's oversight is a risk. Have you ever tried God's surveillance? Being kind in response to abuse takes a pure, sanctified heart (Luke 23:34). It will work if you work it with God. Put Him in full charge, not only of this part of your life, but overall coverage. Let me induce you to pour more oil from God's Holy Spirit onto the rusty wheels of your marital love, and try that. Let me assure you -- IT WILL WORK! I have heard of many, and have known a few very wicked men who finally broke down and humbled, and turned to God because their wives faithfully poured heavenly oil into the mechanism of their marriage.

A sinner man in Tennessee years ago became angry at his wife and forbade her leaving for church that evening. She pled with him, but to no avail. When the time came to leave, she got ready and left. As she was going out the door he barked at her:

"If you go tonight, when you get back, the door will be locked and you won't get in." When she got back he had kept his word. The house was dark, and the door was locked. She laid down on the porch until morning. When it became daylight she rapped on the door. When he came to the door she said, "Let me in, husband, and I'll get your breakfast." That wife SUFFERED LONG AND WAS KIND.

"[Love] envieth not" (v. 4b). Envy creates suspicion, resentment, and is malignant in nature, and arouses vicious ill will. It creates premeditated malice and will utterly destroy love if this "malice monger" is not purged from the heart. How can marital harmony be maintained under all of the trying circumstances of life, when carnal husbands and carnal wives are in control? The carnal mind is an ally of Satan and an enemy of God (Rom. 8:7). Purifying the carnal hearts (Acts 15:9) is the only final answer to the healing of sick love and domestic unrest. The seed of carnal self, in the hearts of unsanctified people, wars against everything that is pure and holy. St. Peter warns us, "see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22). Human determination can go a long ways in stabilizing married life, but the blood of Christ, purifying carnal hearts (Acts 15:9), is the only final answer to all of the dispositional problems of marriage, and especially so, when husbands and wives are sinful and carnal, and try to operate without God.

"[Love] vaunteth not itself" (v. 4c). True love is not boastful with self-esteem and self-importance. Humbleness makes a world of difference in married life. It eliminates the "I must be first" tendency -- "My plans are most important, and if anyone interferes, I'll make them wish they hadn't" -- "Others must give way to me" -- "My ideas are best" -- "My wishes must be gratified" -- "Everyone must recognize my rights." The domineering spirit in either husband or wife is a deadly enemy of true love. When both parties are that way, you know what happens! That is when "an immovable object gets hit by an irresistible force." Only God can cure a situation like that, and He can't if it has gone too far. Turning over a new leaf, and trying to educate and discipline carnality, may seem like a QUICK FIX, but it will not endure unless the heart is changed by the power of God. Only God can purge the heart of its sinful nature. Only God, by the cleansing blood of Christ (I John 1:7), can purify the depraved heart, and remove everything domineering, egocentric and self-opinionated. No one can improve on the words which Peter gave us, when he said: ". . . and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (I Peter 5:5). This is marriage safety insurance.

True love is Christ-centered, but it can never be self-centered and remain pure. Neither companion must ever, under any circumstances, look or speak with disdain toward the other. To belittle is the opposite of being complementary, and is both cruel and uncalled-for. Self-importance in either partner in marriage is a destructive fire.

"[Love] is not puffed up" (v. 4d). Pure love will help one to take criticism sweetly. True love will enable one to step down and admit being in the wrong. Listening meekly to advice and criticism from your companion will go a long way toward beautiful marital relationship. Learning to be subordinate, one to the other, is another of the fine arts which can be, and MUST be mastered by both husband and wife. One who has a proud, haughty spirit cannot keep it from having a damaging effect on the happiness of the home.

"[Love] doth not behave itself unseemly" (v. 5a). Love avoids indecency and the unbecoming as well as the offensive in words and behavior. It speaks, and lives clean, and in a decent and wholesome manner. It enables one to give his companion someone to admire in the producing of fine qualities. You must not ask your companion to love the unlovely. That would be unfair. There is no room in true love for rudeness, sarcasm, or any kind of cutting words -- ever.

Avoid habits that irritate or antagonize your married partner. It is no trouble to be courteous, and it fosters healthful relationships. It does no harm to say "please" and "thank you" at home. The lack of such thoughtfulness will greatly weaken the structure of marriage. A perfect gentleman away from home should be a perfect gentleman at home. Neither party should take the other one for granted. A gentleman never goes to a door and walks in, letting his wife follow. He will try to get to the door first to open it, letting her enter ahead of him -- the car door also. Good manners are not only for special occasions, nor are they for a special person, unless that special person is your wife. Thoughtfulness in these matters helps a great deal to oil the machinery of everyday life, and keeps down friction. Both of you should try to make your spouse feel like somebody special.

Boys, from the time they are very small, should be taught these things, and when they become married men, good manners and thoughtfulness will be second nature, and very rewarding.

A few years ago where I was holding a revival meeting, a young man always got out of his car and walked straight into the church, leaving his wife to get out of the car with a small child and baby. She had to carry the little one and a bag of necessities, while the small lad walked by her side. That conduct is entirely unacceptable in married life. It makes the wife feel very unimportant. A man like that has a very distorted idea of manners. He does not have true love in his heart, or decency.

"[Love] seeketh not her own" (v. 5b). Married folk learn to surrender, not principles of character or religious convictions, but personal notions and habits of little consequence which irritate their companion. Things like these will do much to help guide your marriage away from the "rocks." Love of the very highest quality will penetrate every fog, light every pathway, dispel every gloom, and will ring the bell of hope which may for years have hung cold and silent.

True love is never selfish. It never takes unfair advantage. When one spouse always has to surrender to the other, the marriage cannot be blissfully happy.

"[Love] is not easily provoked" (v. 5c). This could mean, not supersensitive to things that are said and done by your wife or husband, when you may not be sure what was meant. Or, it could mean, not over-reactionary -- not quick to put a hasty construction on things that were meant well, but sometimes might appear otherwise on the surface. It might be a guard against hastily jumping to conclusions, or reading into motives--thereby developing a deep resentment, which might not exist at all if the facts were known. If love is what it should be between husband and wife, communication won't break down, and get hung up on problems that if properly understood, would vanish.

When Satan tries to create wrong feelings between husband and wife, in either case, if their Christian experience is what it ought to be, and their confidence in each other's pure motives and moral integrity is right, then they will both know, without question, that all is well. Their lives and their marriage are always in good hands when they are in the hands of God instead of self, or selves.

"[Love] thinketh no evil" (v. 5c). Evil thinking breeds in a heart "that deviseth wicked imaginations" (Prov. 6:18). Evil surmising will place wrong construction on things because of circumstantial evidence, which is sometimes entirely false. Satan loves to put thoughts like this into the minds and hearts of married people. If their hearts are carnal they are easy prey to such satanic suggestions. Carnal minds are like incubators. When Satan places the seeds of his corruptions in the home -- unless they are quickly removed by sheer willpower, they will hatch out his own likeness. Satan delights in intercepting and influencing the thought processes of married people, creating problems between them, hoping thereby to destroy their home, and eventually their soul. So every human soul that ever went wrong, missed it first in his thought life, wherein he allowed Satan to work. That is the reason we are admonished in the Scriptures to ". . . resist the devil, and he will flee from you." When married persons let Satan control their thought lives, it is no wonder they have problems.

Every broken home (broken other than by death) started in someone's mind. That first thought went from the mind to the heart. Every unhappy home was made unhappy by seed-thoughts that Satan planted. The very best insurance a married couple can take out on their marriage would be to keep their minds under the blood of Christ. Satan's aim is to make all marriages unhappy. He may start out with happiness to fool them, but he'll never abandon his objective.

"[Love] rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (v. 6). All iniquity begins and ends with Satan, and is based exclusively on his lies. ". . . There is no truth in him" (John 8:44). Since all falsehoods are of the devil, they are never acceptable or excusable between husband and wife. Never! If Satan ever tells a truth or a half truth, he does it to deceive somebody. He is a trickster and schemer from start to finish. All they who allow him to meddle in the affairs of their marriage, will not conduct their relationships properly, and their marriage will never be what it ought to be, unless they break away from Satan and turn everything over to Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

When Satan gets his foot in the home, the Holy Spirit, if He were there, will leave. Then, when that happens, the husband and wife may stay together and they may not. If they stay together it can be terribly unpleasant at times. That is when Satan is in control of the home and the marriage, instead of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

"[Love] beareth all things" (v. 7a). The Greek word for "beareth" is *steg'-o*, and means to cover with silence and patience. That means that whenever a personal hurt is inflicted by either party upon the other, when the hurt one fails to cover it with silence and patience, it gives the devil the advantage, and Christ the disadvantage, in trying to keep things running smoothly and harmoniously between husband and wife. Hurts like that wouldn't occur anyway if both lived as close to God as they should.

"[Love] believeth all things" (v. 7b). A positive outlook and an optimistic mind are basic for the assurance of marital bliss. Faith and confidence also are indispensable. When confidence is betrayed by either partner, the marriage structure is weakened, and, if persistent, may be tottering.

One who "believeth all things" believes that sin is so detrimental to marital happiness, that it can get bad enough to destroy the home. Holiness and righteousness are preservatives for the same. "If that is true," you may ask, "then why do some couples affiliated with the most spiritual church break up?" The answer is obvious: they simply do not possess what they are affiliated with.

One who "believeth" all things believes that God is a safe Guide through life, and on into eternity, and that Satan is the very opposite. God will bind husband and wife stronger into "oneness" all through their lifetime together if they will take Him into intimate partnership. Satan, on the other hand, will do everything within his power to wedge them apart and separate them. Never does a home break (except through death) but what Satan was allowed to interfere, and influence it.

"[Love] hopeth all things" (v. 7c). An optimistic outlook is integrating in every way. A positive approach to any situation in married life is of utmost importance. One whose aspirations are high, in the interest of marital happiness, has a much better chance of realizing his ambition than any other.

When a marriage breaks, the innocent party has a much better chance for marital bliss with another partner than the guilty one has. This is because the guilty one was the cause of the trouble, and when he tries marriage again, he will take his problems with him, unless, in the meantime, Christ comes into his heart, and regenerates and sanctifies him, as well as correcting his problematic personality quirks, and bad habits.

"[Love] endureth all things" (v. 7d). Endurance to the limit of one's natural resources is highly commendable in any married person when the odds are stacked against them. This quality is seen in the faithful wife who raises her family, through many years of fearful suffering with an alcoholic husband or a morphine addict, or both in the same man, at the same time.

Such was the wife of D. C. Van Slyke. She was one of the most courageous and enduring wives I have ever known personally. After many years of faithfully holding on in prayer and patience, she came through richly rewarded, for she lived to see her husband miraculously cured, saved, sanctified, and mightily used in the evangelistic ministry, holding revivals, and winning souls to God.

"When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (v. 11). How childish can carnal people be sometimes! Being childlike is a virtue, but childishness is a different matter. It is entirely uncalled-for in an adult. When people are old enough to be married, Paul thought they should have put away childish things. "Spiritually immature" is the meaning here -- spiritual infants never become mature.

"[Love] never faileth" (v. 8). Married people can sin against love until it dies, but as long as it is alive, it cannot fail. There are some very destructive weeds that can spring up by Satan's planting, in the garden of marriage. Love can never be healthy when it is choked and stunted by weedy conditions. As the weeds grow stronger, the "human-love-plants" grow weaker, until they die. When this happens in marriages, God departs (2 Chron. 15:2b). When God is forced out of the lives and home of a married couple, His holy love goes with Him, leaving only human affections between two individuals. This can create a lot of friction, because when God is gone from them, as He departed from King Saul (I Sam. 16:14), they are no longer "crucified with Christ," as St. Paul was (Gal. 2:20). They are controlled by self that is degenerate and carnal (I Cor. 3:3).

Married life so often starts off as a plane flying through a beautifully calm sky, when suddenly it plunges into a terrible storm, which they did not anticipate. Some marriages fly out of such storms and land safely, but the majority do not. Human emotions, apart from the presence of God, can be very precarious. A marriage without God can easily deteriorate into a power struggle along various lines. When that happens, disaster is almost certain. The great majority of married couples that strike their major problems without God are like two planes that collide in midair, or as Edna St. Vincent Millay poetically penned: "I saw at sea a great fog bank between two ships that struck... ."

Dark, foreboding prophecies and predictions from friends and neighbors shall fail (v. 8). Grave ventures as to the despairing forecasts of your tottering MARRIAGE CASTLE -- they all shall fail! Why? Because the greatest of all is charity. Charity is functioning love -- not static or merely receptive, but LOVE AT WORK, exerting and expressing itself, learning therefore that to be kind and charitable toward one another is not only a gift that must be bestowed of God, but it also is one of the fine arts which must be nurtured, or it will die.

Nearly a hundred years ago a book was written by Edward P. Roe, entitled: He Fell in Love With His Wife. It is a beautiful, charming story. One could never forget the depth of anguish married people sometimes fall into over mere suspicion or surmising, based on mistrust and circumstantial evidence, which in this story brought their marriage to the brink of utter destruction. In this case, their little adopted daughter of eight summers uncovered the facts which lay hidden until it was within hours of too late, and the wound was healed.

A TRULY HAPPY HOME

(From American Essays)

"A place of warmth when the world is cold. . . a place of safety when the world is hostile . . . a place of light when the world is dark."

"A family is a group of human beings who care about each other. . . and feel comfortable with each other. . . and who will stand up for each other."

* * * * *

CHAPTER XI.

RULES FOR A HAPPY MARRIAGE

Were statistics available, we no doubt would be shocked to learn how few matrimonial problems are ever solved by the relentless, grinding wheels of the divorce mills. The great majority of divorced people marry again and sometimes, again and again, but so many times, instead of solving problems, they take their problems with them, and it shows up before they have been married very long. How much better it would be if they would turn to God, and let Him cure the sin-sickness in their own hearts, which very likely has been growing there like ugly weeds in a garden from early childhood. In changing partners, they too often fail to turn to God, and ask Him to correct their faults, and establish in their basic nature the moral principles which would magnetically and cohesively hold hearts and homes together. This would be the "MORE EXCELLENT WAY." God is the only final answer to cool-headed, warm-hearted solution to inherent personality problems between individuals.

One receives a heart-rending picture of this whole problem when he realizes how comparatively few couples out in the world these days are essentially happy in their married life. Even among some of the more devout-appearing Christians in the average community, it is appalling to discover, when one gets close enough, how very few married couples are downright happy together.

Right in the midst of this matrimonial chaos, the great army of sincere workers, who have the betterment of society at heart, and hate the very word divorce, can find a wide-open, challenging field for the most rewarding labors.

Many unhappy people, we find, do not know why they are unhappy. They often lay the blame on people and circumstances, never dreaming that within their own natures lie, dormant and unspouted, the seeds of emotional recovery. For an unhappy person to become happy, he must begin in the very roots of his own distorted personality. (But don't let me antagonize you.) it naturally is easier, for you and me both, to see the adjustments the other party should make. But, my friend, if you will admit honestly your own faults and analyze your own motives, spirit, attitudes and habits, and be honest, and will humble yourself enough to go the "second mile," then go the second mile again and again in making the necessary adjustments, presently you will see an entirely new world opening before you which you had formerly thought impossible. After all, it really takes so very little effort to be happy. To humble one's self and be honest always is the first and hardest step that one must take to recapture the lost bliss of married life.

When married people reach the place where they want to be happy together, they can be. To make a marital change seems to appeal to the great majority of maladjusted people as the easiest means of escape from their dilemma. And since life's deceitful grass can appear greener in the unexplored field, many frustrated persons unwittingly seek to capture the ever-elusive state of happiness by making a marital change rather than by making a dispositional and spiritual adjustment and more times than not they come out disillusioned.

Let's Talk It Over Together

And now, husband and wife, permit me to talk to you as frankly and as ruthlessly as at times I have had to talk to myself. If you wish to be happily united as long as you both shall live, read these rules together (let me emphasize "together") as often as it may be necessary and your companionship will undergo an immediate and miraculous change until it will be made to run "as smooth as a ribbon." May I further suggest (and this is all important), when either of you come to a point in the reading where you personally are weak or at fault, pause and humbly and frankly confess this weakness to your companion. There is no better therapy for a sick personality than frank and open confession. Say to your companion, "I am weak at that point," and you will find yourself stronger from then on. Thus will tensions float away in a relaxing stream of humor. This is one game you both can play and you both can win.

1. First, by the most meticulous self-discipline keep your thoughts and affections from wandering from your companion to another. When Satan crosses your mind with the slightest temptation or suggestion for your eyes to wander or your heart to lust, plead the grace of God at once, dismiss the thought and thus maintain the purity of your most hidden feelings. Jesus taught this principle (Matthew 5:27-29) and insisted upon it. Do not toy with the evil suggestion or temptation for a moment when it pertains to the opposite sex. This practice takes a determined will and a constant guard. A first glance may be accidental, but the second is deliberate, forbidden, and dangerous. Keep your thoughts, desires, affections and feelings only for each other so long as you both shall live.

2. Always, I mean "always," be a person your companion can trust under every circumstance. Never bluff; never work under cover; never betray the confidence of your husband or wife. Always be able to face your mate with an open face and a warm level eye. Do not permit your companion to find you, ever, even once, in an untruth or a cover-up deal. A carpenter will tell you that once a nail is bent and straightened he is never quite so sure of it again.

3. Keep all barriers and tensions out of the home. Do not freeze up in a world of silence. The silent treatment is as cruel as the grave. Always be kind; never slurring; never sarcastic. When the slightest tension arises, stop at once and pray together until the tension is entirely gone. God will keep your hearts melted together if you will practice this rule faithfully. Those who diligently have practiced this policy have found that it never fails to work its miracle of healing. Tensions and barriers cannot persist in a Christ impregnated atmosphere. Therefore, when one allows tensions and barriers to infect the home, the sweet Spirit of God withdraws in grief, leaving the spirit of evil to contaminate the atmosphere and rule or wreck the home. One must never let the love flame go out.

4. Have family prayer every day, preferably twice daily, but do not hurry with it. It does little good to pray under nervous pressure. Keep the family altar a time of melting and basking in the presence of God. Wife and husband, form the habit of sitting side by side when you read from the Bible at family prayer time. Then kneel in the same manner for prayer. Soon you will prefer it this way. This practice will keep wedges of ice from getting in and forcing you apart. Husband, if you will rest your hand upon your wife's shoulder while you pray, you will be forming a habit which will work its miracle in your temperament. Try doing this and see how hard it may be at first to break through the frost line, but how rewarding it becomes once the "break through" is accomplished. It will work a miracle within you akin to the miracle of springtime which brings the

flowers up out of the soil and the birds back from the southland. This practice, when followed consistently, will keep the barriers from getting back into your heart and mind. "The family that prays together stays together," they tell us. When a husband and wife cease praying together their earthly happiness is in peril already.

5. Never allow relatives or friends, however well-meaning they may be, to encroach upon the privacy of your home or married life, to interfere. Keep your family secrets between you. Let your companion know you can be trusted.

6. Discussing various problems is necessary sometimes and differences of opinion are frequently unavoidable, but do not argue. Arguing creates tensions and divisions, while it accomplishes absolutely nothing worthwhile.

7. Do not go needlessly into debt. Pay as you go and deny yourselves the things you cannot afford. You will be happier and you will learn to be content with such things as you have (Heb. 13:5). To live beyond one's income is to borrow trouble, create frustrations, worries, and tensions which tend to destroy marital compatibility.

8. Make it a practice of anointing your companion with oil and praying for the healing of the body, no matter how slight the disorder. If the illness persists, continue the practice every day without fail until your companion is healed. Do the same with the children. This practice will not only bring miracles of healing to sick bodies and tired minds, but it will also work the miracle of binding the husband and wife together and will forbid barriers coming between them. Barriers are so prevalent in the family circle and yet these barriers cannot survive in an atmosphere such as this practice creates. Try it and see. Remember, if you want to be happily married bad enough to pay the price, you can be.

9. Always play the game fair and do unto your companion as you would like your companion to do unto you. Never belittle or broadcast things which are humiliating or embarrassing to your companion. True love is always thoughtful of the feelings of its object. Fulton Oursler one time wrote, "The wife or husband who is alert to say the heartening thought at the right moment has taken out valuable marriage insurance." Always remember it's the little things that count.

10. Finally, never grumble or find fault. To do this is nothing but a very bad habit. It does no good but it leaves its wound. And remember, wounds which are under constant irritation may become malignant.

"Laugh at life,
And the world will be back of you.
Growl at life,
And the world will lose track of you."
Anon.

Now Brace Your Feet, "Hubby!"

And now, husband, let us look at this matter of your individual responsibility. There is a vital contribution that you can make and the results will be most gratifying.

1. You must understand that your wife craves a sense of security. She wants someone on whom she can lean. If she does not get this feeling of security from you, she may hunt for it elsewhere or give up in despair. She wants a strong arm of protection around her. She likes to feel your support.

2. Your wife also wants to be free from financial worries. She does not want her husband to spend much of his time and money on his hobbies and begrudge her the little things she craves. She wants your attention. She naturally resents your being extravagant with yourself and your wants (which is a man's weakness) and irritable when she wants a new dress!

3. Your wife is entitled to fair play on your part. Men, I suppose, have a tendency to be more selfish than women. One must guard against this weakness and make it a habit of bending over backwards, in being thoughtful and playing fair. When a man wants something, regardless of what it costs, he wants it at once, whether he can afford it or not. A husband who desires a happy home must guard against this weakness, for it creates a lack of balance in the home and makes for discontentment. Subdue the habit of being set in your ways. Develop flexibility.

4. A womanly wife wants affection, not just sex. She wants tenderness. Men have an innate proneness to take the wife for granted, wrap themselves in business and recreation, and give her little attention. Many wives are starving for affection.

5. Your wife wants you to confide in her. She wants to be the most important person in your life and she should be. She is not herein asking the unreasonable. She wants you to succeed and she likes to feel she helped push you over the top. She likes to feel necessary and wanted. She loves spontaneous compliments and will pay her last coin of devotion for a few of the right kind of thoughtful remarks. Men need to break down the tendency to be aloof. Your wife does not like to feel that she is being shoved off as an inferior whose advice is inconsequential or unsafe. She likes to be wanted and needed. She loves the close feeling of partnership. She is not a mere fixture or accessory; she is an "help meet." God intended her to be your companion. Accept her criticism, even though it is one of the hardest things man can do sometimes. She undoubtedly sees your weakness and she will make you strong where you are inherently weak if you will allow her.

6. Do take her advice, at least, consider it with profound respect. A woman's instincts are usually safe to follow. The wife will seldom miss it when she says to you, "Honey, I have a feeling you are making the wrong move."

7. Learn by deliberate practice (forced if necessary) to make adjustments between you and your wife which are difficult for you. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this practice. Do this for the sake of harmony and the security of your home. These adjustments do not make themselves. Many inter-personality problems will disintegrate once we face them.

Your Turn, Wife!

And now, wife, you have a solemn responsibility too. If you really want to make married life "click," perhaps these suggestions will help you with your task.

1. Your husband wants privacy. Many things that happen are not for publicity. He will feel miserable, self-conscious, humiliated, and resentful if he thinks your friends and relatives know everything that has happened between you. He wants a woman he can trust. He is satisfied only when he can leave you with anyone, even your mother, and be confident that his secrets are locked up within you.

2. Your husband wants and has a right to expect you to be good wife. He is not content simply with a good cook or a good housekeeper. This is to be expected. Your responsibility here is included also in the marriage vow. One who wished to fill the role of an "old maid" should never have gotten married. If your attitude toward normal sex experience is such that your husband feels embarrassed or is made to endure a guilt complex as though he had "stolen" something, your basic attitude should be revised. Your mental pattern in this phase of life's responsibility should be very much the same as it is when you cook a fine meal and your husband eats heartily and leans back from the table in complete contentment. One other thought: your husband will not be nearly so inclined to form evil habits if you play fair and treat him as you should in this regard.

3. Your husband wants sunshine in the home. This is a mighty sour old world sometimes, and he wants a spot of sun shine he can always come into out of the storm.

4. He also would like you to be clean in your habits, in the preparation of food, in your keeping of the home, and in your personal habits in general. A clean man cannot "cleave," as the Bible admonishes him to do, to someone who is unclean and repulsive.

5. Your husband loves special attention. He likes to be petted and "made over" more than he may be willing to give of the same. When he is sick he wants to be "babied." This fact has to be understood and accepted by you. He likes to find his little notions, in your cooking, your housekeeping, and in your personal appearance, spontaneous. He may not say much, but he is noticing more than you think sometimes. These things are all sinking in and are making a mark in your favor.

6. Your man likes appreciation also. If he hears you bragging on him when he is thought not to be listening, he will prick up his ears and stare blankly at the newspaper which you think he is reading. But he is making a mental note of it all, and you are keeping yourself on the inside track.

7. He wants you to be content with such things as he can provide. He does not enjoy nagging or constant complaining. It is better to get along with less than to be pressed to the point of frustration by indebtedness for things one cannot afford. Being happy with less is a matter of self-discipline.

8. He likes you to be playful; it breaks the tensions. If he finds a stone in his soup, a bottle in the toe of his sock, or his pajama legs tied up, he will chuckle to himself the next day when he is at the shop and will think you a grand person indeed. Things like this will even help break down the irritation when the foreman is driving him. No matter how rough the trick or how overbearing

the foreman, your husband knows there is a spot of sunshine waiting for him at the end of the day. So, when the whistle blows he can hardly wait to get home to be with you.

9. He likes you to believe he is a hero -- the greatest "guy" in the world. And he can be as far as you are concerned, and should be.

10. He will not be happy with interference from in-laws. Unless you keep your parents in their proper place, you will multiply sorrows upon your own head (this works both ways). One of the worst things you can do after you are married is to try to live in the same house with either parents. It is far better to patch your threadbare clothes and live on hasty pudding and maintain the privacy of your own home.

11. Your husband wants to be first in your affections, not even the children pushing him out of this position. The children should be an adhesive to hold you together rather than a wedge to push you apart. My companion, for example, has always made it a point to teach her little boy to love his daddy and to make him believe his daddy is the nicest daddy in the world. Anything she can do to bind us closer together, she will do it. I've known her to whisper a "bug" into the little fellow's ear and he would run, as though it were his own idea, wind his little arms around his daddy's neck and give him a big "smacker" on the cheek.

12. Discipline yourself not to challenge your husband's wisdom and authority in the presence of the children when he has corrected or punished them, unless you wish to borrow trouble. If these things must be discussed, it should be done quietly and in private. This, too, works both ways and its importance cannot be overemphasized.

13. Accustom your inner ear so as to keep your companion's voice the sweetest music in the world. After my companion had left this world I would sometimes hear her voice audibly calling me. This may have been a psychological quirk of a lonely, restless mind, but at least it reveals how precious her voice had become.

If sweethearts were sweethearts always,
Whether as maid or wife,
No drop would be half as pleasant
In the mingled draught of life.

But the sweetheart has smiles and blushes,
Where the wife has frowns and sighs;
And the wife has a wrathful glitter,
For the glow in the sweetheart's eyes.

If lovers were lovers always,
The same to sweetheart and wife,
Who would change for a future of Eden
The joys of this checkered life?

But husbands grow grave and silent,

And care on the anxious brow,
Oft replaces the sunshine that perished,
With the words of the marriage vow.

Happy is he whose sweetheart
Is wife and sweetheart still --
Whose voice as of old can charm!
Whose kiss as of old, can thrill!

Who has plucked the rose to find ever,
Its beauty and fragrance increase,
As the flush of passion is mellowed,
In love's unmeasured peace.
Anon.

* * * * *

ADDENDUM

When Betsy and I Are Out
By Will Carleton

Copyright, 1882, by Harper Brothers

(Slightly altered with apologies)

Draw up the papers, lawyer, and make em good and stout;
For things at home are crossways, and Betsy and I are out.
We, who have worked together so long as man and wife,
Must pull in single harness for the rest our natural life.

"What is the matter?" say you. I swan, it's hard to tell!
Most of the years behind us we've passed by very well;
I had no other woman, she had no other man --
Only we've lived together as long as ever we can.

So I have talked with Betsy, and Betsy has talked with me,
And so we've agreed together that we can't never agree --
Not that we've caught each other in any terrible crime:
We've been a-gathering this for years, a little at a time.

There was a stock of temper we both had for a start,
Although we never suspected it would take us two apart:
I had my various failings, bred in the flesh and bone;
And Betsy, like all good women, had a temper of her own.

The first thing I remember wherein we disagreed
Was something concerning heaven -- a difference in our creed:
We arg'ed the thing at breakfast-we arg'd the thing at tea;
And the more we arg'd the question, the more we couldn't agree.

And the next thing I remember was when we lost a cow:
She'd kicked the bucket for certain, the question was only, how?
I held to my opinion, and Betsy another had;
And when we were done a-talkin', the both of us was mad.

And the next that I remember -- it started in a joke;
But for full a week it lasted, and neither of us spoke.
And the next was when I scolded because she broke a bowl.
She said I was mean and stingy, and hadn't any soul.

And so the bowl kept pourin' dissensions in our cup;
And so the blamed cow-critter was always a-comin' up.
And so that heaven we arg'ed no nearer to us got,
But it gave us a taste of somethin' a thousand times as hot,

And so the thing kept workin' in all the selfsame way;
Always somethin' to arg'e, and somethin' sharp to say:
And down on us came the neighbors, a couple dozen strong,
And lent their kindest service to help the thing along.

And there has been days together, and many a weary week,
We both was cross and spunky, and both too proud to speak;
And I have been thinkin' and thinkin', the whole of winter and fall,
If I can't live kind with a woman, why then I won't at all.

And so I have talked with Betsy, and Betsy has talked with me,
And we have agreed together that we can't never agree:
And what is hers shall be hers, and what is mine shall be mine;
And I'll put it in the agreement, and take it to her to sign.

Write on the paper, lawyer -- the very first paragraph --
Of all the farm and livestock, that she shall have her half;
For she has helped to earn it, through many a weary day,
And it's nothing more than justice that Betsy has her pay.

Give her the house and homestead; a man can thrive and roam,
But women are skeery critters unless they have a home,
And I have always determined, and never failed to say,
That Betsy never should want a home if I was taken away.

There's a little hard-earned money that's drawin' interest, say

A couple of thousand dollars laid by for a rainy day --
Safe in the hands of a good man, and easy to get at:
Put in another clause there, and give her half of that.

Yes, I see you smile, sir, at my givin' her so much;
Yes, divorce is cheap, sir, but I take no stock in such!
True and fair I married her, when she was blithe and young;
And Betsy was always good to me, exceptin' with her tongue.

Once when I was young as you, and not so smart, perhaps,
For me she jilted a lawyer, and several other chaps;
And all of them was flustered, and fairly taken down
And I for a time was considered the luckiest man in town.

Once when I had a fever -- I won't forget it soon --
I was hot as a basted turkey and crazy as a loon;
Never an hour went by me when she was out of sight;
She nursed me true and tender, and stuck to me day and night.

And if ever a house was tidy, and ever a kitchen clean,
Her house and kitchen was tidy as any I ever seen;
And I don't complain of Betsy, or any of her acts,
Exceptin' when we've quarreled and told each other facts.

So draw up the paper, lawyer, and I'll go home tonight.
And read the agreement to her, and see if it's all right;
And then in the mornin' I'll sell to a tradin' man I know,
And kiss the child we adopted, and out in the world I'll go.

And one thing put in the paper, that first to me didn't occur:
That when I'm dead at last she'll bring me back to her
And lay me under the maples I planted years ago,
When she and I were happy before we quarreled so.

And when she dies I wish that she would be laid by me,
And lyin' together in silence, perhaps we will agree;
And if ever we meet in heaven, I wouldn't think it queer
If we loved each other the better because we quarreled here.

* * *

WHEN BETSY AND I MADE UP

Give us your hand, Mr. Lawyer: how do you do today?
You drew up that paper -- I suppose you want your pay:
Don't cut down your figures -- make it an "X" or a "V";

For that 'ere written agreement was just the makin' of me.

Goin' home that evenin' I tell you I was blue,
Thinkin' of all my troubles, and what I was goin' to do;
And if my hosses hadn't been the knowin'est team alive,
They'd have tipped me over, certain, for I couldn't see to drive.

No -- for I was laborin' under a heavy load,
No -- for I was travelin' an entirely different road:
For I was a-tracin' over the paths of our lives ag'in,
And seem' where we missed the way and where we might have been.

And many a corner we'd turned that just to a quarrel led,
When I ought to have held my tongue, and driven straight ahead;
And the more I thought it over the more these memories came,
And the more I struck the opinion that I was the most to blame.

And things I had long forgotten kept risin' in my mind,
Of little matters betwixt us where Betsy was good and kind;
And these things flashed upon me as such things sometimes will
When a feller's alone in the darkness, and everything is still.

"But," thinks I, "we're too far along to take another track;
And when I put my hand to the plow I do not oft turn back;
And 'tain't an uncommon thing for couples to smash in two":
So I set my teeth together, and vowed I'd see it through.

When I come in sight of the house, 'twas some-'ut in the night.
And just as I turned a hilltop I see the kitchen light;
Which often a handsome pictur' to a hungry person makes,
But it don't do much for a feller that's goin' to pull up stakes

And when I went in the house the table was set for me--
As good a supper's I ever saw, or ever hope to see;
And I crammed the agreement down in my pocket as best I could,
And fell to eatin' the victuals, which somehow didn't taste good.

And Betsy, she pretended to look about the house,
She watched my side coat pocket like a cat would watch a mouse;
And then she went to foolin' a little with her cup,
And intently readin' a newspaper, a-holdin' it wrong side up.

And when I'd done my supper I drewed the agreement out,
And give it to her without a word, for she knowed what 'twas about;
And then I hummed a little tune, but now and then a note
Was busted by some animal that hopped up in my throat.

Then Betsy, she got her specks from off the mantle shelf;
And read the paper over quite slowly to herself;
Read it little by little, for her eyes were gettin' old,
And lawyers' writen' ain't no print, especially when it's cold,

And after she'd read a little, she give my arm a touch,
And kindly said she was afraid I was 'lowin' her too much;
When she was through she went for me, her face a-streamin' tears,
And kissed me like she hadn't done in over twenty years!

I don't know what you'll think, sir, I didn't come to enquire --
But I picked up that agreement and stuffed it in the fire;
And I told her we'd bury the hatchet alongside of that old cow;
And we might not see things just alike, but we'd never have a row.

And I told her in the future I wouldn't speak cross or rash
If half the crockery in the house was broken all to smash.
She said in regards to heaven, we'd try to learn its worth
By startin' a branch establishment and runnin' it here on earth.

And so we sat a-talkin' three quarters of the night,
And opened our hearts to each other until they both grew light;
And the days when I was winnin' her away from so many men
Was nothin' to that evenin' I courted her over again.

Next mornin' an ancient virgin took pains to call on us,
Her lamp all trimmed and a-burnin' to kindle another fuss;
But when she went to pryin' and openin' of old sores,
My Betsy rose politely, and showed her out of doors.

Since then I don't deny there's been a word or two;
But we've got our eyes wide open, and know just what to do:
When one speaks cross, the other puts on a look that's wise,
And the first one picks up the warning and starts to apologize.

Maybe you'll think me soft, sir, a-talkin' in this style,
But somehow it does me good to tell it once in a while;
And I do it for a compliment -- 'tis so that you can see
That that there written agreement was just the makin' of me.

So make out your bill, Mr. Lawyer. Don't stop short of an "X."
Make it more if you want to, for I have got the checks.
I'm richer than a National Bank, with all its treasures told,
For I've got a wife at home now that's worth her weight in gold.

* * *

A TRUE WIFE

(From American Essays)

"She's a pair of waiting arms for a weary warrior. She repairs frayed banners torn on daily battlefields . . . She cushions defeats . . . and makes victories worthwhile. . . ."

"She can warm a cold room just by walking through the door . . ."

"Wives are contrary things. They cry when they are happy . . . and smile at the world when their hearts are sad. Wives whisper about small things, but when the chips are down, and the going is rough, they're solid as granite and strong as steel. . . ."

She wears "An apologetic smile when the checkbook doesn't balance. . . . A frown when a man is late to dinner. . . Contentment when the day's work is done and night falls and every member of the family is safe under the roof of a happy home."

"When a man runs out of heart . . . a wife gives him part of hers. She rekindles the spark of dreams. She can make a husband young again with just a twinkle in her eye."

* * *

A TRUE HUSBAND

(From American Essays)

"Husbands are funny people . . . every wife should have one."

"He's always handy for a wife to tell her troubles to, . . . and he's always available to share the blame when things go wrong."

"He's a mystery. He laughs when he's worried. . . . He growls when he feels good."

"Husbands leave clothes on the floor. . . . They mess up the bathroom and rumple up the morning paper. They want to go out when wives want to stay in. . . and they want to stay in when wives want to go out."

"Sometimes they complain about the coffee and track muddy shoes across the clean carpet."

"He might forget an anniversary, but he never forgets to bring home the paycheck."

"He can make a wife feel young when she isn't anymore. Because they both share a love that started young . . . neither party of a young love ever grows old in each other's eyes."

"He knows he is never quite the hero his wife thinks he is."

"Husbands can be a lot of trouble. But they're awfully nice to have around the house on rainy nights when an angry wind is blowing outside the door.. . and he makes a home feel safe just by being there?"

"Give a husband a bed that is comfortable, food that is hot let him talk about himself -- and he'll love you forever.

AMEN!

* * *

LOVE NEVER FAILETH

If I loved you,
And you liked me --
That's not the way
It's supposed to be.

Like is shaky --
LOVE is stable.
Like is a twine --
LOVE is a cable.

LOVE plows through,
Whatever this or that.
But like could quit
At the "drop of a hat."

LOVE is constant --
Like is fickle.
LOVE is an Amazon --
Like is a trickle.

Like is intermittent.
"LOVE never fails."
Like is a pushover --
LOVE outrides the gales.

Like is a substitute --
LOVE'S the real thing.
Like works in the sunshine --
LOVE -- when it rains.

Like will dislike
When things aren't good.
But LOVE still LOVES --

You knew that it would.

Like is an infant.

LOVE is mature.

Like must change to LOVE

Or it will never endure.

Like is an imbalance --

Seeks more than it gives.

When like turns to LOVE

It will live through the years.

L.S.B.

* * * * *

THE END