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WOMAN
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MAN'S
COMPLETION

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W.E. BEST

WOMAN-MAN'S COMPLETION

by
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INTRODUCTION

A degenerating society demands an explanation for an ever increasing number of divorces, rapes, child molesters, murders, fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, disobedient children, etc. The answer is wrapped up in one word, depravity. Man's depraved nature, apart from divine restraint, goes from bad to worse: "...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13). Not only do depraved persons make it their trade to deceive others, but they themselves are deceived. Furthermore, the actions of a depraved nature change for the worse spontaneously if they are not changed and redirected for the better by God's grace.

With the degeneration of God's first institution, the home, society in general degenerates accordingly. Hence, the greatest contributor to a deteriorating society is the departure from God's teaching concerning the home. God's original teaching on any subject must never be ignored. Therefore, man and woman in the institution of marriage for life was and is God's standard.

Although depraved men are ever learning, they are unable to come to the knowledge of the truth (II Tim. 3:7). Their human reasoning always sounds good to depraved minds. Wholesome teaching is not palatable to the unregenerate. Their ears are open to only the things that gratify their depraved desires. Hence, they choose for themselves teachers who reason from a hypothetical premise and draw an absolute conclusion from their point of view. Their depraved minds exchange exegesis for eisegesis. Exegesis is to take out of Scripture what is there, but eisegesis is to put into Scripture what is not there.

MAN AND WOMAN IN CREATION

God is one and His plan is one. All unveiling in Scripture is God revealing Himself and His plan to man. All things proceed from Him and bring glory to Him. God's creation of all things, with the exception of man, was designed to declare in general His being and existence: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). "THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Ps. 19:1, 2). God's creation of man was intended to manifest His triunity and fellowship with him who was made in the image and likeness of the triune God. Hence, the first direct reference to a plurality in the divine nature is in the creation of man. In this nature there are three Persons distinctly subsisting; herein consists the most incomprehensible and sublime perfection of His divine being.

The creation of man is introduced in Genesis 1:26, but the making of woman was preceded by the divine declaration: "...It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). Nevertheless, the creation of woman is linked with that of man (Gen. 1:27), but the order of sequence is given in Genesis 2:18. The creation of woman formed a chronological incident in the history of the human race which commenced with the creation of Adam.

The words "let them" of Genesis 1:26 prove that Eve, typical of the assembly of the elect, not only was inseparably united and in fellowship of life with Adam but will with him have dominion over God's creation. Those given to Christ in the covenant of redemption have an inseparable union with, have a present fellowship with, and will experience future dominion with the God-Man.

Every spiritually-minded person desires truth on the subject of womanhood. Therefore, Christians yearn to diligently study the Scriptures on that subject. Since God is one and His plan is one, any deviation from the original purpose of God is departure from the standard that was established at the beginning for man and woman. Consequently, to know the truth on this subject, one must begin with its origin.

Marriage did not originate in the second chapter of Genesis but in the eternal mind of the sovereign God before the foundation of the world. As earthly things were patterned after heavenly things, marriage was patterned after the divine mind. The Levitical system was built after a heavenly pattern. The tabernacle was "...a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience....It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. 9:9, 23). The Levitical sacrifices are often thought to provide a pattern for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; however, this view is not the correct perspective. That would reverse God's order. Earthly things were patterned after heavenly things. All that is of God came from Him. As the necessity of bloodshedding in the Levitical system was caused by bloodshedding in the higher realm, marriage in time was patterned after the eternal mind of God.

God took the man, put him in the garden of Eden to dress and keep it, and commanded the man. “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:15-18). Thus, woman’s place in the universe is revealed as being man’s helpmate. She is seen only in man. Man was given priority, not superiority, over the woman; consequently, she is to be in subjection to him. The precedence of man and the dependence of woman upon the man are established in an ordinance of divine creation. Woman was formed after man; she came from man; and she was for man to fulfill his purpose in life.

A divine declaration was made in Genesis 2:18. God declared that He would make a helpmate for Adam to satisfy his loneliness. Adam’s aloneness was incompleteness. The Lord brought every beast and fowl before Adam to be named, but all living creatures could not alleviate man’s solitariness: “And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them.... And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:19, 20). Blessed with the gifts of God, man still lacked something. He was endowed with a nature too communicative to be without a partner. His nature required partnership for completeness. His whole being aspired to another person, a counterpart. Neither the living creatures below him nor the invisible Being above him, who had given him life, could unite their conditions with his. Adam needed another person who was not himself but at the same time was part of himself. Woman was the companion whom God gave man to enhance his existence.

A divine operation followed the declaration that God would make woman: “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Gen. 2:21, 22). Human nature was created in Adam. Then God formed or built woman out of man; thus, woman is a part of man. She was made for inseparable union and fellowship of life with man. The manner of her creation laid the foundation for the moral ordinance of marriage for all time. The woman must be dependent on the man, not the man on the woman. Circumstances, where a man is forced to be dependent on a woman because of some adversity, alter God’s original plan no more than the writing of a bill of divorcement, during the time of Moses, justified the Pharisees’ belief that this practice should continue for all ages. The Lord Jesus continually reminds us that “...from the beginning it was not so” (Matt. 19:8).

Woman’s first appearance on the scene of human history is important to the understanding of her role in human society. Woman was created in Adam. The unique feature about Adam’s creation is that there was only one man. Man’s nature is not an animal nature but a human nature. When God created the animals, He created many. There were more than one male and one female of the same species. No female animal was ever made from a male animal. Both male and female were independently brought into existence. The creation of woman was different. Adam was formed out of the dust of the ground, but woman was taken out of man. She was not a female animal brought from a male animal, but woman taken out of man. A male animal may mate with several female animals without breaking any ordinance of God, or conversely. However, that would have been

impossible for Adam and Eve to have done without desecrating the ordinance of marriage and the sanctity of the ordinance. Man and woman cannot live like male or female animals without being guilty of adultery or fornication.

The Lord made a divine presentation of the woman to the man: “And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Gen. 2:22). The same principle that is typified by Adam and Eve is seen operating between Jesus Christ and His sheep. Man and woman were not created apart, as the animals were, and afterward brought together. Adam was to be the inclusive head of the human race. He is the natural head of the human race, and Jesus Christ is the spiritual head of His church. All were to be derived from Adam; therefore, woman must not have an independent but a derived existence from Adam, the natural head of the human race. Her existence was derived and dependent, as the Christian’s existence is derived and dependent on Jesus Christ his Lord. This was true of Eve in a natural way and of the believer in a spiritual way.

Jesus Christ is the Head of the church; therefore, believers necessarily have not an independent but a derived existence. As soon as the divine declaration was given that Jesus Christ would build Himself a church, the divine operation was also predicted (Matt. 16:15-21). He spoke about His own death, burial, and resurrection. As a deep sleep fell upon Adam, the head of the old creation, a deeper sleep fell upon Jesus Christ, the Head of the new creation, when He died “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God” (I Pet. 3:18). God made a woman for Adam, and He is building a bride for His Son. When the bride, the church of Jesus Christ, is completed, God will present her to His Son (Rev. 21:2, 9). We are espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin: “...I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (II Cor. 11:2). Our marriage to Him has not yet taken place and will not until the body of Christ is completed.

When God made woman and brought her to man, Adam said, “...This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:23). Adam recognized that Eve was his completion. The word “woman” means female of the man because she was taken out of the man. Thus, woman’s position in life is revealed. She is not only a helper for man but a helper like himself. She has a secondary and dependent place. Her union with her husband is so close that he cannot disparage her without depreciating himself. Since woman was taken from man, she owes him honor and submission. Her position by creation is one of humility. Man “is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man” (I Cor. 11:7-9). Since woman is the glory of the man, she should remain hidden in him. Like the stars, man and woman differ in their glory. Each has certain peculiar and distinctive excellencies. Man is known for his courage, stability, and strength. Whereas, woman is known for her motherhood, helpfulness, and dependence. Society in general does not accept this Biblical truth; nevertheless, Christians cannot submit to the feelings of society and contradict the word of God. God’s people must have strong convictions based on eternal truth.

Woman’s place is not one of inferiority but of dependence on her husband. One who is helpmate, counterpart, and completion of man is not considered inferior. Inferiority and superiority have no place when speaking of man and woman. Woman is given to man for his good in an attitude of submissiveness. Her chief glory is the exercise of her God-given power as wife and mother. The woman’s place is in the home. She emits not her perfume except in the shade of her home. (See

Prov. 31.) Her sphere there is unnoticed by the world. The noisy, flamboyant woman is looked upon as either a woman of the street or a brawler. She is properly named “the evil woman” (Prov. 6:24), “a whorish woman”(Prov. 6:26), “a brawling woman” (Prov. 25:24), “a contentious woman” (Prov. 27:15), and “an adulterous woman” (Prov. 30:20). According to her nature, God has appointed the home as her domain. She is not to teach or usurp authority over the man but to be in subjection to him. Working man is pleased to find a neat house, warm meal, and a neat wife awaiting him when he arrives home. Woman fulfills her role when she is essentially herself. The attempt to act the part of a man is a sorry decline in womanhood. As “the weaker vessel” (I Pet. 3:7), the woman has an entirely different role in life than the man.

Marriage is the greatest natural unity of man and woman: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). This ordinance forms the root of that love by which man loves the woman as himself and becomes the greatest type of love and life which exists between Christ and the church. This is explained by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 5. Wives are to submit themselves to their husbands as unto the Lord because the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church. The church is subject to Christ, and wives must be subject to their own husbands.

When a young man marries, he is to leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. The house of his father and mother must be relinquished, and the man should live and cohabit with his wife. He continues to honor father and mother. The more he knows about the new relationship between himself and his wife, the greater his appreciation for the relationship of his mother and father. His new relationship is more binding than the former. Man cleaves unto his wife, and they are one flesh.

Man is blessed with a counterpart in the creation of woman. If solitude depresses man, it is because life is solitary without a helpmate. If woman dreads living alone, it is because her life is without an aim unless she can be a helpmate. If woman was not made for man, Scripture would be meaningless and human nature would have missed its aim. This would indicate that woman has been called to one work and prepared for another. Woman cannot be true to her sex unless she fulfills God’s original plan for her. Her true purpose in life can be fulfilled only when she is divinely declared one of God’s elect and divinely prepared by regeneration. Her ultimate purpose will be fulfilled when she is glorified and divinely presented to the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

MAN AND WOMAN IN THE FALL

Satan was the instrument of woman's fall, but he did not approach her by saying, "I am the deceiver." He assumed creature likeness to deceive Eve with his subtlety. Paul used Eve's deception to warn the Corinthians: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3). The Greek word for "subtilty" is *panourgia*, which means cleverness or craftiness. The first victim of Satan's cleverness was Eve, not Adam: "...Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Tim. 2:14). Eve acted outside her God-appointed role in life. Where was Adam during that time? Eve's insubordination to Adam made her an easy target. She was an instrument of Adam's transgression. Furthermore, as the mother of all living, she brought reproach upon all women following her. Although woman can by God's grace bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, the punishments announced after the fall are not removed by the mediation of Jesus Christ. In electing grace, God removes the eternal punishment but not the temporal punishment, such as woman's sorrow in childbirth and subordination to her husband.

Eve was disobedient when she listened to Satan. She had been taken from man and was for man, but she acted independently of her husband. She became by her independent act an open target for Satan's craftiness. Satan's cleverness was manifested at the very beginning of his encounter with Eve by questioning, "...Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:1). He neither asserted error nor contradicted truth but sought to put a question mark in Eve's mind. Having dropped an evil seed of doubt into her mind, he would allow it to germinate and come forth as sin. A question by one who is tempting another is never properly motivated. The psychology of it would fill a book. Have you ever tried to gauge the power of a seemingly innocent question? The fires of suspicion and doubt can be ignited by a mere question. Anyone entertaining a discussion with a person about evident truth is asking for trouble.

Satan's one projected question evidently caused a chain of questions in Eve's mind. She could not forget the forbidden tree. Why would God deprive us of the fruit of that one tree? Does God not want us to gain more knowledge? Are we being deprived of our rights? Is God not interfering with our freedom? Since we are free to eat the fruit of all the other trees, why not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Satan's evil question kindled a flame of doubt and was followed by fuel added to the flame: "...Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4, 5). Satan progressed from craftiness, to lying, to slander, and to deception.

Eve's mistake was being insubordinate to her husband, and Adam's mistake was listening to Eve rather than God. God had forbidden Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. His injunctions include the prohibition of all that would lead to disregarding His commands. Eve's lingering gaze incited desire for the forbidden: "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). The Greek word for "lust" is *epithumia*, which means lust or desire. Eve not only took the fruit and ate thereof, but she also gave to Adam and he ate of it. No person is satisfied to sin alone because he feels more

comfortable with company. Adam and Eve learned experientially the meaning of spiritual death and that Satan is a liar. God had said, “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Satan’s addition of the word “not” — “...Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4) — manifested his lying nature (John 8:44).

Eve was second in creation but first in sin: “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Tim. 2:13, 14). Although Adam was not deceived, he became the respondent rather than the aggressor. The order of the home was reversed. Nevertheless, the human race fell in Adam, not Eve, because headship pertains to the man: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church...” (Eph. 5:23). Adam was Eve’s head, even though he did not act like it in the fall. He was also the natural head of the old creation: “For since by man came death...For as in Adam all die...” (I Cor. 15:21, 22).

The immediate result of the fall was that Adam and Eve knew they were naked: “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons....I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen. 3:7, 10). Modern artists offend against purity in their portrayal of the Bible’s statement concerning the nakedness of Adam and Eve in Eden: “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:25). Before the corruption of human nature in the fall, Adam and Eve were not ashamed; but after the fall they knew they were naked. Their knowledge went deeper than that of skin nakedness to the nakedness of their evil souls before God. They knew they had sinned, and they were also aware that God knew they had sinned. They wore no man-made clothing before the fall, but they were not without the covering of uprightness (Eccl. 7:29). The absence of a covering is contrary to nature for the living creatures of the earth. Each bird has its plumage, and each animal has its coat. Therefore, man in his created uprightness was not without his effulgence as the ruler over the lower creation.

There are different kinds of shame—natural, gracious, and penal. After the fall, Adam and Eve manifested natural shame. Knowing they were destitute of original uprightness, they sewed fig leaves together for a covering. The natural man thinks himself sufficiently clothed if the nakedness he can see is covered from the sight of his eyes. He does not realize that God searches the heart and tries the reins (Jer. 17:9, 10; Heb. 4:13). The gracious shame of repentance is that God alone can bring all of man’s nakedness to the sight of his eyes. By grace David could say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23, 24). Penal shame is that man unashamed of his sins will be put to shame by them. Persons who manifest no shame in exposing their naked bodies are not in their right minds. Mark and Luke describe a demoniac, possessing an unclean spirit, who was naked, untamable, and who lived in the burial caves. Christ drove the unclean spirit out of the man. He was then seen “sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind” (Mark 5:15).

The glory of uprightness was changed to the shame of sin in the fall. Before the fall man possessed such emotions as love, fear, and hope. These were kept in order and peace by original uprightness. However, this order was destroyed in the fall. The same emotions remained, but their use was changed. Love for God became self-love; fear became evil; and hope was lost in distrust (John 5:42; Rom. 3:18; John 8:45-47).

Satan has turned woman's God-given virtue into vice since the fall. The heart of the unregenerate woman is the Devil's treasure. Instead of her desire being toward her husband, woman has become restless. Her submissiveness has been turned into domination. She has become haughty rather than humble. Her gracefulness has become flirtatious. Her love has degenerated into self-will. She seeks to glorify herself rather than her husband. She delights more in the flattery of a stranger than in the approval of her husband. Her search is for interests outside of her home.

Man cannot lay all the blame at the feet of the woman for the evil course she has taken. The actions of men and women can be traced back to Adam and Eve in the fall. Adam and Eve both sought to justify their actions by shifting the blame to another. God asked Adam, "...Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" (Gen. 3:11). Adam replied, "...The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Gen. 3:12). Adam's reply has a worse connotation than that of merely shifting the blame to Eve. He said, "...The woman whom thou gavest to be with me...." Thus, he accused God—"if Thou Thyself had not given Eve to me, I would not have sinned." Adam went further than that heinous reply to add sin to sin by saying, "...she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." His admission of sin began with accusing the woman of being at fault and concluded with God being the cause of his sin. This is typical of the average admission (not confession) today. Every time Adam opened his mouth, he added sin to sin. His was an admission, but not a confession, of sin.

Scripture clearly demonstrates that the Holy Spirit alone makes God's word a blessing to people. Therefore, the word of God plus the Spirit of regeneration enables one not only to confess his sins but also to grow up into Christ in all things. Contrarily, the word of God without the Holy Spirit will cause one to "blow up" and try to justify himself by shifting the blame to another, like Adam and Eve did after the fall.

Scriptures give evidence that woman has been willingly exploited by the man. Lamech was the first violator of the original law of marriage; he took both Ada (name means, "he adorned") and Zillah (name means "he wasted") in the first polygamous relationship. He adorned Ada and wasted Zillah (Gen. 4:19). The law of marriage broken by the line of Cain was bad, but to be broken by the line of Seth was much worse. Hagar caused disturbance in the household of Abraham (Gen. 21), and Leah's deception caused trouble in the life of Jacob (Gen. 29 ff.). The people of Israel were corrupted by the daughters of Moab (Num. 25). Since Balaam could not curse Israel, he would seek to corrupt her. This has often proven to be a more successful device. Hence, the friendliness and invitations of the world are more to be feared than its curses. The daughters of Canaan led Israel into wickedness and idolatry (Judges 3:5-7). Delilah brought shame to Samson, a willing subject. After Samson went in unto a harlot, the Philistines persuaded Delilah, for whom Samson had expressed love, to entice him in order to learn the source of his strength (Judges 16). Bathsheba, with her feminine beauty, led a willing David into adultery and murder (II Sam. 11). Jezebel led Ahab to sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord (I Kings 21). Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel by birth and in disposition, sought to secure the kingdom for herself. She must have been the president of the "Woman's Liberation Movement." This wicked woman thought she had secured her position by destroying the royal seed, but Joash had escaped her bloody purpose. When she learned this, she cried, "Treason, Treason." Poor innocent Athaliah! When the people saw she was a usurper and a tyrant, she was put to death where she had committed her bloody crime (II Kings 11). Herodias led Herod to behead John the Baptist (Mark 6). John had revealed their adulterous relationship: "...It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18). Please

observe that this statement was made after they had separated from their previous partners and married. Paul and Barnabas were persecuted because of the religious and honorable Jewish women (Acts 13:50).

MAN AND WOMAN AFTER THE FALL

The indissolubility of marriage is an objectionable Biblical subject in a fallen and permissive society. Opposition to the indissolubility of marriage comes from three sources: (1) persons who are contemplating divorce, (2) divorced persons trying to justify remarriage, and (3) preachers who are trying to keep everybody happy. The one thing prevalent in all three is the natural takes precedence over the supernatural. When persons look for a loophole to get out of a marriage contract, they admit the hardness of their hearts. Furthermore, they are more interested in concession than in God's institution of marriage.

The subject of divorce and remarriage has been debated for centuries, but so has every major Bible subject. There are theologians on both sides of what appears to be a complicated issue; therefore, a person can find human support in whatever he wants to believe. However, the real question is whether one can find Biblical support for the termination of a marriage on any ground other than death. Persons on both sides of the issue think they have the support of Scripture. Hence, the final settlement of the issue awaits either the judgment seat of Christ for many Christians or the great white throne judgment for nonchristians.

Divorce has become so prevalent in modern society and even in professing Christendom that exposure to Biblical principles is absolutely imperative. However, this will solve the problem in neither society nor churches. Nevertheless, it is necessary for God-called ministers to be obedient in declaring the whole counsel of God. God alone can turn the tide of a corrupt society, and only the application of Biblical principles by the Holy Spirit in sanctification can alter the sad situation in the churches of Jesus Christ.

Marriage is a divine institution that pertains only to the earthly existence of mankind: "For in the resurrection they (men and women) neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30). Marriage is a contract into which one man and one woman voluntarily enter; nevertheless, God holds them responsible in it. The statement "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9) must be viewed as a divine institution. To view marriage from any other perspective does not alter the fact that it is God's appointment. Divorce is purely human. There has been a perverted view of the institution of marriage since the fall of man, but God is no more the author of its perversion than He is guilty of man's fall. The Greek verb for "joined together" is an aorist active indicative of *sudzeugnumi*, which means to yoke or join together. The aorist active is a timeless verb in this context that is used culminatively, emphasizing the finality of the action.

Marriage as a divine institution is under heavy attack today. Satan knows that his time is short. Therefore, he is presenting the world with a false christ, a false gospel, and a false spirit (II Cor. 11:1-4). Furthermore, he is proclaiming a false union of man and woman apart from the divine principle of marriage. One of the signs Christ gave of His second advent is found in Matthew 24:37-39: "But as the days of No-e were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the

day that No-e entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” There is nothing wrong with eating, drinking, and marrying in themselves; but obesity from eating, intoxication from drinking, and unlawfulness in marriage copulations are signs of Christ’s soon return. Luke added to this a description of the “days of Lot” (Luke 17:28). One of the worst of the passions that enslaved the people of Sodom and Gomorrah was the corruption of sex. What was true then is even more true today because of the many methods employed to reach the eyes of youth and adults alike.

Those to whom the word of God has been committed are obliged to make themselves clear at the very outset concerning the required attitude of the divorced Christian who is not married, the divorced and remarried believer, the married Christian who has not been divorced, and the believer who is unmarried. (1) The grace of God is sufficient for the unmarried divorced Christian to be a spiritual eunuch for the cause of Christ (Matt. 19:12). Since the mind is the chief factor in the lust of the flesh, the believer is to set his affection on things above (Col. 3:2) and to think on spiritual things (Phil. 4:5-13). (2) The divorced and remarried believer cannot undo what has been done. Hence, “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (I Cor. 7:20). Christians are the subjects of the two callings of grace and providence. (3) The married Christian who has never been divorced must guard against a self-righteous, holier-than-thou attitude. It is only by God’s grace you have not made the same mistake. (4) The believer who is yet unmarried must marry only a Christian with the full understanding that marriage is God’s institution for life. (See Mark 10:9; Rom. 7:2, 3; I Cor. 7:2-11; Eph. 5:22-33.)

Next to the marriage of Jesus Christ to His church, there is nothing more wonderful than the marriage of two Christian people, which is its type. Marriage, however, is not always a honeymoon experience. It has been said, “Marriage is an ocean of emotion surrounded by an expanse of expense.” The type differs from the marriage of Christ to His church in that the earthly institution of marriage has its trials and sorrows as well as its triumphs and joys. Conversely, the heavenly institution of the marriage of Christ to His church will be one eternal state of happiness and bliss.

The institution of marriage is a contract between one man and one woman for life. Since this is the divine institution of marriage, no civil or ecclesiastical body can prescribe a higher rule of morality. Lax views on marriage lead not only to social corruption but also to spiritual declension in the church.

Instruction for the divorced, divorced and remarried, married who are not divorced, and the unmarried is the same for nonchristians as it is for Christians with one exception. Since grace is given by God alone, no appeal can be made to the divorced and unmarried nonchristian whereby he or she by God’s grace can become a spiritual eunuch for the cause of Christ. God does not have two standards for the institution of marriage—one for the saved and another for the unsaved. The saved and the unsaved should be approached differently because one has a spiritual mind, and the other does not. Although the unsaved do not have spiritual minds with which to reason, God’s standard of marriage must never be lowered.

Marriage is to be held in honor by all, but it is not for all. There are circumstances that hinder marriage. Paul spoke of the “present distress [necessity]” which made it difficult for some to enter into a marriage contract (I Cor. 7:25-28). The Greek verb for “present” in this statement is a perfect active participle of *enistemi*, which means to be at hand or to be present. The word “distress

[necessity]” is the accusative of *anagke*, which is a word referring to either external circumstances—such as distress, trial or persecution—or to an inward constraint or compulsion. The apostle was showing that in view of the world crisis, the unmarried man should not seek to get married. He would not commit a sin by marrying, but he and his family would have difficulty. One who is already married should not seek to be loosed from the marriage contract. The verbs “bound” (*deo*) and “loosed” (*luo*) are perfect passive indicative, which indicates settled states (I Cor. 7:27). Therefore, the verb “loosed” refers not to a divorced person but to one who has never married.

Not only are there circumstances that hinder marriage, but the divine institution is not designed for all. After Christ had given His answer to the Jews who tried to trap Him on the subject of divorce and remarriage, the disciples concluded that such teaching made the institution of marriage unadvisable (Matt. 19:3-10). Jesus Christ answered them by saying, “...All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. 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” (Matt. 19:11, 12).

The Greek word for “eunuch” is *eunouchos*, which means one who has charge of the bedchamber or one without a sexual drive. Christ spoke of three kinds of eunuchs: (1) Some were born eunuchs. They were born with a congenital sexual defect. (2) Some were made eunuchs by men. They were physically castrated (II Kings 20:18; Esther 2:14). (3) Some made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. These were not sexually impotent. Like Paul, they were willing to be celibates in the interest of the kingdom. The eunuchs who fit one of the aforementioned categories will have no problem accepting the conclusion of the disciples that “...it is not good to marry” (Matt. 19:10).

MAN AND WOMAN IN MARRIAGE

There are differing views, most of which are false, concerning what actually constitutes marriage. All the opinions embraced by men can be reduced to a few major concepts. These will be analyzed in the light of Biblical data. The subject of marriage is one of the most emotional subjects to be either taught or printed; nevertheless, it must be preached and published to counteract the degrading views that most religionists and nonreligionists alike have of God's institution. Many have corrupt concepts of marriage because they regard it as a human institution. People who have such a low view of marriage can easily believe in divorce.

Marriage is the only institution established before the fall of man. However, the blessing of marriage has been degraded by mankind in his depraved condition. Thus, the corrupted nature of mankind has been used by Satan to debase the original meaning of marriage. Although God's original institution of marriage has been degraded, His principle of marriage remains the same for all people and for all time. God's principles, as well as His character, are immutable.

The Divine Principle Of Marriage

Without discussing the various and contradictory interpretations of Romans 7, the point of emphasis in this study is the principle of marriage. Paul used this principle to illustrate the important doctrinal truth of the elect's severance from the law and being joined to Jesus Christ. The apostle to the Gentiles assumed that the brethren at Rome were fully cognizant of the principle that the "law" (*nomos*), whether Mosaic or Gentile, has mastery (present active indicative of *kurieuo*, which means to rule or have dominion over) over a man as long as he lives (Rom. 7:1). The word "law" in chapter 7 is used twenty-three times and has five different usages: (1) in a general sense (vv. 1, 4-6), (2) as the bond of marriage (vv. 2, 3), (3) as the moral law (vv. 7-14), (4) as the doctrine of God (v. 22), and (5) as the principle of sin (v. 23).

Paul's illustration of marriage is unclassified. This means marriage is neither assigned to a certain category nor restricted because of certain conditions. There is only one divine standard for marriage for all mankind: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom. 7:2, 3). Three things must be observed in Paul's unclassified illustration: (1) The marriage union is bound by law. The tense of the verb "bound" is important. It is a perfect passive indicative of *deo*, which means to bind. Paul's use of the perfect tense signifies that the woman has been bound by the marriage contract, and she will remain thus as long as her husband lives. The indicative mood confirms the reality of the verb's action. (2) The marriage bond is dissolved only by death: "...if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." The particle "if" (*ean*) is a third class condition used with the subjunctive "dies" (aorist active subjunctive of *apothnesko*, which means to die), indicating a possibility. The Greek

verb for “loosed” is a perfect passive indicative of *katargeo*, which means to render null, to abrogate or cancel, or to free from. Hence, upon the death of her husband, the woman has been made free and stands free from all obligations of the marriage. The words “bound” and “loosed” are perfect passive indicative verbs. The perfect tense refers to the completed action with a resulting state of being. (3) The woman’s second marriage is made possible by her husband’s death.

The legality of remarriage by one who has been “loosed” by the death of his or her mate in Paul’s illustration must be considered in relation to the Biblical truth he was proclaiming. As there are many false religious unions, there are many illegal marriages. Paul had shown that every person is united to the law from which he cannot divorce himself. One who thinks he can be joined to Jesus Christ while bound by law or tradition is deceived. This would be an illegal union, but there is no unlawful union in the family of God. (See Mark 7:1-13.) The apostle did not use an illustration that was ineffective. As death alone can free one from the bond of marriage, death to the law that has dominion over a person must precede his union with Jesus Christ.

The principle of marriage is a lifetime contract from which none can divorce himself. Any Christian who has made the mistake of divorcing and remarrying before God saved him will not resent the truth presented on this subject. God’s union of Adam and Eve is the established principle for all time: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave [be glued together] unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). Paul was aware of this principle, and the Holy Spirit inspired him to categorically state it in Romans 7:2-3. Whatever is stated in any other passage of Scripture cannot contradict this principle.

There is no contradiction between references where divorce is mentioned and references where the Biblical principle of marriage was first established (Gen. 2:24) and later confirmed by the Holy Spirit through Paul (Rom. 7:2, 3). One would be foolish to think the inspired apostle botched his illustration. Those who look for a loophole to satisfy their selfish desire run to three verses of Scripture (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; I Cor. 7:15). They fail to explain why “except for fornication” is used only by Matthew and refuse to show that divorce and remarriage are not under consideration in I Corinthians. These Scripture passages will be dealt with extensively in subsequent lessons, but that is not the purpose of this study. This lesson is to point out that neither the Lord Jesus Christ nor Paul could contradict himself.

The following erroneous reasons, which are palatable to a promiscuous society, have been given for divorcing and remarrying: (1) When one is saved, he is free to remarry no matter how many times he has been married before he was saved; this is based on all sin of the Christian being under the blood (Rev. 1:5). (2) Fornication or adultery gives the innocent person the right to remarry (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). (3) The desertion of a married believer by the unbelieving partner gives the believer the right to remarry (I Cor. 7:15). (4) Divorce dissolves the marriage relationship, giving the divorced person the right to remarry (Deut. 24:1-4). (5) Since death breaks the marriage contract, it can be broken (Rom. 7:2, 3). Thus, while it may not be legitimately broken, it can be illegitimately broken. If divorce secures nothing more than legal separation, the persons involved would be deprived of the remedy for the lack of self-control expressed in I Corinthians 7:2.

This unchaste society is anxious to quote the law of Moses in defense of its promiscuity. Why does it fail to look at the penal side of the law? The following things should be considered: (1) Under the law, adultery did not give the innocent mate the right to divorce. The law condemned the guilty

person to death (Lev. 20; Num. 5). Hence, death, rather than adultery, terminated the marriage. (2) Under the law, adultery is not mentioned in the matter of divorce. (3) Under the law, Moses suffered divorce in the case of fornication (Deut. 24). The purpose of Moses' legislation was to regulate and thus to make less severe what he could not fully control.

Divorce overlooks the very nature established in marriage: (1) Divorce subverts the provision ordained by God for an orderly home. Marriage is an arrangement for life, and divorce opposes that arrangement. (2) Divorce destroys the provision of nature for the welfare of children for which both father and mother are needed. (3) Divorce leaves no opportunity for repentance and reconciliation. (4) Since divorce is contrary to God's original order, man, whether preacher, lawyer, or judge, must not originate a different arrangement.

Contrary to the Biblical teaching on the subject of marriage, a well-known "Christian psychologist" said three things must be considered in a marriage relationship: (1) intelligence, (2) education, and (3) religion. One can expect the order given by most psychologists to be contrary to Scripture. According to the aforementioned psychological order, before a young man or woman thinks about getting serious with each other, they should have an IQ test. If they are not on the same level of intelligence, they should stop seeing each other. Furthermore, on the first date, a young couple should make sure they are on the same educational wave link. According to most psychologists, the couple should then think about religion. Their opinion is that religion follows intelligence and education because it is of lesser importance. Religion in which men profit may come last, whether it is Judaism or any other man-made belief (Gal. 1:14); but religion which is pure and undefiled before God must take precedence over everything (James 1:27). The Greek word for "religion" in Galatians 1:14 is *Ioudaismos*, which means Judaism; but the word "religion" in James 1:27 is *threskeia*, which means religion or piety. This Greek noun is used only four times in the New Testament (Acts 26:5; Col. 2:18; James 1:26, 27). The adjectives "pure" and "undefiled" distinguish true religion from worthless ritualistic practices. Hence, psychologists may be permitted to place worthless ritualistic practices last; but Christianity based upon the objective truth of God must take precedence over intelligence and education. When persons are rightly related to divine truth, everything else will fall into place. On the other hand, a couple may have much in common intellectually, but the absence of relationship to divine truth will lead to serious problems.

False Views Of Marriage Considered

The following is a discussion of the false views of marriage embraced by people today:

FIRST—Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church designed primarily for propagation. The word "sacrament" is not a Biblical word, but it is derived from the Latin word *sacramentum*. Hence, the word "sacrament" has come into use in ecclesiastical and theological language to indicate religious events. Roman Catholic theology has fixed the number of sacraments on the basis of its view that they constitute a series of supernatural acts that infuse supernatural grace into all of life from beginning to end. Her theology affirms that the sacraments are outward (visible) signs instituted by Christ to give grace. Their seven sacraments include baptism, confirmation, penance, holy eucharist, holy orders (the sacred duties of bishops, priests, and other ministers of the church), matrimony, and extreme unction. They allege that the sacraments are the seven mouths into which the stream of divine life of grace, which has its spring in the cross of

Christ, empties itself in the wilderness of human existence. Therefore, Roman Catholics believe that sacraments possess efficacy because they are acts of Christ Himself.

Our purpose is not to discuss all seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. They have been mentioned to show that marriage, according to Romanism, is a means of conferring grace upon the marrying couple. Baptism and penance are called sacraments of the dead. They were made to give God's life to souls which are dead in sin. Baptism is for pre-baptismal sins and penance is for post-baptismal sins. Since Roman Catholics believe supernatural grace given in the sacrament of baptism can be lost through mortal sin, they devised the sacrament of penance for restoration to a saved standing. The other five sacraments are called the sacraments of the living. Their purpose is to give more grace to souls already living in a state of grace. Hence, marriage, according to the Roman Catholic Church, is a sacrament for those who are living (members of the Roman Catholic Church) who desire to have more grace bestowed upon them. What a shame that the pope, cardinals, bishops, and priests miss out on this added grace! Although these religious leaders claim to be married to the church, there is no Scriptural proof that any of God's redeemed were married to the church. But, there is Biblical proof of the redeemed in the church being espoused to Christ as chaste virgins (II Cor. 11:1-4). The Bible gives no evidence of religious leaders being married to the church. But Scripture teaches that the church which is espoused to Christ will be married to Him in the future (Rev. 19:7).

God's principle of marriage is highly esteemed by those who have the proper respect for the One who instituted it. However, some make marriage to mean more than Scripture allows. It is neither a means of more grace nor is it designed primarily for propagation, which involves the idea of mating. Mating being the primary purpose of marriage is a low view of the divine institution of marriage. Marriage includes the propagation of the human race, but it means more than that.

To say that matrimony is the sacrament by which a baptized couple (man and woman) is indissolubly bound for life and by which they receive grace to perform their duties must be examined. One will miss the thrust of the statement if he ignores the Roman Catholic meaning of baptism. According to Catholicism, baptism by the Roman Catholic Church alone is valid. This is the reason a mixed marriage between a Catholic and noncatholic may be annulled, and the Catholic mate may remarry in the church. In the eyes of Catholicism, there was no first marriage. The couple was guilty of fornication.

The Roman Catholic Church requires every Catholic to be married in the presence of an authorized priest and two witnesses. A Catholic whose ceremony is performed by either a justice of the peace or a protestant minister is not married, but lives in sin. God will not forgive him unless he is married by a priest. If this is impossible because one of the mates refuses, the other should separate, even though children may be involved. Catholics are forbidden to be present at a noncatholic ceremony. They are also forbidden to send gifts to a Catholic who is married at a civil or noncatholic ceremony. If the marriage takes place at a religious ceremony and the Catholic person attends, he is excommunicated.

When Roman Catholic teaching on the subject of marriage is taken to its logical conclusion, there were no true marriages from Adam and Eve to Peter—who they claim was the first pope. Did God who instituted marriage before the fall reinstate it by committing it to the Catholic church? There is nothing in the New Testament about either the sacrament of marriage or its being made valid by the

clergy. Therefore, men who do not speak according to God's word are in spiritual darkness (Is. 8:20; I Pet. 4:11).

SECOND—In Mormon theology, marriage is a sacred union, divinely ordained. Under the authority of the Mormon priesthood, marriage is believed to be not only for life but also for eternity. They teach that two types of marriage are possible: (1) Temple marriages are performed by only a few men delegated with such authority. (2) Bishops and other officers may perform ordinary civil marriages. Their opinion is that those married in a temple are sealed to each other for eternity, and they will have the privilege of completing the full measure of their existence by having a posterity as innumerable as the stars of heaven. Whereas, those not married in a temple are married for time. Their marriage will be dissolved by death, and they will be single in eternity. They will live as angels but not as gods.

Mormons claim that until the time of Joseph Smith, marriage ceremonies performed by ministers stated “until death do you part.” However, with the revelation God gave to Smith, the Lord showed that the marriage covenant should be for both time and eternity. Their opinion is that “until death do you part” is a man-made doctrine. They assert that provision has been made for the dead. Living children can be vicariously married for the dead parents, even as they can be baptized for them. They are persuaded that with this fact, Mormons have something not only for which to live but also for which to die because God has promised the restitution of all things.

This heretical institution declares that although polygamy was sanctioned by revelation from God, Mormons admit that they will comply with the ruling of the United States Supreme Court. In this case, “revelation” does not mean much to Mormons. Observe the difference between them and Paul (Gal. 1:10-12; Acts 26:19).

Scripture plainly states that marriage is for man's benefit in time: “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” (Matt. 22:30). Hence, the saints in heaven will be like the angels in one respect—not married. As angels do not have children, neither will glorified saints in eternity. Hence, the idea of the posterity of Mormons who marry in a temple being innumerable as the stars is the wishful thinking of perverted minds.

The Mormon's interpretation of Christ's answer to the Sadducees is contradictory to their claim that children can be vicariously married for their dead parents. They say what Christ meant was that in the resurrection there will be no marrying or giving in marriage because the marital status must be settled before that time. If the marriage status is settled before the resurrection, how can children be vicariously married for them after the resurrection?

THIRD—Marriage is a union in which two persons become one flesh. Love not only is the marriage of the affections but is also two bodies coming together in copulation, thus becoming one flesh. Marriage, therefore, is no mystical supernatural bond. Hence, the idea of a spiritual bond that cannot be broken creates a mythical bond that does not exist. The same bond of one body and one flesh is used to speak of one who is joined to a harlot and of a man joined to his wife. Therefore, this cannot be a spiritual bond. Those who advocate that the union is physical inform us that marriage is capable of being put asunder because it is an agreement between a man and a woman. They explain that marriage is not two agreements made one so that if one mate defaults, the other lives as though he or she is married forever; furthermore, one of the mates in a marriage contract can default

because Christ said, “What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6).

The first thing to be observed in the aforementioned view of marriage is the meaning of “one flesh.” This term is used by God at the institution of marriage (Gen. 2:24), by Jesus Christ when discussing the subject of marriage with the Pharisees (Matt. 19:5, 6; Mark 10:8), and by Paul when talking about an illegal copulation (I Cor. 6:16) and when discussing marriage (Eph. 5:31). God’s original institution of marriage provided for man and woman—not man and man or woman and woman. Moreover, no allowance was made for either polygamy or divorce. Attraction for the opposite sex is a natural part of God’s creation, but attraction for more than one woman or for a person of the same sex is unnatural. The unnatural relationship is the fruit of sin. Contrary to the opinion of our sin-sick society, unnatural relationships are not other forms of life-style that must be recognized. Our generation is filled with people who are “Without natural affection” (II Tim. 3:3). The Greek word for this statement is *astorgos*, which means devoid of natural affection. Paul used this same adjective in Romans 1:31. (See Rom. 1:24-31.) Thus, *astorgos* covers every kind of unnatural relationship, whether it is a homosexual relationship, having a multiplicity of women or men, or whatever.

The “one flesh” of Genesis 2:24 describes copulation in lawful marriage, but Paul used the same term to describe an unlawful sex union: “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh” (I Cor. 6:16). This proves that marriage is more than copulation. If this were not true, one would be married to every person with whom he or she has had an unlawful sexual relationship. Paul warned the Corinthians about the misuse of their bodies which belong to the Lord. Therefore, believers must flee sexual impurity because that would be sinning against their own bodies. The whole person—spirit, soul, and body—belongs to Christ. Since the immaterial part of man has been redeemed, he must mortify his material part as long as he is a resident in time. The body will be redeemed in the resurrection.

There is more to marriage than lawful copulation. Judging from the manner of life of a sin-sick society, one would be led to believe that sex is the most important ingredient in marriage. There are several unions to be considered in a marriage contract:

1. There is the union of affections. The marriage of affections must not be confused with lusts. When a man and woman marry to legally satisfy their lusts, they are headed for big trouble. There is a lot of living in between the times when sexual passions are relieved. The word for “burn” in I Corinthians 7:9 is a present passive infinite of *puroo*, which means to be inflamed with passion. Unsaved people have natural but not *agape* love, which is the stronger of the two. The natural affection of two Christian people united in love for each other is reinforced by the love of God that has been shed abroad in their hearts (Rom. 5:5). True love destroys selfishness. Christians recognize that man and woman are the two halves of God’s image and there is no higher mode of living on earth than that of husband and wife in the Lord. Hence, their union is a type of Christ and His church. Persons who are united by only natural affections cannot understand this spiritual truth.

2. There is the union of commitment to each other in what we call engagement. Paul used the word “espoused,” an aorist middle indicative of *harmodzo*, which means to espouse or betroth (II Cor. 11:2). The middle voice indicates Paul’s interest in the Corinthians. His responsibility was to train and prepare them for marriage. To the Jews, this union of commitment was as binding as the actual

marriage. Engagement should be a vital part of the marriage process of two people who have expressed the union of their affections for each other.

3. There is the union of marriage. This occurs when the man and woman who have expressed their love for each other and have committed themselves to each other by becoming engaged are joined in legal agreement. Jesus Christ was preeminent at the marriage in Cana. He added joy to the occasion by providing wine, the symbol of divine joy. Apart from Christ, human joy will soon fail because there is no lasting joy outside of Jesus Christ. Marriage was the first institution ordained by God, and Christ's first miracle was performed at a marriage. The institution of marriage is the most beautiful analogy to the relationship of Christ with His church. As man existed before the woman, Christ existed before the church. As woman was made for man, the church is being made for Christ. Furthermore, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, man is to love his wife and care for her.

4. The two are made one flesh by copulation. However, copulation does not constitute marriage. It is only one, but not the most important, ingredient of marriage. Marriage is consummated before copulation, or else Scripture would not say, "...there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee..." (John 2:1). The Greek reads *gamos* (a wedding or marriage festival) *egeneto* (aorist middle indicative of *ginomai*—actual point action past time). Furthermore, Joseph and Mary were referred to as man and wife before they came together (Matt. 1:18-20). A union without the bond of affection plus marriage would be no different from being joined to a harlot (I Cor. 6:15, 16).

The idea of marriage consisting of mutual agreements between man and woman, one or both of which may be broken, fails to prove that God's unchanging principle of marriage is severed. One who takes the view that marriage is nothing more than a human institution could believe that marriage consists merely of two mutual agreements. However, one who considers that God must be regarded in the marriage contract admits that the institution of marriage is of God. God's institution of marriage remains the same regardless of the unfaithfulness of either or both of the mates involved in a marriage contract. Marriage is more than the bond of affections between a man and a woman which is consummated by a legal bond. What about the law of God? (Rom. 7:2, 3).

FOURTH—God has nothing to do with the marriage of unsaved people because true marriage is a symbol of Christ and the church. Contrary to this assertion, when two unsaved people are united in marriage, God binds them in an indissoluble bond. The information that Christ gave the Pharisees in Matthew 19:3-9 and Mark 10:1-12 was to the unsaved (Matt. 23:13-33). Hence, marriage is a permanent monogamous relationship for saved and unsaved alike.

The fall of man had no more effect on God's original principle of marriage than on man's responsibility. The appeal made today by many is that apart from grace man has no ability to comply with God's original law of marriage. Their purely human reasoning is that what marriage ought to be and what it is are two different things; furthermore, marriage is not a god to crush man but God's provision for fallen man. Contrary to this erroneous appeal, the following things are true:

1. Scripture is clear that no man in his depraved condition is either willing or able to comply with God's righteous principles. Hence, he is not only unable to be willing but unwilling to be able.

2. God has made provision in grace for the elect. All informed Christians recognize that this does not release the nonelect from personal responsibility.

3. The original institution of marriage before the fall no more releases the nonelect from the principle of marriage than the fall releases them from responsibility. The immutable God has established divine principles from which He can never change, and marriage is one of those principles. God's righteous laws are for the elect and the nonelect. Therefore, if the nonelect are not responsible before God's righteous laws, the door is wide open for every kind of evil for them. This kind of conclusion is in direct opposition to Holy Scripture: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:4, 5). "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4).

MAN'S AND WOMAN'S PERVERSION OF MARRIAGE

The first perversion of the divine principle of marriage recorded in the Holy Scriptures came from the line of Cain. Lamech, a descendant of Cain, was the first to break God's institution of marriage by introducing the sin of polygamy (Gen. 4:19-24). Since Lamech's name means "bringing low," one should have no problem understanding that everything with which the descendants of Cain were involved would be below the divine standard. One woman for one man did not satisfy the evil heart of Lamech. Hence, he took unto himself two wives, Adah and Zillah.

Adah and Zillah were the first two women involved in a polygamous relationship. Adah means "he adorned" or "ornament." She gave birth to Jabal, whose name means "a stream" and Jubal, whose name means "he will be carried." Zillah means "he wasted" or "shadiness." She bore Tubal-Cain, whose name means "thou wilt be brought of Cain," and his sister Naamah, whose name means "pleasantness." The women in the line of Cain came into greater prominence in world recognition than the women in the line of Seth. They were city dwellers and spent more time adorning their persons, as Adah's name indicates. Hence, they gave themselves to the cultivation and practice of feminine allurements. That which had its beginning with Adah and Zillah has increased to an alarming degree in our modern, sin-sick society. Many of the advertisements today use the flattering appeal of women to attract customers to their respective products, and silly women enjoy being exploited in that manner.

The commentary on Lamech's polygamous relationship is shocking. He brought Adah low by adorning her. He brought Zillah low by wasting her; this concluded in her daughter's temporary pleasantness. Worldly adornment and allurements are a waste because they give only temporary pleasure. Hence, the pleasures of sin are for only a season. What is time in comparison to eternity? By a God-given faith, Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" and chose to suffer with God's people; he knew that the pleasures of sin were only temporary (Heb. 11:24, 25). Unlike Moses, Lamech did not have God-given faith that could penetrate the fog of depravity and see "him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27). The faith of God's elect can see beyond the temporal to behold the eternal Christ and to esteem His riches greater than all the temporary pleasures and treasures of time. The reward of grace is internal, external, and eternal. Conversely, the pleasures of sin are internal and external but short-lived. A poet described the pleasures of sin: "Pleasures are like poppies spread—you seize the flower, its bloom is shed; or like the snowfall in the river—a moment white, then melts forever."

Breaking God's law of marriage leads to all kinds of evil. This was evidenced in the life of Lamech, and it is obviously manifested in today's society. Reference is made within the context of Genesis 4 to Lamech's murders and his taking refuge in Cain's crime. He justified himself to his wives, perverted God's forbearance, and boasted of immunity from punishment for crimes superior to that of Cain: "And Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me; If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold" (Gen. 4:23, 24 NASB).

Many people in today's promiscuous society live immoral lives and say, "God loves everybody." The present age makes the time of Lamech appear mediocre. The frequently mentioned "new morality" is a manifestation of Jude 8: "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." The context of this statement by Jude must not be overlooked. He had just made reference to Sodom and Gomorrah and those who indulged in gross immorality. He then said that in the same manner, the dreaming ones defile the flesh, reject authority, and rail at majesties. Promiscuity is "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin..." (II Pet. 2:14). Hence, judgment against sin and condemnation are ignored.

Although the actions of depraved people continue to go from bad to worse, the principles of a holy law and a righteous judgment remain the same: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). The Greek word for "honourable" is *timios*, which means precious, esteemed, dear, valuable, or honorable. There is no verb in the Greek text—*timios ho gamos*. Where no verb is expressed, the indicative, rather than the imperative, is understood. This is not a command to make marriage honorable. It signifies that marriage is highly esteemed; furthermore, "the bed undefiled" —*kai he koite amiantos*. Both subjects are without verbs and are to be understood factually (indicative mood). Conclusively, marriage and the bed are both honorable. The phrase "in all" is restricted because neither marriage nor the bed is held in high esteem by some, as the last part of the verse proves: "...but whoremongers [plural of *pornos*, which means a fornicator or an impure person] and adulterers [plural of *moichos*, which means an adulterer] God will judge." While wicked men scoff at righteousness and judgment, God's holy wrath is being treasured up against them until the day of His wrath and the revelation of His righteous judgment (Rom. 2:4, 5).

The institution of marriage must never be denied. Paul warned about seducing spirits who forbid marriage in the last days: "NOW the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [demons]; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (I Tim. 4:1-3). Paul's warning against seducing spirits' forbidding marriage condemns the celibate vow taken by the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church. The Greek word for "forbidding" is a present active participle of *koluo*, which means to hinder, restrain, or prevent. The word of God does not prevent marriage for those He calls for the ministry. The bishop is to be "the husband of one wife" (I Tim. 3:2). The Greek text reads *mias gunaikos andra*, and the literal translation is "of one [*mias*, genitive singular feminine of *heis*, which means one] wife [*gunaikos*, genitive singular of *gune*, a married woman or wife] husband [*andra*, accusative singular of *aner*, a male person of full age and stature or a husband]." The same Greek construction is used for deacons except that it is plural for husbands (*andres*) (I Tim. 3:12). Some say I Timothy 3:2 and 12 forbid the bishop and deacons to have more than one wife at a time; thus, they believe the verses refer to polygamy. However, I Timothy 5:9 shows that the meaning goes further than that of polygamy. The same Greek construction is used for a "widow" (*chera*) enrolled for specific duties, who must not be under sixty years old, having been a "one" (*henos*, genitive, singular, masculine of *heis*—one) "husband" (*andros*, genitive singular of *aner*—husband) "wife" (*gune*, a married woman or wife). This proves that the Scripture teaches that an elder or bishop should be a one-wife husband and not that he should have one wife at a time.

The enrollment — “number” (present passive imperative of *katalego*, which means to select, to enter in a list, or to enroll) — of a widow means more than giving her monetary aid from the church (I Tim. 5:9). The minimum age of sixty would refute the idea of monetary assistance. She was to perform some spiritual function in the church, which is explained in Titus 2:3-5 — “The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” The one-husband wife alone, like the one-wife husband, could set the proper example before the young women she should “teach” (present active subjunctive of *sophronidzo*, which means to restore one to his senses, curb, or discipline; to admonish or exhort earnestly). A widow above sixty years of age and an elder must set the proper example before those whom they teach when it comes to the principle of marriage.

Paul’s warning about seducing spirits who hinder marriage in the last days goes further than celibacy which is taught by the Roman Catholic Church. There are many today who teach free love and give no credence to the institution of marriage. They do not understand that the expression “free love” is a contradiction in terms. Love, by its very nature, is exclusive. If it is free, it is not love; therefore, if it is love, it is not free. Chastity belongs to the altar of love. Hence, on that altar a gift that is not the product of exclusiveness is unworthy. The Bible is clear on the point that sex apart from the exclusiveness of love within the marriage relationship is lust. Therefore, the Bible commands, “Flee fornication...” (I Cor. 6:18). The verb “Flee” is a present active imperative of *pheugo*, which means to flee, to make escape, or to shun. The imperative mood signifies a command to shun fornication.

When children and young adults begin to experience the newborn passions which ignite their curiosity, whether they learn the facts of life purely or impurely is of utmost importance. They will learn from either impure companions, Christian parents, or men of God. Where and from whom would you desire that your children learn about these important facts?

The Problem Of Divorce Considered

The harmony between the Old and New Testament teaching on divorce presents no problem. Some have reasoned that divorce was approved in the Old Testament but disapproved in the New. However, the real issue is that divorce was suffered in the Old but not permitted in the New. Hence, neither the Christian under grace nor the nonchristian can appeal to Deuteronomy 24:1-4 as a regulation for his life. Matthew’s and Mark’s accounts of the Pharisees’ interrogating Jesus Christ on divorce and His reply differ in that Matthew used the exceptive clause, “except it be for fornication” (Matt. 19:1-9; Mark 10:1-12).

Israel, rather than Moses, was blamed for the bill of divorcement. Moses “suffered” the bill of divorcement. One does not merely permit what is right and good. Contrarily, he approves and promotes it. When he permitted divorce under the law, Moses did not contradict what he had been inspired to write in Genesis 2:24. Divorce, like celibacy, was a temporary expedient that the Jews erroneously claimed as a precept.

Divorce is negative, and marriage is the positive it tries to negate. Divorce argues against, denies, and refuses to accept marriage as God’s unchangeable principle. Argument, denial, and rejection do

not change the validity of God's absolute principle of marriage. Therefore, divorce must be viewed and judged in the light of the fact of marriage.

Marriage is of God, but divorce is of man. One would be foolish to think that man invalidates what God has validated. Does man think that his divorce can nullify the existence of God's institution of marriage? Man's denial of the existence of the indissolubility of marriage does not make it void. Law does not negate grace; works do not nullify faith; apostasy of institutional churches does not annul the body of Christ; and man cannot invalidate God.

Jesus Christ used the immutable principle of marriage in replying to the Pharisees' question about divorce: "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? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 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? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 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. 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" (Matt. 19:3-9). The negative approach in this passage of Scripture serves the purpose of having a positive effect—no divorce by man.

The Pharisees used trick questions, trying to persuade Jesus Christ to incriminate Himself. They were testing, not tempting, the Savior by asking, "...Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause" (Matt. 19:3). This was the Pharisees' first question because a liberal school of Jews interpreted Moses' permissive law with a latitude to include anything that was objectionable to their fleshly desires. They thought it was clever. The liberals of today have not changed their tactics one iota. A smart aleck is detected by his questions. Christ replied by pointing the Pharisees to the original institution of marriage (Matt. 19:4-6). Following Christ's reply, the Pharisees, feeling smug, were confident that their next question would cause the One they hated to incriminate Himself: "...Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away" (Matt. 19:7). Characteristic of persons with only natural understanding of spiritual things, the Pharisees did not understand the passage of Scripture from which they quoted. The ignorance of persons unconscious of their undiscerning minds can be revealed to them by God alone.

The Pharisees did not understand the passage from which they quoted: "WHEN a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" (Deut. 24:1-4). Moses neither commanded nor approved divorce. The word "command" in Matthew 19:7 is from the Greek word *entellomai*, which means to enjoin, charge, direct, or command. Christ's answer to the Pharisees manifested

their defeat: "...Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). The Lord Jesus Christ used the word "suffered" (aorist active indicative of *epitrepo*, which means to permit, allow, or suffer). This aorist verb—permitted or allowed—is used in the constative sense, which refers to the action as a whole. Hence, Moses gave no command for the husband to divorce an "unclean" wife, but he did permit the writing of a bill of divorcement (*biblion*, a written document) because of the husband's hard and unforgiving heart. Furthermore, Christ pointed the Pharisees to the original principle of marriage which takes precedence over Moses' subsequent allowance of divorce under the law. Hence, Deuteronomy was not Old Testament law on divorce but a deviation from it. This was evidenced by Moses' permitting divorce under one condition and positively forbidding it in Deuteronomy 22:13-21, 28, and 29. Contrary to the Pharisees' statement, Moses never gave a command for divorce. Like many today, the Pharisees did not desire information contrary to their desires.

Jesus Christ replied to the Pharisees' question on divorce by giving the truth of marriage. The essence of marriage is that man and woman are no longer two but one. This oneness does not mean that two persons become one person, but they become one in love, purpose, spirit, and lawful copulation. Christian couples have the added dimension of strength and assurance of their one spirit because they are united by the Holy Spirit. The analogy of husband and wife being one is used of Christians having been made one in Christ; therefore, we constitute one body (I Cor. 12:12-26). Having the same love, believers are to be one in thinking and judging (Phil. 2:2; I Cor. 1:10). The oneness in marriage is severed only by death (Mark 10:11, 12; Rom. 7:2, 3; I Cor. 7:39).

Man and woman are united in marriage by mutual consent. However, God binds them by an indissoluble bond; therefore, they are not subsequently at liberty to disunite. The term "one flesh" means that the relation between husband and wife is closer than that between parents and children (Gen. 2:24). Children leave their parents, but husband and wife cannot become two again because they have been made one flesh for life.

Two thousand and five hundred years of human history passed before any reference was made to divorce. Divorce is mentioned nine times in the Old Testament, all of which apply to Israel. The Hebrew word meaning to cast out or divorce is *gahrash* (Lev. 21:7, 14; 22:13; Num. 30:9; Ezek. 44:22). The word signifying a cutting of the marriage bond or divorce is *K'reethooth* (Deut. 24:1, 3; Is. 50:1; Jer. 3:8). Conclusively, divorce is related to one nation—Israel; one dispensation—the law; and was granted for one cause—fornication. That which was permitted in Israel because of fornication was never meant to be made a rule for the church. The church is governed by the law of Christ and not by the permissive law of Moses.

Criticizing persons who hold the Scriptural view of marriage could be amusing if it were not so serious. We are accused of being legalistic while our accusers are hiding behind Moses' permissive law for their liberal views on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Why do they not proceed with the Scriptural teaching of these subjects and embrace the penalties of the law for fornication, adultery, rape, etc. (Deut. 22)? Everyone must make a choice of either God's original institution of marriage (Gen. 2:24) or the way of the Pharisees who prefer the hardness of the heart route.

Divorce has caused controversy that has increased since Moses allowed the first one. The truth of the subject is not difficult for those to see who lay aside their selfish desires and fear of offending so

many people because of their marital status. Since one out of every two marriages ends in divorce according to man's law, one can understand why this subject is so volatile.

The divorce that is mentioned in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is on the grounds of fornication, not adultery. One must reject the assumption that the exceptive clause, "except it be for fornication," is on the grounds of adultery committed in the consummated married state. Adultery committed in the consummated state was not a reason for divorce under the law. It was an offense punishable by death (Lev. 20, Num. 5:11-31). Although the word "fornication" has a wider use than "adultery," there is a difference between the words that must be recognized in order to properly understand the subject under consideration. Some say "fornication" covers adultery and fornication. Others say all adultery is fornication, but not all fornication is adultery. There are some who explain that "fornication" is a generic term which describes all sexual relations outside of marriage. We want to know how Christ used the word *porneia* (fornication) in the exceptive clause. That will be the subject of our next study.

The Problem Of Divorce Resolved

"Fornication" is not a synonym for "adultery" in the exception of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. In order to understand the difference between Matthew's use and the other inspired writers' omission of the exception, one must know the difference between Jewish customs and the customs of other civilizations. The fact that Matthew alone records the exception suggests it has a special application to the Jews. To make "fornication" (*porneia*) and "adultery" (*moicheia*) mean the same thing is untenable when both are used in the same verses (Matt. 5:32; 15:19; 19:9; Mark 7:21).

Mark and Luke do not mention the exception that is used by Matthew. They give no grounds for divorce. Matthew wrote primarily to Jews, and Mark and Luke wrote primarily to Gentiles. Since Mark's account is more comprehensive than Luke's, our attention will be directed to Mark 10:1-12. His record clearly evidences that Christ amplified for His disciples the subject of marriage and divorce that had been raised by the Pharisees. Two important variations are apparent in Mark 10:10-12 — "And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" — (1) The exception for fornication recorded by Matthew is omitted. (2) The woman's putting away her husband is added.

Divorce was permitted among the Jews during the Mosaic dispensation only for the cause of fornication. Fornication is sexual activity before marriage, and adultery is infidelity after marriage. Fornication has some resemblance to the sacredness of marriage. Hence, it is under God's curse, but marriage is under God's blessing. This answers the "one flesh" which is properly associated with marriage but improperly applied to fornication (I Cor. 6:16).

Fornication is an awful crime for a Christian to commit: (1) The believer is joined unto the Lord (I Cor. 6:17). (2) The fornicator dishonors the members of the body of Christ (I Cor. 5). (3) The fornicator unlawfully becomes one flesh with a harlot (I Cor. 6:16). (4) The fornicator degrades his own body (I Cor. 6:18). (5) Fornication profanes the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:19). (6) The fornicator dishonors the sacrifice of Christ (I Cor. 6:20).

According to Deuteronomy 22, some fornicators were put to death, but others were spared. There were two types in each category. Those put to death included whores (Deut. 22:13-21) and those who became unfaithful during the betrothal period (Deut. 22:23, 24). The exception was a slave who had less command and therefore less guilt (Lev. 19:20). Those spared included victims of rape (Deut. 22:25-27) and those who committed the sin outside the betrothal period (Deut. 22:28, 29).

The whore-type fornicator was put to death under the law (Deut. 22:13-21). Laws of chastity and marriage are addressed in Deuteronomy 22. Marriage must be founded upon fidelity. The first type of fornicator put to death was the woman who falsely presented herself to her husband as a virgin. If the husband's accusation against her was unsubstantiated, the husband was chastised with blows (Deut. 25:2, 3) and forbidden a divorce (Deut. 22:19). The falsely accused wife emerged from the cloud of a bad name by her virginity being proven. On the other hand, if the accusation was true, the wife was stoned to death for playing the whore in her father's house and for deceiving her husband.

The second type of fornicator put to death was the woman who was unfaithful during the betrothal period (Deut. 22:23, 24). The betrothed young woman described should have remained in her father's house as she awaited the time of the consummation of her marriage. However, she was found "in the city" where she became unfaithful during betrothal, the first part of her marriage contract. Fornication, which is prior to marriage, is the only cause for the "putting away" mentioned by Christ in Matthew 5 and 19. Since a man and woman were viewed as "man and wife" during the betrothal period (Matt. 1:18-20), unfaithfulness during that time was an offense as serious as though it had been committed in the consummated marriage state. If Mary had been unfaithful to Joseph during the betrothal period, he would have had the right to put her away, and she would have been stoned to death.

The fornicators not put to death under the law were the victims of rape (Deut. 22:25-27) and those who committed the sin outside the betrothal period (Deut. 22:28, 29). The victim of rape, although she was betrothed, did not suffer the penalty of death. However, the rapist was put to death. The victim did not merit death, but she suffered from the experience. The man to whom she was betrothed had the right to refuse to consummate the second part of the marriage contract, that of marriage itself. Moreover, such wronged women were subsequently numbered among those involved in divorce litigation (Deut. 24:1).

Fornication committed outside the betrothal period was not without penalty (Deut. 22:28, 29). If this sin was revealed, the man had to become her husband without ever being able to put her away. Therefore, the man would be humbled by entering marriage through Satan's gate.

Distinction between fornication and adultery is evident. They are acts similar in nature; however, they differ in relationship and degree of guilt. Some cases of fornication were not punishable by death (Deut. 22:25-29). Adulterers, apart from divine intervention, were put to death (Lev. 20:10; Num. 5:11-31; Deut. 22:22; John 8:4, 5). Adultery, unlike fornication, is sexual unfaithfulness to a married partner (Lev. 20:10). It defiles the marriage bed (Heb. 13:4). Christ mentioned fornication and adultery in Matthew 15:19 as two distinct uncleannesses. The Pharisees understood the difference between them (John 8:1-9). They used the term "adultery" to speak of the woman they caught in the act and appealed to the law of Moses for her stoning (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). On the other hand, they used the term "fornication" in their controversy over Christ's origin (John 8:19, 41). Paul made the same distinction (I Cor. 6:9-11; 7:2; Gal. 5:19). The term "adultery" could not

have been used in I Corinthians 7:2 — “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” Furthermore, the term “fornication” is used in Revelation to symbolize the illicit intercourse of the Christian individually and the church corporately with the world (Rev. 2:20-22). Since the church is espoused to Christ, her unfaithfulness is considered fornication (II Cor. 11:1-4; Rev. 2:20-22). The false church is symbolized as a great whore (Rev. 17); therefore, the Holy Spirit properly identified her illicit conduct as fornication.

Jesus Christ did not compare the permission of Moses with His own teaching on the subject of divorce. However, He did compare the Pharisees’ false interpretation of Moses’ permissive law to God’s unchangeable principle of marriage. The word “Whosoever” (Matt. 5:32) is governed by the antecedent “you” which restricts the expedience of divorce on the grounds of fornication to those addressed, the Jews. This is the reason Mark and Luke omit the exception — “except it be for fornication (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). The exception does not apply to the Gentiles. The importance of observing the persons to whom Christ spoke is exemplified: ”VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber” (John 10:1). The antecedent of “you” is the Pharisees of John 9:39-41. (See Deut. 4:1-13; 5:1.) God suffered the Jews’ outrage against the principle of marriage for only 1,500 years. But He is not dealing with Israel as a nation today (Rom. 11).

The granting of divorce to the Jews on the grounds of fornication was a temporary expedient because of the Jews’ hardness of heart. The Pharisees erroneously interpreted it as a precept. They said what the law never stated and interpreted it to say what they wanted. Thus, the Jews avoided the principle and the letter of the law. The only thing that mattered to them was the legality of divorce. According to Mark, Christ answered them first at their level, “...What did Moses command you” (Mark 10:3). He purposed to give new depth of meaning to the law. Hence, the Pharisees were forced to yield ground. Their knowledge that divorce was never prescribed by law caused them to change their word “command” to “suffer” (permit).

The Pharisees received the second blow from Christ when He said, “...For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept [*entole*, which means an injunction, order, direction, precept, or commandment]” (Mark 10:5). Moses’ direction was strictly a permissive instruction, rather than a categorical imperative. His concession was on the basis of “some uncleanness” a man found in his wife after he married her: “WHEN a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD...” (Deut. 24:1-4). The Pharisees called Moses’ direction a command, but Christ called it permission. Thus, the carnal-hearted Pharisees of yesterday and today misconstrue the Scriptures and take a mile where only an inch is permitted.

The key issue of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is the meaning of “...he hath found some uncleanness in her...” Can “some uncleanness” be so general that the Pharisees could say “for every cause”? When the Pharisees tested Christ, they asked, “...Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause” (Matt. 19:3). Was “for every cause” anything that the husband might dislike? Was the

“uncleanness” of Deuteronomy 24:1 fornication? The Hebrew word for “uncleanness” means disgrace, shame, uncleanness, or nakedness. This proves that the issue disapproved by the husband was serious and not a trivial matter. Therefore, the one exception given by Christ in Matthew 5 and 19 is the only acceptable ground for the bill of divorcement granted in Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

Moses’ directive in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 established some important principles: (1) The law limited divorce to a certain uncleanness—fornication. Uncleanness was considered a just cause for divorce. It may have been either of the two kinds of fornication that did not merit death (Deut. 22:25-29). Uncleanness was less than adultery; adultery was punishable by death. Fornication during the betrothal period was as serious as adultery. (2) The man who divorced his wife on the grounds of uncleanness was not commanded to put her away; but if he did, he must give her a bill of divorcement. Before Moses gave this directive, the woman was turned out to the mercy of the world. After he gave the order, she was protected from disgrace after divorce. (3) The man who divorced his wife was not allowed to remarry her after she had been married and divorced by a second man or after her second husband’s death. Her second marriage defiled her.

The Jews’ hardness of heart caused God to turn from Israel to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles’ hardness of heart will cause Him to turn from them to the Jews (Rom. 11). The Jews were guilty of perverting the truth concerning marriage and divorce, and the Gentiles are doing the same today to a greater degree. Persons who follow the hardness-of-heart route will suffer the same consequences that Israel suffered. God is a righteous Judge.

Jesus Christ who answered the Pharisees at their own level by calling their attention to Moses proceeded by referring them to a higher level: “But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mark 10:6-9). Christ went beyond what Moses permitted at a particular point in time to God’s timeless purpose revealed in creation (Gen. 2:24). Paul showed that the law was “added” (aorist passive indicative of *prostithemi*, which means to lay by the side of) only until the coming of Christ “to whom the promise was made” (Gal. 3:19). The law was no part of God’s covenant of grace and therefore modified none of its provisions. Divorce formed no portion of God’s original thought concerning marriage. Since divorce is purely human, nothing else needed to be said to the Pharisees.

The last part of Mark’s account of Christ’s discourse with the Pharisees turned from them to Christ’s answer to the disciples’ question “in the house” (Mark 10:10-12). Moses permitted divorce among the Jews on the grounds of fornication. The statement about the woman was added for Mark’s Gentile readers (Mark 10:12). Furthermore, no provision for divorce on the grounds of fornication is mentioned in the Epistles. Christ did not advocate something that was withheld from the instruction given to the churches. Conclusively, the Bible gives no grounds for divorce. It records death as the only excuse for remarriage (Rom. 7:2, 3; I Cor. 7:39). Adam could not divorce Eve without hating his own flesh. Some being lawfully one flesh in marriage condemns divorce. Everyone under the influence of Jesus Christ will sustain that which God originally instituted. This does not indicate that an adulterer, adulteress, or fornicator cannot be saved. Scripture records the salvation of such people, but the institution of marriage is not lowered.

Adultery does not sever the marriage contract. Illicit conduct by a married partner does not break that contract. Scripture proves that although men have illicit relations, their marriages remain intact. “There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I [Jacob] buried Leah” (Gen. 49:30, 31; 50:13). Abraham’s affair with Hagar did not break the marriage bond. If Jacob could have had his way, he would have called Rachel his wife because he loved her more than Leah. However, Scripture affirms that Leah, the first he married, was his wife. This same truth is also represented in Hosea and Gomer (Hos. 1-3). John the Baptist condemned Herod for marrying his brother’s wife (Mark 6:18). Please note that Herodias was called Philip’s wife after her marriage to Herod. This case of two unsaved people condemns the idea that God has nothing to do with the marriages of nonbelievers.

Explanation Of God’s Divorcing Israel

Many are saying that divorce is a Biblical concept which God through Moses regulated, rather than condemned. Therefore, their opinion is that marriage is a covenant relationship broken by divorce. They question, Did not God write Israel a bill of divorce? “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also” (Jer. 3:8). They assert that anyone who thinks two divorced persons are still married must admit they are to continue to have sexual responsibilities. To emphasize this assertion, they ask, “Should counselors tell their clients they should maintain sexual intercourse after divorce?”

The extent to which some “Christian counselors” and others go in their human reasoning is amazing. God’s metaphorical language in His dealings with national Israel and what He suffered through Moses in the life of the people of Israel are two different things. A metaphor is the application of a word or phrase to an object or concept it does not literally denote. Its purpose is to suggest a comparison between things essentially different but alike in one or more aspects. Those who study the subject under discussion soon recognize essential dissimilarities between God and husbands and Israel and wives. They also detect some similarities between unfaithful Israel and unfaithful wives.

God told Jeremiah that He had given backsliding Israel a “bill of divorce,” but treacherous Judah had not learned anything from her sister’s experience: “The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also” (Jer. 3:6-8). Although the Jews were a people favored with peculiar privileges, they were prone to idolatry and “bent to backsliding” (Hos. 11:7).

The last good king of Judah was on the throne when God gave this message to Jeremiah. Josiah’s reign began at a very young age of eight years, but he was subjected to such teachers as Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah. At the age of sixteen, he began to seek after the God of David; and at the age of twenty, he began to purge Judah (II Chron. 34). Six years later a book of the law of the Lord was found by Hilkiah, the priest. The king learned from God’s book the defectiveness of his purging. Reformation motivated by either tradition or the light of conscience is inadequate. Any

worthwhile purging must be by the authority of God's word. Without the objective standard of God's truth, everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

The figure of marriage is used of God's covenant relationship with Israel. Therefore, marriage denotes the permanency of God's union with the northern kingdom. Although God had granted Israel a "bill of divorce" (Jer. 3:8), He said to Jeremiah, "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you..." (Jer. 3:12-14). Please observe the following order: (1) Israel was given a bill of divorce. (2) Israel was admonished to return unto the Lord, although she had been given a bill of divorce. (3) The Israelites were called "backsliding children"; but God said to them, "I am married unto you." Being divorced and yet being married is interesting. The word for "married" also meant to be master or to be a husband. Where is that bill of permanent divorcement? God's bill of divorcement given to Israel was only temporary. It was the fruit of her own sins (Jer. 3:14-25). The bond between God and Israel was indissoluble, although a temporary separation intervened. Governmentally, Israel had gone away from God. However, God never departed from His indissoluble bond with her. A future restoration will take place (Is. 50; 54; Ezek. 16).

Jeremiah mentioned three of God's calls to Israel to return and three reasons why she should return: (1) "...I am merciful...." (2) "...I am married unto you...." (3) "I will heal your backslidings" (Jer. 3:12, 14, 22).

One of the most illustrious representations of God's grace is revealed in Hosea's attitude toward Gomer (Hos. 1-3). Persevering love, salvation by grace, sustenance by grace through chastening, and restorative grace are all symbolized in Hosea's relation to Gomer. Hosea was God's prophet in Israel's zero hour of history. He prophesied during a time of material prosperity and spiritual degeneracy. Through Hosea and Gomer, the Lord gave Israel a picture of her history. While Israel was floundering as an impotent child, lying in a field unwanted and untended, God gave her spiritual life. He clothed her with His righteousness and caused her to flourish and prosper into a kingdom. The beauty of Jehovah was revealed through her. Nevertheless, she desecrated the blessings of God and committed spiritual whoredom (Ezek. 16). Three of the major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, record much about Israel and her desecration of what God had given her.

The message of Hosea may be discerned from the names recorded in the first two chapters of his prophecy. A list of some of the names and their meanings follows: Hosea — "salvation or deliverance," representing the love God has for His covenant people; Beeri — "my well"; Uzziah — "my strength is Jehovah"; Jotham — "Jehovah is perfect"; Ahaz — "possessor"; Hezekiah — "strengthened of Jehovah"; Judah — "he shall be free"; Jeroboam — "let the people contend or He will multiply the people" (the downfall of national Israel began with Jeroboam); Joash — "Jehovah has become man"; Israel — "he shall be prince of God"; Gomer — "completion and corruption"; Diblaim — "bunches of dried figs"; Jezreel — "it will be sown of God or scattered"; Lo-ruhamah — "not having obtained mercy, unloved, or she that never knew a father's love"; Lo-ammi — "not

my people or no relative of mine”; Ammi — “my people”; Ruhamah — “having obtained mercy”; Achor — “trouble”; Ishi — “my husband”; Baali — “my lord.”

The first three chapters of Hosea are not a parable. They are historically true. The context proves that the chapters are not in symbolic language. Hosea literally married a woman of whoredom. He has been called the prophet of persevering love. Thus, he represents the love that God has for His covenant people. God who told Abraham to offer up his son could tell Hosea to go take a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms. He then explained the reason for His command: “And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD” (Hos. 1:2). Through his wife of ill fame, Hosea learned Israel’s sin and what the grace of God had done for her.

God has the right to do what He pleases with His own. Consequently, He did not contradict His holiness when He commanded Hosea’s union with Gomer. Those who know the grace of God will not object to the manner in which the Lord portrays His grace. No matter what anyone has been, the grace of God is capable of delivering the elect. The Lord Jesus reminded the religious Pharisees that there was more hope for the harlots and whoremongers than for them: “...Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you” (Matt. 21:31). There is no room for Pharisaism in the life of any person. Unless an individual sees himself as God sees him, a potential whoremonger, he can never appreciate the grace of God.

The apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians that they had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners. As such, they could not enter the kingdom of God. However, they had been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:9-11). The belly was designed for food, but the body was not designed for fornication. Idolaters worship gods other than the true and living God. Adulterers violate the marriage bed. Effeminate persons give themselves to a soft life, filled with corrupt indulgences. The grace of the sovereign God cannot be limited by man. He saves whom He will. He saved a harlot like Rahab and a murderer like the apostle Paul. Regardless of one’s background, by grace alone he becomes a child of God.

Hosea, manifesting that he was a prophet of persevering love, took Gomer out of whoredom. Three children were born by Gomer. Observe that Gomer bore Hosea a son: “So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son” (Hos. 1:3). Scripture does not state that Gomer’s second and third children were Hosea’s (Hos. 1:6, 8). She proved to be unfaithful to him, left him, and ran after her lovers. Nevertheless, she was still dissatisfied (Hos. 2:7). Finally, according to the Jewish law (Is. 50:1; Jer. 3:8), Hosea gave her the writing of a temporary, not a permanent, bill of divorcement. The time came when Hosea disclaimed her as his wife: “Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts” (Hos. 2:2). However, he later said he would betroth her to him forever. Gomer did not marry another man. She lived the life of a whore and was sold into slavery. Hosea purchased her out of the slave market (Hos. 3:2), proving the bill of divorcement was temporary. He manifested his love for Gomer by never letting her go and remaining faithful to her while she was unfaithful to him. Hope lies in God’s faithfulness, not man’s faithfulness.

God made a covenant with Israel. His grace also made provision for the Gentiles in the covenant (Hos. 2:23). This is explained by the apostle Paul in Romans 9:21-25 and 11:12-25. The same truth is illustrated in the two adulterous women in the gospel of John. The adulterous woman brought to the Lord Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees (John 8:3-11) represents the elect remnant among Israel who shall be saved in time to come. Among the Jews, adultery was punishable by stoning to death. The Lord Jesus in grace did not condemn the woman to stoning. The adulterous woman (John 4) who had five husbands and was living with one who was not her husband portrays elect Gentiles who are saved by grace. This woman embodied all that could excite the aversion of the Jews. Her Samaritan birth rendered her an object of sectarian hatred, and her immoral life brought contempt from the Pharisees. However, Jesus Christ had no natural animosity, sectarian bigotry, professional dignity, or self-righteous hatred. He saw the woman as one whom the Father gave Him to save (John 6:37). The Lord Jesus Christ crosses all human barriers and reconciles the elect unto Himself. One of the marvels of grace is that it overcomes sectarian and prejudicial opinions. Elect Jews and Gentiles are brought into covenant relationship with God through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gomer's unfaithfulness to Hosea pictures Israel's unfaithfulness to God. Gomer played the harlot and went after other lovers. This describes Israel's present condition. She is living in spiritual harlotry, prostituting her high privileges for personal gain. Many passages of Scripture other than this in Hosea portray adulterous Israel. Another example of Israel's present condition is revealed in Ezekiel 16. After God spoke life to her, she became His by covenant relationship. She later desecrated what God had given her (Ezek. 16:15, 16, 22). She was unwilling to sin privately, so she built a public place for idolatrous worship (Ezek. 16:24). That place became a place for spiritual prostitution. Israel should have lived a separated life, but she mingled with the very people from whom she had been delivered (Ezek. 16:25, 26). She committed fornication with the Egyptians. The Lord compared her to a wife who commits adultery (Ezek. 16:32). One may wonder why Ezekiel used both adultery and fornication to illustrate Israel's sin. These terms were used with reference to Israel. Fornication, the act of sin outside the consummation of the wedding contract, could be committed by one who was betrothed, or engaged. Ezekiel used the word "fornication" because betrothal was as binding as though a person were already married. He used the term "adultery" because Israel is represented as married in covenant relationship to God. Therefore, both terms are permissible with reference to Israel.

Christians are espoused as chaste virgins to Jesus Christ: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). We are not married to Him, but if we commit spiritual fornication, the sin is as great as though it were adultery (I Thess. 4:3-7). One who desecrates the gifts and blessings of God becomes guilty of spiritual whoredom. No Christian can say he has been as faithful to the Lord as he should; neither can he assert that he has not prostituted the blessings of God. Adultery includes more than physical relations. The apostle Paul exhorts Christians to cleanse themselves from the sins of the flesh and of the spirit: "HAVING therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). Sins of the spirit are just as heinous as sins of the flesh in the sight of God.

Hosea had given Gomer his love and material blessings, but she rejected them for other lovers. Consequently, her blessings were removed, and her sin was revealed (Hos. 2:8-13). Israel's privileges have been removed. Today she abides without a king, a prince, a sacrifice, an image, an ephod, and teraphim (Hos. 3:4). Israel is rejecting her Betrothed for other lovers and material gain.

The prophecy of Isaiah represents this truth. Isaiah was commissioned to prophesy to Israel, but he saw no desirable results: “And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land” (Is. 6:9-12).

Gomer, Hosea’s wife, began to recognize her condition. No one could satisfy her, and she indirectly confessed her unfaithfulness (Hos. 2:7). She was severely punished (Hos. 2:6-13). Throughout Israel’s history, God remained faithful to that chosen nation while they were unfaithful to Him. The Lord will not let His people go: “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her” (Hos. 2:14). His people will not be allowed to continue in unfaithfulness. Chastening is a means to cause them to return (Heb. 12:6-8).

Hosea bought Gomer from her slavery (Hos. 3:2). She was not to play the harlot: “...Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee” (Hos. 3:3). Although Gomer was married to Hosea, Hosea said that he would betroth her unto him forever: “And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD” (Hos. 2:19, 20). However, for a time she could not live with him as his wife.

Israel was not literally married to Jehovah, neither are Christians literally married to Jesus Christ today. Israel is betrothed to Jehovah by covenant relationship. Christians are espoused to Jesus Christ by regeneration.

God is not through with Israel. She is not now abiding with Him. Nevertheless, after her wilderness experience, she will return and seek the Lord Jesus Christ, her King. She will fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days (Hos. 3:5; Ezek. 16:59-63). The apostle Paul showed that Israel shall return (Rom. 11). Isaiah promised that in spite of Israel’s unfaithfulness, a remnant will return: “But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof” (Is. 6:13). The words “...it shall return...” are expressive of the claim that Jehovah still has on Israel. The life germ in Judah will cause Israel to survive. A living seed does not perish when it is buried in the earth, but it springs up and a new plant comes into being. Neither will Israel perish, though she is now buried among the nations of the world. A holy seed shall be the stock thereof. God has a remnant, a holy seed, among the Israelites (Hos. 2:16). Israel will call Jehovah “Ishi,” not “Baali.” Both words could be used to speak of the husband-wife relationship. However, the former is a more endearing term. “Baali” means my Lord; whereas, “Ishi” denotes my husband. When Israel has proper respect for the Lord, she will call Jehovah “my husband.”

The terms employed by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, and Malachi to address the Jews are interesting to observe. Jeremiah spoke of their adultery, their divorce, and of God’s being their husband—in that order (Jer. 3). Ezekiel spoke of the Jews’ fornication and adultery (Ezek. 16:15, 26, 29, 30). To “break wedlock” (KJB) means to commit adultery: “Thus I shall judge you, like women who

commit adultery or shed blood are judged...” (Ezek. 16:38 NASB). Hosea referred to Gomer as his wife, but after her infidelity he said, “...I will betroth thee unto me for ever...” (Hos. 1:2-5; 2:19, 20). Israel’s sin was spiritual adultery, which means to seek satisfaction in unlawful relations. She was also guilty of harlotry, which means prostituting high possessions for the sake of hire or gain. Nevertheless, Malachi spoke of the Jews as the wife of God’s covenant (Mal. 2:14).

The difference between God’s divorcing Israel and a man’s divorcing his wife is tremendous. God hates to put away (Mal. 2:16), but there is no reference to man’s hating divorce. God has given Israel a temporary divorce for her idolatry, but she will, like Gomer, be restored in the latter days. Man thinks his divorce is final; but according to God’s immutable principle, marriage is indissoluble (Rom. 7:2, 3). Thus, we see just how far to take the use of the metaphors of marriage and divorce as God applied them to the nation of Israel.

One important aspect of Israel’s divorce is yet to be considered. There is an Israel within Israel—spiritual seed within national Israel (Rom. 9:6). Jeremiah 3:1 must not be overlooked when considering God’s giving a bill of divorcement to the apostate Jews: “THEY say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou has played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD.” The prophet was quoting from Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The apostates becoming “another man’s” applies to the formation of a definite covenant with the antichrist (Dan. 9:27). When the antichrist casts out the apostates, they will not be able to return to their first husband because there will be no return to divine favor. However, God has a remnant other than the apostates who will return (Is. 6:13; Ezek. 16:60-63; Rom. 11). The churches should also heed this warning. Although the Lord may own a remnant in a local church, He may reject the visible body as a whole.

MAN AND WOMAN INSTRUCTED

No one can deny that morality is the fruit of regeneration and conversion. If persons who have been seized by the truth of the gospel need no instruction in morality, as some advocate, inspired instruction for Christians was a waste of time. Surely no one will have the audacity to say inspired information about morality is not needed by believers. Some “strange fire” in the area of Christian ethics is proclaimed today, and believers must be forewarned that they might be forearmed. Therefore, Christian ethics prefaces our study of I Corinthians 7.

Paul taught, “...love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:10). Because this statement has been greatly misunderstood, it must be properly interpreted. Some think that love means to abrogate the law, but there is a difference between fulfillment and nullification. The Greek word for “fulfilling” (*pleroma*) is used with the descriptive genitive *nomou*, which means fulfillment of law. Love that has been poured out in one’s heart by the Spirit of regeneration is devoted to the negative commandments. Apart from love, obedience is meaningless, but in love (*agape*), the Christian’s obedience is expressive: “...the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:4). “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3). Law to a righteous person is not a burden but a delight.

Modern day antinomianism is the same old heresy expressed in new terminology. The question is asked, “Can one be under law’s obligation without being under its condemnation?” The argument is that a person is under either both aspects or neither aspect of the law. Those who argue thus claim that since the believer delights to do what is good, he does not need law to direct his behavior. That line of logic would lead one to conclude that since faith is given to the elect for the purpose of embracing the gospel, he does not need the proclamation of the gospel. The goodness of the law is experienced only as it is put to proper use. Its improper use becomes an unbearable burden which ultimately becomes a curse. The Christian has not been delivered from the spiritual obligations of the holy law. But he has been liberated from the evil he brought upon himself through failure to obey the law or properly use it.

Admittedly, the law cannot legislate righteousness, but it can restrain sin to an extent. This is exemplified by one’s slowing down or looking at his speedometer when he sees a highway patrolman. The Christian does not view the law as a means of, but as a sequel to, salvation. God gave the law to Israel as a redeemed people. Obedience to God’s authoritative law out of love for Christ is not legalism: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Legalism is the abuse of the law by relying on keeping it for salvation. Christ’s perfect obedience to the law for the elect’s justification does not exempt them from obedience to it for their progressive sanctification.

The moral law of God which grew out of His nature cannot be changed. Christ said, “...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 22:37-39). Paul instructed the Roman saints: “...Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt

not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. 13:9, 10). Love for God and neighbors cannot be changed. Furthermore, the moral law can be neither abolished nor superseded. God cannot dispense with the laws that are moral in themselves. However, the Substance—Jesus Christ—has filled the place of the shadows of the ceremonial law and has annulled unto us the judicial laws that were peculiar to the Jews.

God’s laws, unlike man-made laws, are “holy, and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12). If one could conceive of all the laws of man incarnate in a judge sitting on his bench, he would have some idea of the truth that every law of Holy Scripture finds its source in God Himself. A human judge dare not say, after a jury has found a man guilty of a heinous crime, “You are guilty, but I forgive you; therefore, you may go from this court a free man.” He would be impeached for failure to discharge his duty according to the law he claims to uphold. On the other hand, God can forgive the guilty sinner because He has justified him on the grounds that the demanded penalty of the law has been paid. God gave the law; and in the Person of His beloved Son, He paid the full penalty of His own holy law. Therefore, the justified, redeemed, regenerated, and converted sinner has been freed from the curse of the law by the law of Christ: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). The purpose of this freedom is “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us...” (Rom. 8:4).

Man-made laws are connected with morality, but there are different concepts of morality among the nations of the world and among the citizens of the same nation. Christianity and humanism conflict worldwide. Humanistic laws are giving society a new morality which strikes against Biblical morality. They are supposed to remake society by freeing men from prejudice, ignorance, crime, and war. Humanism relies on democracy which has its own brand of authoritarianism. Many think the voice of the people is the voice of God, but like the Laodiceans, the people become the god of democracy. This indicates that nothing related to human democracy can stand in the way of the people. All who hold the Biblical concept of morality are looked upon as social deviates.

Educational systems are creating restlessness rather than promoting tranquility. Humanistic education is designed to establish the will of man as the ultimate authority. Any philosophy that denies the authority of Scripture promotes subjectivity. It stresses human freedom to be able to choose correctly and to create a subjectively meaningful society. Such philosophy relies on existentialism rather than Biblical supernaturalism. Existentialism is the humanistic philosophy that makes human experience the norm for judging reality. The chaos brought about by this system cannot be reversed by the same system.

Subjectivism is not the authority for determining what is true. Although institutional churches are filled with subjectivists, few people are willing to admit it. Why is no one willing to allow subjectivism to operate in the sphere of mathematics, but will permit it in the sphere of Biblical principles? Each business man is not permitted to subjectively form his own system of relationships because commerce would collapse, and that would lead to social chaos. On the other hand, religionists are unrestrained in their subjectivism of spiritual things. They think they have the right to express themselves about things of which they know little or nothing.

Another passage of Scripture about which there is much misunderstanding is Galatians 5:22-23 — “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” There is no law against the virtues of the Spirit mentioned by Paul. The apostle had been battling the legalizers who desired a ceremonial mold to regulate their religious lives. Hence, they preferred an external law to the inward principle. Paul had previously asked, “Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law” (Gal. 4:21 NASB). Those who desired to be under the law were legalizers. Hence, they made what God had given as a sequel to the deliverance of His people the means of their deliverance.

Contrary to the legalizers who live under the principle of the law, Christians live in the realm of the principle of the Spirit of regeneration, which is the Spirit of grace (John 3:8; Heb. 10:29). Therefore, “...they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24). We killed Christ when He came in the flesh. Through lawless men He was “slain” (aorist active indicative of *anaireo*, which means to put to death, kill, or murder) (Acts 2:23). On the other hand, Christ enables those of us who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit to “crucify” (aorist active indicative of *stauroo*, which means to crucify or mortify) our flesh with its passions and lusts (Gal. 5:24). Christ’s objective work at Calvary became a subjective experience to the regenerated person, and this is opposite to legalism. Therefore, the Christian is not compelled to duty by the energy of the flesh, but he is impelled to service and holiness of life by the Spirit of grace.

A warning must be given to those who have been made free by grace. True freedom becomes actualized in submission. The fact that we as Christians are not our own does not cast a shadow over our freedom but enables us to manifest it in joyful reality (I Cor. 6:20; Gal. 2:20). This is a freedom from something lesser to something greater: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:2, 3). Freedom is not the product of human action but the unsolicited act of divine grace. Hence, Christians are free in Christ, but they are also slaves of Christ: “For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant (*doulos*, a slave)” (I Cor. 7:22). As Christ’s slaves, self-expression apart from control cannot be visibly permitted. Objective principles must be translated into subjective actions. Therefore, the more God’s objective truth becomes a part of our constitution, the greater freedom we experience.

The word “ethics” comes from the Greek word *ethos* and is translated “manners” in I Corinthians 15:33 — “Be not deceived: evil communications [nominative plural of *homilia*, which means companionship, intercourse, or communion] corrupt good manners [accusative plural of *ethos*, which means custom, morals, or character].” This is another way of saying, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...” (II Cor. 6:14). Inward separation results in outward separation. There can be no safety among those in whose hearts there is no fear of God. Keeping away from evil society is much easier than being in it and resisting its current. Standing on the banks of a raging river is preferable to being in it and trying to resist its current.

Many think they guard the truth against doctrinal error, but they permit its desecration through carnal living. A party of antinomians in Corinth was polluting the purity of the church. The word “antinomian” is a compound noun made up of two Greek words — *anti*, which means against or instead of, and *nomos*, which means law. Hence, the antinomian is one who believes a Christian is

free by grace from the moral law. He claims freedom from all legal restrictions; thus, he has liberty to live according to personal pleasure. This philosophy is a perversion of truth. Anyone who embraces such ideology takes a tolerant attitude toward sin. Conversely, Paul was intolerant with sin and took an uncompromising stand against it.

Doctrinal and moral purity must never be separated in the church. Moral purity is the fruit of doctrinal purity. Where one is lacking, the other is also absent. Contending for the faith in doctrine while being unfaithful in life is hypocritical. Paul's strict attitude about orthodoxy and orthopraxy caused some in the Corinthian church to resent him. However, they respected him enough to ask the apostle at large for instruction on some matters of Christian conduct. Some of these matters will constitute our study of I Corinthians 7. There are five major divisions of this chapter: (1) marriage and celibacy (vv. 1-9), (2) marriage and separation (vv. 10-16), (3) marriage and happiness (vv. 17-24), (4) marriage and expediency (vv. 25-38), and (5) marriage and remarriage (vv. 39-40).

Marriage And Celibacy

Marriage and celibacy were the first subjects Paul addressed. Among the things about which the Corinthians had written to Paul, celibacy seemed preeminent; therefore, he addressed it first: "...It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (I Cor. 7:1). The Greek word for "touch" is a present middle infinitive of *hapto*, which in this context means to have intercourse with: "And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her" (Gen. 20:6). "So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent" (Prov. 6:29). Paul's "good" (*kalos*, which means good, profitable, or expedient) must be read in the light of "not good" of Genesis 2:18 — "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone...." There is no contradiction between the two. Here is a classic example of the importance of the context when a seeming contradiction appears. Circumstances were such when Paul wrote the Corinthian letter that the unmarried should not seek marriage. Although the "distress" (*anagke*, which means necessity, obligation of duty, distress, trial, or affliction) is not described, Paul said the married man should not shirk his marital responsibility, and the unmarried should not seek that responsibility (I Cor. 7:26, 27).

The apostle knew what it was for his own life to "stand...in jeopardy (present active indicative of *kinduneuo*, which means to be in danger or peril every hour)" (I Cor. 15:30). This Greek verb is used in these verses: Luke 8:23, Acts 19:27 and 40, and I Corinthians 15:30. The noun form *kindunos* is used in Romans 8:35 — "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" — and eight times in II Corinthians 11:26 — "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren." This gives some idea of the hardships and persecutions of early Christians in general and in particular in certain places.

Paul did not say that celibacy is good in the sense of superiority to marriage. That would be contrary to God's ordination of marriage for man's completion (Gen. 2:18, 24), as the means for propagation of the human race (Gen. 1:28), and as the image of the union between Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-33). On the other hand, the apostle did say that celibacy was good in view of the present affliction for one who is called to some particular service for the Lord or for one who has the gift of

self-control. Paul did not advocate the unmarried state as the general rule for practice but only as an expedient in the light of the present affliction or trial.

Celibacy does not promote greater spirituality. The Roman Catholic Church anathematizes all who say marriage is not one of the seven sacraments, but she turns right around and says celibacy was always the rule of the church. Not until the fourth century did she get a definitive statement about her doctrine of celibacy being more holy than the holy estate of marriage. The way Roman Catholics by-pass the marriage of Peter, who they say was their first pope, is amazing (Matt. 8:14). Was Peter a bad example for the Catholic clergy? One must not overlook Rome's teaching concerning the infallibility of the pope. The definition of infallibility by the Roman Catholic Church is that the church speaks forever by a divine voice, not intermittently by general councils, but always by the voice of its head. According to her affirmation, Peter, a married man, was infallible, and succeeding unmarried popes are infallible. How could Peter have been infallible since his marriage made him less holy than his celibate successors? Are there degrees of infallibility? Does the voice of a celibate pope contradict the voice of married Peter? Paul who had the gift of celibacy spoke of his right to have "a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord." He then mentioned Peter by name: "and Cephas" (I Cor. 9:5). He pleaded for support of the wives and children of God's servants. Without any reference to either moral or spiritual superiority, celibacy is God's gift to some for a special work (Matt. 19:10-12).

Marriage was not instituted just for the cure of fornication. The Greek text of verse 2 reads *dia de tas porneias* — "But because of the fornications." This is followed by two present active imperatives of *echo*, which means to have. Hence, the command is that each man have his own wife and each woman have her own husband. Since marriage was instituted before the fall, it must not be viewed as a mere cure for fornication, which Paul had condemned in the two preceding chapters. Using it as a cure for fornication would be a low view of marriage. Paul showed that the boundary of sex is marriage and that marriage must be a monogamous relationship. This is the command: "Let each have his or her own partner." The marriage bed must not be defiled. Those who sexually violate it are called whoremongers and adulterers, and God will judge them (Heb. 13:4).

Lawful sex is not a subject for which the man of God must apologize. Christians do not joke about sex. It is set apart for the marriage relationship and must be treated with respect. The perversion of sex does not bar its lawful use. Its mystery must be unveiled in the relationship of love that has been consummated in marriage, not in the laboratory of lust outside of wedlock. Christians recognize the reality of sexual desire, but they also acknowledge that it is controlled by love for God and each other in a marriage relationship. Furthermore, sex is a God-given endowment to be kept in trust for that person to whom one offers oneself in the responsible union of a lifelong marriage.

There is a mutual obligation for both husband and wife in the realm of sex (I Cor. 7:3-5). From mutual love, which is assumed in the state of marriage, flows the desire to please each other. There is no virtue in a husband and his wife living as celibates. Each has rights over the other's body. One is not to "Defraud" (present tense of *apostereo*, which means to deprive or unjustly withhold) the other, except by mutual consent for holy purposes for an agreed period of time. When that time is fulfilled, they are responsible to return to their normal relations to avoid Satan's temptation for lack of self-control. The word "incontinency" is from the Greek word *akrasia*, which means intemperance, incontinence, or want of self-control.

Paul gave some advice in verses 6-9. Although his speaking was by permission, the apostle did not want the Corinthians to interpret it as a command that marriage was a duty to all. The Greek word for “permission” is *suggnome*, which means to agree in judgment with or knowing together. It is a compound word made up of the preposition *sun*, which means with, and *gnome*, which means the mind as the means of knowing and judging. Since this is the only place the word is used, one must determine its meaning by the context. Therefore, Paul wanted the Corinthians to yield to the teaching of the Lord to which he had conceded because he had the mind of Christ (Matt. 19:12; Phil. 2:5). There are different interpretations of Paul’s voluntary yielding to the Lord on this disputed matter. Some think it refers to what he said in verses 2-5, but others apply it to the immediate context of verses 6-9 in relation with verse 1. It could not refer to verse 2 because every man’s having his own wife was by command. Furthermore, it could not apply to verses 3-5 because that which was due each partner in the marriage was a precept (Ex. 21:10). The apostle was expressing his agreement with the subject of celibacy introduced in verse 1.

Paul expressed his personal preference under the present conditions. Both marriage and celibacy were gifts. Among Paul’s special gifts, one enabled him to remain unmarried. However, he wanted the Corinthians to know that the celibate state was not meant for all. Celibacy would be no advantage if it meant that one would “burn” (present passive infinitive of *purōo*, which means to be inflamed with passion). On the other hand, where marriage is impossible, one is better to be inflamed with passion than to commit fornication. Burning with desire does not justify fornication.

The unmarried state was frowned upon by some, but Paul wanted no reproach brought upon the unmarried: “I say therefore to the unmarried [*agamois*, dative masculine plural—men] and widows [*cherais*, dative feminine plural], It is good for them if they abide even as I” (I Cor. 7:8). Paul did not say the unmarried state was better, but it was good. Since the unmarried men are referred to in connection with the widows by the use of the conjunction “and” (*kai*), indications are that the apostle was talking about widowers and widows. Some suppose that the unmarried includes the divorced of both sexes, and they advise that they should marry if they lack sexual control. Paul was not giving information about the marriage of divorced persons. That would have indicated that his permission was directly opposed to the principle of marriage he established in Romans 7:2-3. The Spirit of Christ and the Spirit that inspired Paul was the same. Therefore, the Holy Spirit would never lead Paul to say one thing and subsequently inspire him to say something entirely different.

We are not told how the unmarried of verse 8 became widowers and widows. But we are assured that either married partner is bound by the law of marriage as long as his or her mate lives. Hence, the only release from that law is the death of one’s mate. Nothing subsequent to established principles will ever contradict them.

Marriage And Separation

Paul followed the subject of marriage and celibacy by addressing himself to the subject of marriage and separation (I Cor. 7:10-16). He first gave advice to married Christians, and then he dealt with the problem of mixed marriages. Scripture condemns mixed marriages (II Cor. 6:14). But this situation occurs when one of the mates becomes a Christian after marriage. This was a problem with which Paul had to contend and with which the church shall be confronted until her completion. The apostle had given divinely inspired information to the unmarried, widowers, and widows; but he must also deal with the problem of believing couples and mixed married couples separating.

Many are teaching that divorce for believers and unbelievers is discussed in I Corinthians 7:10-16. They say the church is not to become an antiodivorce society. Such teaching necessitates a study of the Greek verbs *choridzo* and *aphiemi*.

The Greek verb *choridzo* means to separate, sever, or disunite; to withdraw or depart; to be aloof; to dissociate oneself or part company. This verb is used twelve times in the New Testament (Matt. 19:6; Mark 10:9; Acts 1:4; 18:1, 2; Rom. 8:35, 39; I Cor. 7:10, 11, 15; Philem. 15; Heb. 7:26). The following are the inflected forms of the four uses in I Corinthians 7 — (1) “...Let not the wife depart [*choristhenai*, aorist passive infinitive—point action time—of *choridzo*, to be dissociated or separated] from her husband” (v. 10); (2) “But and if she depart [*choristhei*, aorist passive subjunctive—point action time with the mood of possibility—of *choridzo*]” (v. 11); (3) “But if the unbelieving depart [*choridzetai*, present middle indicative of *choridzo*]” (v. 15); (4) “...let him depart [*choridzestho*, present middle imperative of *choridzo*]” (v. 15). The separation must be on the part of the unbeliever, not the believer. The first two inflected forms refer to the separation of a professing Christian woman from her husband, and the latter two speak of an unbeliever’s separating from a believer.

The Greek verb *aphiemi* means to send away or dismiss; to leave or depart from; to desert or forsake; to leave remaining or alone; to suffer, permit, or allow. This verb is used 143 times. The following are the inflected forms of the three occurrences in I Corinthians 7:11-13 — (1) “...and let not the husband put away [*aphienai*, present active infinitive of *aphiemi*] his wife” (v. 11); (2) “...let him not put her away [*aphieto*, present active imperative of *aphiemi*]” (v. 12) — this was a command for the believing husband not to desert his unbelieving wife if she desired to live with him; (3) “...let her not leave [*aphieto*, present active imperative of *aphiemi*] him” (v. 13). The believing wife was commanded to stay with her unbelieving husband who consented to dwell with her.

Paul began his discourse on marriage and separation: “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord...” (v. 10). The verb for “married” is a perfect active participle of *gameo*, which means to marry. The perfect tense signifies a completed action with a resulting state of being. Hence, the correct translation should be “But to those who have married” or “But to those having married.” The Cherokee Indians have a descriptive marriage ceremony in which the bridegroom and bride join hands over running water. Thus, they symbolically express that their lives are made by marriage to flow in one stream until the bond is broken by death.

The departure of the Christian wife from her Christian husband should not be final. Paul directed the wife who “separates” (aorist passive infinitive—point action time) to “remain [present active imperative of *meno*, which means to abide or to continue unchanged] unmarried [*agamos*], or be reconciled [aorist passive imperative—point action time—of *katallasso*, which means to be reconciled] to her husband” (I Cor. 7:10, 11). The apostle was not giving a treatise on divorce. If the verbal noun of *choridzo* means divorce, Paul would have had to say, “But if she divorces her husband, let her remain unmarried or be remarried (not reconciled) to her husband.” Although the wife leaves her husband, he is still called “her husband.” She is not to be reconciled to a divorced man but to her husband. Therefore, “putting away” (*choridzo*) does not sever the indissoluble marriage tie. Hence, the separated wife must be reconciled to “her husband.” The Greek verb *katallasso* is used six times in the New Testament (Rom. 5:10—twice; I Cor. 7:11; II Cor. 5:18, 19, 20). It can never be used in the sense of remarriage.

Using the Greek verb *choridzo* in the sense of divorce in Matthew 19:6 and Mark 10:9 does not indicate that it means divorce in I Corinthians 7:10-11. It is used to signify Jesus Christ's separation, not judicial divorce, from sinners (Heb. 7:26). The verb is not used in the sense of a judicial divorce in other references: "...they should not depart from Jerusalem..." (Acts 1:4); Paul departed from Athens..." (Acts 18:1); "...Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome..." (Acts 18:2); and "For perhaps he [Onesimus] therefore departed for a season..." (Philem. 15). If *choridzo* in I Corinthians 7:10-11 means judicial divorce, it did not annul the marriage bond. The separated wife was to be reconciled to her husband. Hence, those who use these verses to support the concept of divorce are defeated either way.

A different Greek verb is used in Paul's command to the man not to "put away" (present active imperative of *aphiemi*, which means to send away, depart from, or suffer) his wife (v. 11b). Although the verb is different, the meaning is similar. Salvation must not disrupt the marriage relationship. The command is that the believing husband must not send away his believing wife.

Paul turned to the problem of mixed marriages (vv. 12-16). Since Scripture clearly forbids mixed marriages, the mixed marriage problem involved cases where one member of the union had become a Christian after marriage or where a believer had disobediently married an unbeliever. The Christian wife or husband in a mixed marriage is not to initiate the leaving.

Jesus Christ had not given any specific command regarding this aspect of mixed marriages. Therefore, Paul gave information for which there had been no express command: "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord..." (I Cor. 7:12). The apostle was not disavowing inspiration. He was not distinguishing inspired from uninspired commands. Hence, the "rest" refers to husbands and wives in marriages where one spouse or the other is not bound by grace.

The Spirit had spoken plainly in the Old and New Testaments through prophets and apostles on the prohibition of believers marrying unbelievers. (See Neh. 13:23-26; II Cor. 6:14-16.) Paul, by the authority of the Holy Spirit, gave some relevant information concerning mixed marriages. Some separations could have been initiated by an incorrect understanding of Ezra 10:10-11 — "And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives." Intermarriage with the Canaanites was forbidden by God in order to maintain a holy seed and thus effect the birth of the Messiah. Satan promoted mixed marriages, trying to prevent that birth. By saying that the unbeliever must be the one to separate, Paul corrected the false interpretation that putting away strange wives meant the believer should separate from the unbeliever. This proves that any mixed marriage caused by a work of grace is not the same as those from which Ezra told the Israelites to separate.

A mixed marriage has been sanctified by grace: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (v. 14). The verb "sanctified" in both instances is the perfect passive indicative of *hagiadzo*, which means to make holy, to separate or regard as holy. The perfect tense signifies the completed action has a resulting state of being. The passive voice shows the marriage union has been affected by God's grace having been given to one of the partners in the union. Thus, the reality of the change is the work of God. The believer in the union lives in the light of God's grace, but that

light is not in the unbeliever. An external influence of grace proceeds from the life of the believer, but the unbeliever has no internal grace.

Those who advocate “the family covenant with God” use I Corinthians 7:14 as a proof text to teach that the holiness of this verse belongs to the covenant relationship. They believe parents can secure for their children the benefits of the covenant. They assume that by becoming Christians they bring their children with them into the fold of Christ. Their reference to the “children” (*tekna*, plural of *teknon*, which means a child) of this verse is unscriptural. Covenant theologians explain that until children are old enough to assume personal responsibility, believing parents are to regard them as Christians. If this is true, where is their depravity? Does this mean that holy association may become holy assimilation? This is one of the great errors of reformed theology. Neither the unbelieving married partner nor children are regenerated by the regeneration of another member of the family. That is the work of the sovereign Spirit. God has made no promise that grace given to one member of the family assures that grace will also be given to other members of the same family. The children of a home where grace exists have been separated from the common condition of a home without grace.

Some regard I Corinthians 7:15 as the legitimate grounds for divorce and remarriage: “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” The verb is used twice in the first part of the verse: (1) *ei de ho apistos choridzetai* — “but since the unbelieving one separates himself or herself,” and (2) *choridzestho* — “let him or her depart.” The departure or leaving must be by the unbelieving partner of the marriage union. As it has already been shown, *choridzo* cannot be proved to refer to divorce in verses 10 and 11. However, many are erroneously teaching that if the unbeliever insists on a divorce, the believer must not deny the unbeliever’s request.

The freedom of the believer is the subject of great debate: “A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” Those who believe that “depart” in the first part of the text means divorce maintain the believer must not prevent the divorce and is therefore free to marry again. They quote verse 39 as their proof text; however, this verse refutes, rather than proves, their contention: “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.” The text is not dealing with a divorced person but with one whose marriage bond has been annulled by death. This shows how prejudice blinds some Christians to the truth of a passage of Scripture. Verse 39 harmonizes with the established principle of marriage: “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man” (Rom. 7:2, 3).

The Greek verb for “under bondage” (I Cor. 7:15) is *dedoulotai*, a perfect passive indicative of *douloo*, which means to reduce to servitude, enslave, or oppress by retaining in servitude. Here, again, the perfect tense is used, which means a completed action with a resulting state of being. A believer’s social status because of desertion, not his divorce and remarriage, is under consideration in this passage. The believer is left free to serve the Lord without encumbering problems caused by the demands of an unbeliever. The freedom applies not to the right of remarriage but to the Christian life. Therefore, the believer lives in a continuing state of freedom that is a reality. God

called Christians “in the sphere of peace” (*en eirenei*). The sphere of peace refers to the realm of domestic peace. The deserted Christian is at liberty to live separately in the sphere of peace and is therefore not morally bound.

The deserted believer’s responsibility of verse 16 destroys the idea of divorce or remarriage: “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” Opposite views have been drawn from this verse. Some say it means that a marriage should be retained in hope of the believer’s saving the unbeliever. Others do not believe that such a marriage should be regarded as a means of evangelism. Those who embrace the latter view try to prove their point by comparing what Paul said in verse 11 — “But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband...” and the omission of “...let her remain unmarried...” from verses 15 and 16. Since *ei* (whether) follows *oidas* (knowest thou) in the Greek text, it can express either a negation or a wish. Therefore, the conclusion must be drawn from the context, and the sanctification of verse 14 should prove the latter. If *choridzo* of verse 15 means divorce, there would be no hope of saving the unbeliever. The verb for “save” is a future active indicative of *sodzo*, which means to save, rescue, preserve, or deliver. Since *sodzo* is used many ways in the New Testament, the hope of the believer should be to rescue the departed unbeliever from making a greater mistake. Salvation of the soul is the work of the sovereign God. (Study the word *sodzo* (save) —Matt. 1:21; Acts 2:40; I Cor. 7:16; I Tim. 2:15; I Pet. 3:21.)

The deserted believer should leave open the door for reconciliation. What if the unbeliever remarries? Does that free the believer because the unbeliever has committed adultery? The believer must abide by the principle of Romans 7:2-3 and I Corinthians 7:39, which is in agreement with what Christ taught (Luke 16:18).

Marriage And Happiness

The principle of a Christian husband or wife remaining with a nonchristian to whom he or she is married applies to our general calling in life (I Cor. 7:17-24). Although Paul introduced another subject, contentment applied to what he taught in verses 10-16. Salvation does not segregate believers from either family or social responsibilities. It separates but does not isolate. The early churches had some problems that required correction. Hence, the Corinthians had to realize that salvation did not start a revolution that wrecked the family relationship. Furthermore, learning that grace in the lives of God’s elect did not change the work ethic was necessary for the Thessalonians (I Thess. 4:11-12; II Thess. 3:6-15; I Tim. 5:8).

Salvation does not change customs by starting a radical social change, but it does change individuals within those customs. The calling of God’s elect reaches into the various religious and secular walks of life. Since Paul was an apostle at large, he had “the care of all the churches” (II Cor. 11:28). “...I teach every where in every church” (I Cor. 4:17). All the churches had problems, and Paul was God’s ordained apostle to give instruction for the correction of those problems. Hence, he gave orders in all the churches (I Cor. 7:17).

The Greek verb *kaleo* (to call) is used eight times, and the Greek noun *klesis* (a call) is used once in I Corinthians 7:17-24. Christians are the subjects of two calls: (1) Temporal calling is the work of God in providence: “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk” (v. 17). All do not have the same lot in life. (2) Spiritual calling is the work of God in

grace: “For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant” (v. 22). This is the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). Paul explained this call: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (I Cor. 1:26).

Three times within the context of I Corinthians 7:17-24, Paul repeated the same command concerning the believer’s providential call. Christianity does not make all its converts aristocrats or capitalists. Grace does not create an artificial greatness, but it teaches the true greatness of humble places. Spiritual greatness does not consist in doing great things in the eyes of men, but it does teach doing small things in a great way before God. Christians should learn in the admonitions of I Corinthians 7:17-24 not to murmur or to be restless in the situations God’s providence has assigned us. Circumstances were not mentioned by Paul in his declaration of contentment: “...I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. 4:11).

Progression in our providential call was Paul’s first admonition: “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches” (I Cor. 7:17). The important words of this verse are “distributed,” “called,” “walk,” and “ordain.”

The Greek word for “distributed” is a perfect active indicative of *meridzo*, which means to divide, allot, assign, or bestow. Since all do not have the same assignment or lot in life, grace teaches us to be content with God’s providential placement. This verb is used fourteen times and speaks of a divided kingdom (Matt. 12:25), a divided house (Mark 3:25), a divided inheritance (Luke 12:13), and divided Christians (I Cor. 1:13). It is also used in the sense of the allotment of fish (Mark 6:41), gifts (Rom. 12:3), and stations in life (I Cor. 7:17). The perfect tense denotes a completed action by God in His assignment and that the resultant state of the allotment is a reality.

God’s allotment of our various stations in life is in the perfect tense; furthermore, having been “called” is also a perfect active indicative of *kaleo*, which means to call or summon. Unlike the King James Bible, the Greek text reverses the proper names “God” and “Lord.” Thus, the Lord has assigned each man his station in life, and God has called each one. Therefore, in each person’s case, as God has called, the believer is to walk in his particular station of life.

The verb “walk” is a present active imperative of *peripateo*, which means to walk or make progress, to accompany or follow, to regulate one’s life or conduct oneself. It was a favorite metaphor with Paul for making the most of one’s opportunity. Hence, Paul’s command was that Christians must not seek to change their calling in life but that they should manifest the excellence of God’s grace in their respective stations in life.

The Greek word for “ordain” is a present middle indicative of *diatasso*, which means to prescribe, give order, or appoint. This order was not restricted to the Corinthians, but it was directed to all the churches for all time. Disorders were not peculiar to only the Corinthians.

Paul applied his “order” of verse 17 to called Jews and Gentiles in verses 18 and 19 — “Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.” The circumcised Jew called by God was not to become uncircumcised. On the other hand, the uncircumcised Gentile called by God was not to be circumcised. The verb

“called” with reference to the circumcision is an aorist passive indicative, and it is a perfect passive indicative with reference to the uncircumcision. The difference between an aorist and a perfect verb is that the aorist denotes a snapshot—point action time—view, and the perfect is like a moving picture—completed action with a resulting state of being. Circumcision and uncircumcision are worthless in God’s effectual call. Grace places no value on religious externals. The Jews in general were resting in outward ceremonies, but God said through Jeremiah, “...all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart” (Jer. 9:26). Thus, circumcision of the flesh was uncircumcision apart from the circumcision of the heart: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. 2:28, 29). “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal. 6:15).

The difficulty regarding I Corinthians 7:17 does not appear in the King James Bible. The Greek text begins with *Ei* (if) *me* (not), translated “but” in the KJB. Others translate *Ei me* as “other.” The words *Ei me* usually mean “except” or “unless,” as in I Corinthians 7:5 — “Deprive ye not each other, unless or except [*ei me*] by agreement...” (translation); Galatians 1:7 — “Which is not another; except [*ei me*] some trouble you, and who wish to pervert the gospel of Christ” (translation); Galatians 1:19 — “But other of the apostles saw I none, except [*ei me*] James the brother of the Lord” (translation); Romans 14:14 — “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: except [*ei me*] to the one reckoning anything to be common, to him it is unclean” (translation); Matthew 11:27 — “All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, except [*ei me*] the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, except [*ei me*] the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him” (translation).

Let us now consider the way the words *ei me* are used in I Corinthians 7:17. Some believe Paul gave a general principle to be applied to what he had just said in verses 12-16, and at the same time, it would apply to those who are called in the realms of circumcision and slavery. Hence, some have the consensus that the apostle was saying, “What can one do except [*ei me*] remain in the circumstance in which he is called?” He was not referring to spiritual progress in worthless customs, but he was instructing saved Jews not to seek to destroy their mark in the flesh. On the other hand, a saved Gentile should not seek circumcision.

Following Paul’s command for each Christian to make progress in his providential call, he gave a command to abide therein: “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called” (I Cor. 7:20). The verb “abide” is a present active imperative of *meno*, which means to stay or continue, to persevere, or to be constant. Continuing in one’s providential call is to be understood in a general rather than a qualified sense. The apostle used the illustration of a person’s being a slave (vv. 21-23). A Christian has no justification for remaining in an immoral or illegal station in life. Rahab did not continue the life of a whore. Zacchaeus not only stopped his illegal practice but returned fourfold to all he had defrauded. Paul did not continue his murderous pursuit of Christians.

The general sense of remaining in our providential stations of life is illustrated by the term “servant.” Paul used the Greek word *doulos*, which means a slave or bondsman, a servant or attendant. Some say the “call” (*klesis*) of verse 20 refers to salvation, rather than one’s station in life. They do not believe *klesis* is ever used when speaking of one’s avocation. The noun is used eleven times (Rom. 11:29; I Cor. 1:26; 7:20; Eph. 1:18; 4:1, 4; Phil. 3:14; II Thess. 1:11; II Tim.

1:9; Heb. 3:1; II Pet. 1:10), and its predominant use is connected with salvation. However, to say *klesis* is never used to speak of one's avocation is going too far. For example, the verb *kaleo*, which means to call or summon to salvation (Rom. 8:30), to call to the performance of a certain duty (Heb. 11:8), and to call to an office (Heb. 5:4), is also used in reference to the circumstance in which one is divinely summoned: "Let every man abide in the same calling [locative of *klesis*] wherein he was called [aorist passive indicative of *kaleo*]." Therefore, each Christian is to remain in the circumstance in which he was called by grace.

Liberty is not freedom from restraint or authority. A great truth concerning the nature of true liberty is hidden in the word *doulos*. No one is absolutely free from either restraint or authority. The four masters in the world are Satan, sin, self, and the Savior—Jesus Christ. Hence, if Jesus Christ does not dominate our lives, the other three will. The Greek noun *doulos* refers to a person who is in a binding relationship to his master. It is a word that divides every audience into two classes—the unsaved and the saved. Every person is born into a slavery to Satan, sin, and self by his natural birth. Only by the new birth is one born into a loving, willing bondservice to Jesus Christ.

The slavery of an unregenerate person is the subordination of his will, under the influence of a slavish fear, to another. Conversely, the slavery of a regenerate person is the subordination of his will, under the influence of love, to Jesus Christ. These two subordinations may be illustrated by two soldiers: (1) A young man is drafted as a soldier and forced by fear to fight for his country. The penalty for desertion is death; therefore, he fights out of fear for his life. He knows he will die if he deserts the army; whereas, he might survive the war if he fights. (2) Another soldier volunteered to fight for his country. Love for the freedoms he enjoyed made his service one of love and loyalty to a worthy cause. Submission of a person to a worthy cause is not a sign of weakness, but forced submission of one to the same cause is a sign of weakness. Some church members serve out of fear rather than love. Those who serve out of love have behind them the divine will working in them, causing their wills to willingly and lovingly do God's will.

Christian freedom is an important subject. There is no thought of coercion with Christ. True freedom is to know a Person, Jesus Christ, higher and better than oneself. Therefore, the greater slave one is to the infinite God, the greater freedom he enjoys: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free....If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:32, 36). Conversely, there is no greater slavery than the mastery of one by his own depraved will, whose fruit is unsatisfied passions and lusts.

Paul's third command is that each believer abide with God in the sphere in which he was called: "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called [aorist passive indicative of *kaleo*], therein abide [present active imperative of *meno*, which means to abide, continue, or persevere] with God" (I Cor. 7:24). Contentment in one's present station in life often becomes a great testimony for God's saving grace. The Christian slave living in the power of God's grace can be delivered from the depression and discontentment of heart caused by his condition of slavery. This is not to suggest that the Christian should refuse a door opened by the Lord for a better position in life. But it does mean that the believer is to be more concerned about continuing in fellowship with God than with circumstances. Paul's command is for Christians to "abide" (present continuous) with God because He is with them regardless of their circumstances.

Marriage And Expediency

At the beginning of the fourth division of I Corinthians 7, Paul addressed another question raised by the church (vv. 25-38). The apostle began this division with “Now concerning (*Peri de*) virgins (*parthenon*) I have no commandment of the Lord....” Although the word *parthenon*, genitive of *parthenos*, refers to only women in this passage, it is used of men in Revelation 14:4. Hence, it refers to a virgin or chaste person of either sex.

God’s apostle at large had no direct “commandment” (*epitage*, which means injunction, mandate, or command) from the Lord on the question at hand. This particular word is used only seven times in the New Testament (Rom. 16:26; I Cor. 7:6, 25; II Cor. 8:8; I Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:3; 2:15). No doubt the question arose because of the concept of celibacy that was adopted by some and because of the “present distress” (v. 26). The idea of celibacy gave occasion for the beginning of nunnery in the Roman Catholic Church, but her interpretation was erroneous. Although Paul had no direct injunction from the Lord on that particular matter, he said that he would give his own “judgment” (*gnome*, which means opinion, judgment, or suggested advice). He further stated that his advice would be trustworthy because of God’s mercy bestowed upon him. Having the care of all churches (II Cor. 11:28), Paul’s desire was that God be glorified through the church he had begotten through the gospel (I Cor. 4:15). The fact that Paul’s advice through the inspiration of the Spirit became a part of the sacred canon must not be overlooked. Therefore, distinction must be made between Paul’s inspired advice and our uninspired advice on matters for which there is no direct injunction.

Reference to the “present distress” is important in order to correctly understand this division of the chapter (v. 26). The word for “distress” (*anagke*, which means distress, trial, or affliction) is a strong word. It refers to something far more difficult than the ordinary circumstances or trials of the Christian life. This is the word Paul used to describe his unusual trials (II Cor. 12:10). One has suggested that when the seas are raging is not the proper time to change ships. In view of unusual circumstances, the apostle suggested that men and women would do better to remain in their present states. Thus, Paul’s advice was proper.

Although marriage was the normal state for men and women, abnormal circumstances made it feasible for the Corinthians to remain as they were: “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; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you” (vv. 27, 28). The word “bound” (by marriage) and the word “loosed” (from marriage) are perfect tense verbs, which indicate settled states.

There is no reference to divorced persons implied in the use of the verb “loosed” (v. 27). That interpretation would fit neither the immediate nor the overall context of the chapter. Paul made his meaning plain. A married man should not seek to be loosed, and an unmarried man should not seek to get married. Those who married “would have [*exousin*, future active indicative of *echo*, which means to have] affliction [*thlipsin*, accusative singular of *thlipsis*, which means affliction, trial, or distressing circumstances] in the flesh” (I Cor. 7:28). Marriage involves the responsibility of not only a wife but children. Both are great blessings in ordinary circumstances, but they can add to the distress in abnormal circumstances. Separation from them plus worry about their protection and welfare can be torture added to affliction. As far as the beloved apostle was concerned, he said, “I would be sparing you.” The verb “spare” (v. 28) is a present middle indicative of *phaidomai*, which

means to spare in respect to added hardship brought about by marriage. Evidently, Paul had reference to imminent danger for Christians. Marriage was not a sin to those who chose to marry, but it would not be expedient in view of the present affliction.

Paul's reason for such advice was the shortness of time: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short..." (v. 29). The word "short" in the Greek text is a perfect passive participle of the verb *sustello*, which means to be shortened. Hence, the "time" (*kairos*, which means a limited period of time marked by characteristic circumstances) of crisis was near. The apostle was indicating that the Corinthians must adjust to the "present distress" by commitment to eternal matters: "...it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (vv. 29-31).

Five areas of earthly circumstances and things with which a Christian must not be excessively occupied are mentioned:

1. Those who have wives are to be as though they do not have them (v. 29). This does not indicate that their care for their wives should be as though they had none. That teaching would contradict I Timothy 5:8 — "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." The Holy Spirit would not inspire Paul, the author of both exhortations, to contradict himself. The apostle was teaching that no earthly union should take precedence over our eternal union with Christ. All earthly bonds will cease, but our bond with Christ is eternal. Therefore, we must never seek to please our earthly spouses at the expense of displeasing Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation who is bringing us to glory.

2. The weeping should be as though they did not weep (v. 30). Mourners frequently become completely occupied with their sorrow. The Greek word for "weep" is a present active participle of *klaio*, which means to mourn, weep, or lament. When primary things are viewed in their proper perspective, we will not be overcome by lamentation. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, did not become so occupied with the disorder of Israel that he failed to try to construct something worthwhile out of the ruins. What a lesson for us who live in a time of apostasy!

3. The rejoicing should be as though they did not rejoice (v. 30). Rejoicing over our present family situation, health, or circumstances, which are subject to sudden and drastic changes, can be excessive. Therefore, joy over our present state should be reasonable. Joy in the Lord can never be extravagant because the Lord of our salvation, from whom true and lasting joy flows, can never receive too much praise from the redeemed. Grace furnishes the Christian with the strongest and most satisfying joy. It is a joy that fire cannot destroy, flood cannot drown, and physical death cannot annihilate. Faith enables the believer to live in the mouth of death by strengthening him against the horrors of it (Ps. 23:4; Rom. 8:38) and by showing him what lies beyond it (I John 3:2). Hence, the joy of the Christian comes from God. Human joy comes from within oneself, but divine joy comes from without. Divine joy alone is experienced in the midst of physical necessities: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The

LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments" (Hab. 3:17-19).

4. Those who are buying should be as though they possessed nothing (v. 30). The Greek word for "buy" is a present active participle of *agoradzo*, which means to purchase something in the marketplace. The word for "possessed" is a present active participle of *katecho*, which means to have in full and secure possession. Possessions are all right as long as we keep in mind that they are things of time with which we must part. Spiritual things alone, which we have been able to accomplish with our earthly investments, will live eternally. Paul's advice to the Corinthians was that they should not be possessed with their possessions. But they must be so possessed with the Lord that their possessions would be held loosely in view of the coming crisis. The final consideration of earthly possessions should be that they are the Lord's, temporarily loaned to us for our glorification of Him.

5. Users of the world should not make excessive use of it (v. 31). The Greek word for "use" is a present middle participle of *chraomai*, which means to use, to make use of, or to employ. The word for "abusing" is a present middle participle of *katachraomai*, which means to use excessively. You will observe that the latter participle is a compound form of the same verb used when speaking of the lawful use of the world. Hence, the world is given for our use, but not to excess. Paul previously stated that the world is ours: "...For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3:21-23). The Christian must understand that the world may be a help with proper use, but a hindrance with excessive use.

The reason for not exorbitantly using the world is that its "fashion" (*schema*, which means fashion or external show) "passeth away" (present active indicative of *parago*, which means to pass along or pass by). The word "fashion" is used only twice in the New Testament. The noun is used as the passing fashion or external show of the world's system (I Cor. 7:31). But in Philippians 2:8, it speaks of the contrast between what Jesus Christ was as the second Person in the Godhead and what He appeared to be in the eyes of men. The verb *parago* is a compound word used ten times in the New Testament. It carries the idea of passing by or away (Matt. 9:9, 27; 20:30; Mark 2:14; 15:21; John 8:59; 9:1; I Cor. 7:31; I John 2:8, 17). The fashion of this world's system is made up of continually passing opinions and manners of men. Hence, its standards are always changing to please the depraved nature of mankind. A changing world system should cause Christians to keep their eyes and affections stayed on the unchangeable God and His promised blessings. God and eternal verities are not passing by as actors on a stage or as the seasons of the year.

In view of the "present distress" and the coming crisis, Paul wanted the Corinthians to be without anxious cares (vv. 32-35). The Greek word for "without carefulness" is an accusative plural of *amerimnos*, which means free from care or anxiety (Matt. 28:14; I Cor. 7:32). A brave man becomes a coward when his wife and children are faced with a distressful situation. Thus, his service for the Lord under such conditions may be hindered. The married woman, as well as the married man, "careth for the things that are of the world." This does not denote worldliness in the sense of James 4:4 — "...whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." However, it does mean that married people, with an interest for the family, have responsibilities which demand some attention to the things of this world. Paul showed the difference between the married woman and the "virgin" (unmarried woman). The married woman has cares from which the

unmarried is free. The same is true with married and unmarried men. Therefore, the single state would be without distraction in the “present distress,” but Paul was not putting a “noose” (*brochos*) on the Corinthians, constraining them to obey him.

Paul made it clear that he did not condemn marriage (vv. 36-38). There are several views of the subject under discussion in these verses: (1) an engaged couple who had become confused because of the celibate teaching, (2) a “spiritual marriage” where two live celibate lives, and (3) a father who had a daughter who had passed the age of youth. The key to the proper interpretation of the verses is in understanding the verbs *gameo*, which means to marry (v. 36), and *gamidzo*, which means to give in marriage (v. 38).

Paul used a plural present imperative of *gameo*, “...let them marry” (v. 36). Hence, the father does not sin by permitting his daughter and the man she loves to marry. Although the word for “father” is not used, the masculine gender is used. The man has authority to prevent his virgin from marrying. However, he who “giveth her in marriage” (present active participle of *gamidzo*, which means to give in marriage) does well, and he who does “not” (*me*) give his virgin in “marriage” (present active participle of *gamidzo*) does better in view of the “present distress.”

Marriage and Remarriage

The last division of I Corinthians 7 involves the subject of marriage and remarriage (vv. 39, 40). Remarriage is justified only on the basis of death: “The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord” (I Cor. 7:39). This verse harmonizes with the established principle of marriage (Rom. 7:2, 3). It destroys present-day teaching concerning what are believed to be Biblical reasons for the termination of a marriage contract. Those who advocate such teaching say marriage can be terminated by fornication or adultery, marriage of a divorced person, desertion, or death. However, death alone terminates the marriage bond.

The widow of a deceased husband is free to remarry, but her marriage is restricted to a Christian mate: “...she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.” The restriction “only in the Lord” is not limited to a person affiliated with the same denomination as oneself. There were New Testament churches, but no denominations as there are today, when this inspired advice was given by Paul. Denominational affiliation does not guarantee that the prospective mate is a Christian. Determination must be made on the basis of Scripture, rather than a man-made religious organization.

Scripture gives the survivor of a marriage terminated by death the right to remarry; however, Paul’s judgment was that the Christian would be happier to remain unmarried. Since many of the Corinthians showed lack of respect for the authority of the apostle at large, he seems to have concluded his advice with a vein of irony: “But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God” (I Cor. 7:40).

Marriage in the Lord is one of the great blessings of man and woman. Man must render glory to God for a Christian wife because a good wife is from the Lord (Prov. 19:14). She is a special gift of God’s grace. A wife of God’s choosing is a delight (Prov. 12:4). One seeking a wife must be under the direction of the Lord. The servant sent by Abraham to seek a wife for Isaac sought the Lord’s

guidance (Gen. 24:14). God who appointed the ordinance must receive preeminence in it. The man who finds a good wife finds a good thing (Prov. 18:22).

Christians are urged not to marry nonchristians: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God...” (II Cor. 6:14-16). The two families on earth are the children of God and the children of wrath. A believer who marries an unbeliever is asking for trouble. Problems will inevitably ensue. It has been said that a Christian man who marries an unsaved woman has an untamed heifer for his wife, or a Christian woman who marries an unsaved man has a wild ass for her husband. The believer is always the one who suffers. Consider Solomon, and see what followed his unholy alliance in wedlock. A believer attached to an unbeliever will find difficulty making spiritual progress.

Love for God should precede marriage. It is essential to true virtue. Virtuous love toward anyone proceeds from loving God supremely. All purity emanates from God. Nothing in which God is not the first and the last can possess the nature of virtuosity. Man is commanded to love the Lord preeminently and his neighbor as himself: “...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27). Love to God is necessary to correctly love one’s partner in marriage. Love for God should regulate all the Christian’s affections. Outside of love to Him, everything must be viewed from a selfish basis. There is no security in a merely corporeal marriage.

The marriage of Christians pictures the relationship between Jesus Christ and His church. A husband’s attitude toward his wife must be regulated by love: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). Jesus Christ has a holy, sacrificial, and enduring love for the church. This love should be emulated by the husband for his wife. The man ought to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He is required to minister to her needs, protect her, and give honor to her as unto the weaker vessel: “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered” (I Pet. 3:7). The man is the head of the woman (I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23). Unless this divine appointment is observed, there will be nothing but confusion. The household must have a leader; God has committed its rule to the husband. Therefore, He holds the man responsible for the orderly management of the home. The consequences will be serious if he shirks his duty and turns the reign of headship over to his wife. However, this does not give the man license to be a domestic tyrant. He is obligated to govern by love, not fear. He is the image of Christ governing His church, and his wife is a helpmate.

The apostle Paul exhorted wives to be submissive to their husbands (Eph. 5:22). There is only one exception in the application of this principle: namely, when the husband commands what God forbids or forbids what God commands. The wife must abide by the principle of Christian subjection to higher authority in the fear of God. She is not commanded to disobey God; she must obey God. However, in her obedience she must be willing to suffer the consequences of the authority at home. Sarah was in willing, loving subjection to Abraham out of respect for the authority of God: “For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham,

calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement” (I Pet. 3:5, 6). Conclusively, the wife is commanded to be in subjection to her husband out of respect for the authority of God.

The subjection of a wife to her husband is interpreted as subjection and obedience to the Lord because it is service to Christ: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord” (Col. 3:18). The contrary is rebellion against God. Consequently, a wife receives comfort against all unkindnesses and unthankful returns from her husband. Her subjection is inward and outward. Inward reverence, the ground of all love and submission, renders due esteem for her husband: “...let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Eph. 5:33). Reverence for her husband is an humble acknowledgement of the husband’s right by God’s ordinance. Outward reverence is manifested in both word and deed; thus, woman acknowledges her husband’s headship. Obedience is manifested in many ways. The Christian spouse studies to please, rather than be pleased (I Cor. 7:34). She seeks to carry out the wishes of her husband but not at the expense of her duty to God (Titus 2:5). The woman is to be a help, not a hindrance, in the home.

The law of nature demands submission. Even the heathen enacted a law that “...all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small. And the saying pleased the king and the princes...For he sent letters into all the king’s provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house...” (Esther 1:20-22). Shall heathen obey the command of the Lord, and Christians refuse to do so? Natural imperfections of womankind demand her submission: “...giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel...” (I Pet. 3:7). Modesty should prevent the woman from going up and down in the world. The order of her creation demands submission (I Tim. 2:13; I Cor. 11:8, 9). Included in the word “wife” is a hint of earnest, indoor, stay-at-home occupation fitting for her who bears man’s name. God has appointed her sphere according to her nature (Gen. 2:18-24). She is not to instruct or usurp authority over the man.

Modern society is instrumental in making the unenlightened mind of woman feel that her place is one of inferiority. However, her place is not inferior. She is a helper to man. Family character is represented in woman taken from man; therefore, she owes him the honor of remaining hidden as a modest spouse in the comparatively narrow enclosure of her home. There are some rare instances in Scripture where women were used in an extraordinary way. In all these cases they were still subordinated to men. Woman should remember that she is the glory of the man and withdraw herself from the eyes of the world. A wife is compelled to look to her husband for all that she desires; here is her dependence. She is to live under his authority; here is her submission. The godly spouse finds her place in her family (I Tim. 2:15). Woman’s sphere is neither equal nor unequal to man’s; she has an entirely different role. While the woman may act within a narrow circle — narrow in extent but vast in influence — she is fulfilling her God-appointed role in life. Disposition, not position, is important with God.

Woman’s modesty is manifested in her dress code: “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” (I Tim. 2:9, 10). “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plating the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which

is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (I Pet. 3:3, 4). She should be modestly attired. A Christian lady knows what is modest apparel. Her appearance should not attract attention to herself in either her attire, hair style, or conduct. A woman’s dress is a mirror not only of her mind but of her heart. Shamefacedness and sobriety indicate modesty and self-control. This is dignity and seriousness of purpose as opposed to levity and frivolity.

The Christian woman’s standard of dress is higher than that of a nonchristian. The prudent woman avoids whatever would appear light and wanton. She would not want to attire herself as a female of the street. Furthermore, she avoids clothing that pertains to a man: “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man...” (Deut. 22:5). Womankind has always had a tendency to dress in a manner to attract men, and women are no different today. The word “apparel” in I Peter 3:3 does not mean clothing only, but costly, conspicuous clothing. The woman, therefore, is to be very simple, neat, and clean in her dress. She should not be overdressed, underdressed, or poorly dressed, but dressed in a manner becoming to a Christian. Peter did not give an absolute prohibition when he stated that woman’s adorning was not to be the outward adorning of plaiting of the hair, wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel. Precedence should be given to higher things. There is no manifestation of grace in a mean, unattractive garb. The attire should always be in keeping with one’s station in life. If gold is to be completely eliminated from one’s dress, then consistency with this passage demands that clothing would also be eliminated. Some women make the mistake of thinking that if they dress as the world dresses, they please their unsaved husbands. Peter was warning against this when he exhorted Christian women to dress modestly. Their adornment should be appropriate. Artificiality does not become them. They should ask themselves if their adornment feeds the natural lust of a man’s appetite for sin or pricks his conscience. Is the beauty of grace hidden beneath a veneer of worldliness? Clothing is for the protection of the body. The Christian woman’s charm is manifested in her manner of dress (I Tim. 2:9, 10). She has respect for not only herself but her husband who is her head. Most of all she reverences the Lord Jesus Christ who is her Savior. Holy women of the past adorned themselves according to the inner man of the heart. A holy wife, subject to her own husband with a meek and quiet spirit, is a jewel of great price in this day of rebellion.

Fornication And Adultery Differ

Christ’s teaching on divorce and Moses’ legislation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 perfectly harmonize. A close study of Scripture will show that the institution of marriage is not connected with any particular dispensation or nation. It was instituted by God between Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Since Adam is the natural head of all mankind, the principle is for all people for all time. Although divorce is not mentioned in the ten commandments, two of them indirectly forbid it: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” and “...thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife...” (Ex. 20:14, 17). The teaching on divorce in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18) and the legislation by Moses (Deut. 24:1-4) are perfectly united. The proper exegesis of the uncleanness, the defilement, and the abomination before the Lord will prove there is no contradiction between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of Moses on divorce.

The word “fornication” is very controversial among interpreters. The following are some frequently made statements:

1. The Greek word *porneia* (fornication) is a generic term used to describe all sexual relations outside of marriage.
2. The distinction of fornication referring to premarital sex and adultery referring to infidelity in the married state is not altogether correct.
3. Fornication is a sin of lesser degree than adultery because adultery was a sin punishable by death.
4. Christ gave permission to divorce one’s mate on the ground of fornication, rather than on its effect of adultery subsequently committed by the guilty partner who remarries.
5. All adultery is fornication, but not all fornication is adultery.
6. Christ used the word “fornication” not in contradistinction to “adultery,” but in its wider sense of including sin either before or after marriage.
7. Fornication is an unrepentant lifestyle of sexual unfaithfulness.
8. “Fornication” is a broader term than “adultery.”
9. Christ did not expect His church to become an antiodivorce society.
10. Christ was not talking about either the legal or the one-flesh aspect of marriage in the exceptive clause, “except it be for fornication” (Matt. 5:32; 19:9).

The following are some definitions of fornication and adultery that have been given:

1. Fornication (*porneia*) means whoredom, concubinage, adultery, incest, lewdness, uncleanness, and idolatry. It speaks of illicit sexual conduct in general. The word is used metaphorically of the worship of idols.
2. Adultery (*moicheia*) is intercourse between a married person and one who is not his or her spouse. It is forbidden by God’s seventh commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14). One may be guilty of adultery in thought as well as act: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27, 28).

One must understand how Biblical lexicographers compile their lexicons. They go through the Scriptures to see how a particular word is used and thus conclude its meaning. They list the various ways in which a word is used. With this in mind, let us go through the Greek New Testament and see how *porneia* is used.

The Greek noun *porneia* is used twenty-five times (twenty-six times in some manuscripts which include Romans 1:29) in the following ways: (1) of unlawful sexual intercourse outside of marriage

(I Cor. 7:2), (2) to falsely accuse Christ of being illegitimately born (John 8:41), (3) of immoral thoughts (Matt. 15:19), and (4) metaphorically for idolatry (Rev. 14:8). No one can deny that *porneia* has a more unrestricted use than *moicheia*, but fornication is not a synonym for adultery when both are used in the same verse (Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21; Gal. 5:19). Therefore, to say Jesus Christ used “fornication” as a synonym for “adultery” in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is erroneous. The Lord Jesus was not guilty of tautology—the needless repetition of the same idea by using different words.

The following listing of nouns should be considered with reference to the subject under discussion:

1. *Porneia* (fornication) is used twenty-five times, excluding Romans 1:29 (Matt. 5:32; 15:19; 19:9; Mark 7:21; John 8:41; Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; Rom. 1:29—in some manuscripts, but others use *poneria*, which means wickedness, mischief, or malignity; I Cor. 5:1—twice; 6:13, 18; 7:2; II Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; I Thess. 4:3; Rev. 2:21; 9:21; 14:8; 17:2, 4; 18:3; 19:2).
2. *Pornos* (a fornicator or impure person) is used ten times (I Cor. 5:9, 10, 11; 6:9; Eph. 5:5; I Tim. 1:10; Heb. 12:16; 13:4; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).
3. *Porne* (harlot or prostitute) is used twelve times (Matt. 21:31, 32; Luke 15:30; I Cor. 6:15, 16; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25; Rev. 17:1, 5, 15, 16; 19:2).

The following are the verbs to be considered:

1. *Porneuo* (to commit fornication) is used eight times (I Cor. 6:18; 10:8—twice; Rev. 2:14, 20; 17:2; 18:3, 9).
2. *Ekporneuo* (to excessively indulge in fornication) is used in Jude 7.

To avoid teaching that a second marriage in the New Testament is adultery, some assume that the woman’s second marriage of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was not adultery. They explain away the woman’s defilement by saying the divorce, rather than the second marriage, was the cause. Thus, they claim remarriage does not constitute adultery in the case of divorce on the grounds of adultery or desertion.

Scripture proves that the one-flesh relationship established in the first marriage continues. The divorce mentioned by Christ in answer to the Pharisees’ questioning did not dissolve marriage. The Pharisees asked, “Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away” (Matt. 19:7). Since they were referring to the legal aspect of marriage, they pointed to Deuteronomy 24:1-4. However, Christ answered the Pharisees by quoting Genesis 2:24 to prove that marriage is indissoluble. A marriage consummated by sexual union (one flesh) cannot be invalidated. It is not terminated after the “legal aspect” of marriage is annulled on the basis of adultery. Christ used *porneia* in the exceptive clause because He was speaking of unfaithfulness during the betrothal period, the only reason the unfulfilled marriage contract could be abrogated.

The divorce of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was the nullification of an unfulfilled contract. It was granted because of the uncleanness the husband had found in the betrothed. Her marriage to the second man, which was consummated by sexual union (one flesh), defiled the woman. Hence, remarriage

to her first husband, to whom she was formerly betrothed only, was an abomination. Thus, the reason *porneia* cannot be equated with *moicheia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is clear. The Holy Spirit did not use “fornication” as a synonym for “adultery.” Furthermore, adultery was punishable by death under the law.

Popular teaching on Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 presents two views on divorce: (1) divorce for unchastity plus remarriage does not equal adultery, and (2) divorce for other reasons plus remarriage equals adultery. This teaching indicates that in the first case marriage is dissolved; whereas in the second, it means separation rather than divorce. Those who hold this teaching say the only hope for either party in the second case is remarriage to the same partner. Conclusively, the common belief is that the first to remarry commits adultery thus freeing the second party for remarriage. Those of this opinion fail to see that under the law an adulterer or an adulteress was put to death. The living party was then free to remarry on the basis of death. However, the penalty of death for adultery is not executed today. Scripture does not justify remarriage except for the cause of death. Apart from fornication under the law, divorce means separation without the right to remarry in any case. The only authorization for remarriage is subsequent to the death of one's spouse. One flesh is as impossible to negate as for parents to divorce their children. The flesh and blood relationship of children is the fruit of the one-flesh connection between husband and wife.

Marriage that has been consummated by sexual union (one flesh) cannot be severed by a writing of divorcement: “...Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery” (Mark 10:11, 12). “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (Luke 16:18). An understanding of the significance of one flesh will enable one to see that these verses by Mark and Luke do not contradict Christ's statement concerning divorce in Matthew 5 and 19.

MAN AND WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

The Bible emphasizes that worship must be according to divine order: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). God gave Moses the pattern for the tabernacle. Observe that Moses did as the Lord commanded (Ex. 40:19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32). “Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he” (Ex. 40:16). Moses finished the work according to the order of the Lord; then, the glory of God filled the tabernacle: “So Moses finished the work. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Ex. 40:33, 34). The temple was also completed according to specifications before the glory of God filled it (I Kings 7:51-8:11).

David sought to bring the ark of God, which had been taken by the Philistines, back to its appointed place. He reminded Israel that God’s established order must be observed: “Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever” (I Chron. 15:2). The blessings of the Lord had been withdrawn from them because they had not worshipped God after the order ordained by Him: “For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders...as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD” (I Chron. 15:13-15). During the days of Hezekiah, the house of the Lord was set in order, and then the children of God observed the passover (II Chron. 29:35, 30:1).

The Lord has given the pattern for the church, and it must be observed to receive God’s blessings. The apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian church that divine order must be practiced: “Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Cor. 14:40). No one has authority to change God’s order. Problems in professing Christendom result from failure to follow divine order.

Disorder was prevalent in the Corinthian church. The apostle Paul instructed them concerning two prevalent disorders—woman’s insubordination and the church’s manner of observing the Lord’s supper. Saints are more edified by observing divine order than they are by so-called expediency. In the first division of I Corinthians 11:2-16, Paul dealt with the relationship of man and woman in worship. Man’s head is Christ, and woman’s head is the man. Paul stressed woman’s conduct and her covering as a worshipper—in relation to her husband, the assembly, and God. He distinguished between inferiority and subordination.

Scripture does not restrict either woman’s influence or her intelligence in her God-given sphere. It does definitely exhort her to occupy her sphere. No one has done so much as Jesus Christ to liberate woman. However, there is no similarity between liberation in Christ and the so-called woman’s liberation prevalent among women today. Christianity is womanhood’s emancipator and protector.

Some who oppose the Biblical view of woman and her position in the church present the following arguments:

1. The unit of man and woman, not individuals, was made in the image of God. Man without woman cannot render a complete ministry. A ministry that excludes women is not truly human.

This erroneous view, if consistent, would argue that Jesus Christ did not become a true man because He did not become man and woman. Furthermore, it would indicate that the image of God is not borne by any individual but only by the combination of man and woman.

2. Man and woman are one in church authority (Gal. 3:28). Hence, the number of women studying theology in religious schools and being ordained to the ministry is increasing.

Contrary to this view, the context of Galatians 3:28 reveals that the apostle Paul was not discussing woman's subjection to man. He spoke of equality of all persons in Jesus Christ. Woman in Christ is spiritually equal with man in Christ. Difference in sexes is irrelevant in redemption, but diversity remains in church polity and worship. The Creator has not equipped women for positions of authority in the churches.

3. I Corinthians 11:5 teaches that women are to pray and prophesy aloud in the church.

The context must be considered to discern truth. The subject of woman's teaching is not discussed in I Corinthians 11:5. The emphasis is on subjection of woman to man. Paul did instruct women about the subject of teaching, but that is recorded in I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:11-14. If a woman desires to know anything, she must ask her husband at home. She is not to speak in church. However, the woman can pray silently, listen to the word, and sing psalms. Singing psalms was sometimes referred to as prophesying (Ex. 15:20, 21; I Sam. 10:5; I Chron. 25:1-3).

4. The apparent results verify woman's teaching.

Obvious consequences do not justify disobedience to God's method. God's work done in God's way will never lack supply. It is never right to do wrong that one may have the opportunity to do right. God's blessings cannot be discerned by physical results. The assumption, visible results prove the veracity of women teaching, reversed would denote that every preacher who does not have results is illegitimate. If that were true, Noah, a preacher of righteousness, was an illegitimate preacher. However, the Bible states that he was faithful to the Lord. Isaiah asked, "Who hath believed our report" (Is. 53:1). He was sent to a disobedient and gainsaying people to make their hearts fat and their eyes heavy. A few of his hearers received his message and followed the Lord. To judge by the appearance of results, one must judge the whole results, immediate and ultimate.

5. The woman's covering has no significance at all for us today. God is interested in mental attitude, not hats or veils. There is no such custom.

Assuming that mental attitude is all that is meant is to deny the emblems of water in baptism and bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. If mental attitude is sufficient in the tradition of wearing the veil, why does it not suffice in baptism and the Lord's Supper? The idea of "no such custom" will be expounded when we get to verse 16.

6. The Greek preposition *anti* proves that long hair is the woman's only covering.

What about the covering and uncovering addressed in verses 5 and 6? This will be discussed later.

There are three kinds of assembly meetings for worship. (1) There are mixed assemblies, composed of believers and unbelievers (Matt. 5:1; 13:1, 2; Luke 15:1). The apostle Paul clearly defined such a worship service: "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers..." (I Cor. 14:23). (2) There are assemblies including only saints (Mark 4:34; Acts 2:1-4; 20:7). There are many other references to these meetings throughout the book of Acts. (3) There are assemblies of elders and principal brethren within the local church (Acts 1:2-4; 13:1, 2; 15:2, 4, 6; Gal. 1:2).

Scripture records no occasion where women separated themselves from the brethren to perform worship among themselves. This eliminates all women's missionary groups, ladies' Bible study groups, and Sunday School classes. Such meetings cannot be called worship. The Bible reveals only two officers in the church, elders and deacons (I Tim. 3:1-13). There are no God-called women teachers or preachers in the churches. When persons desired prayer, they called upon men, not women (II Thess. 3:1; I Tim. 2:8; James 5:14). Persons and performances must be distinguished. The appointment of meetings for divine worship is an act of power. This authority resides in elders. The Old Testament demonstrates this with Moses, Aaron, and the priests. The New Testament shows that elders are responsible for the organization in the local church.

Without the teachers God has called, Christians cannot comply with the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. He builds His own house. He appoints officers for rule in His churches. He gives the gifts for administration in His churches. He gives power and authority to those who are to minister and rule in His churches. Since Christ is the Author, Institutor, and Appointer of authority, that authority must be observed. Nothing honors the Lord except that which is done in obedience to Christ's authority. He has never appointed a woman to the office of elder or deacon in the church.

The apostle Paul interrupted his censure of the church in Corinth (of I Corinthians 10) with a commendation: "Now I praise you, brethren..." (I Cor. 11:2). He then exhorted them to remember him, not personally, in all things. They bore in memory some of his counsel, but he would have them remember and do all his proclamation. Therefore, he continued by rebuking the church for the incorrect observance of two traditions. The traditions should be observed as he had delivered them. Subordination in the first was not to be changed for the convenience of anyone. The Greek word translated "ordinances" is the plural of *paradosis*, which means that which is transmitted in the way of teaching, precept, or doctrine (II Thess. 2:15; 3:6). It is used not only for oral instruction, transmitted from one generation to another (Matt. 15:2, 3), but for any instruction whether it relates to faith or practice, written or oral (II Thess. 2:15; 3:6). The traditions brought to the minds of the Corinthians were well-known and observed by all the churches. The church at Corinth had no right to deviate from them. Their wives were to be in subjection and manifest it. The word *paradosis* is used thirteen times in the New Testament, and I Corinthians 11:2 is the only reference where it is translated "ordinances."

Paul first established the principle of women and worship, on which his rebuke rested. He would have Christians to retain in memory the foundation for the truth of woman's place in the church: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the

man; and the head of Christ is God” (I Cor. 11:3). Order and subordination pervade the whole universe and are essential to its being. The body is dependent on and subordinate to the head. The obvious meaning is that woman is subordinate to man, man is subordinate to Christ, and Christ is subordinate to the Father. The Father is head in the Godhead. There cannot be two heads. This indicates no inferiority. Jesus Christ recognizes the Father’s headship. The Father is head of Jesus Christ as the God-Man (Mediator). The Father formed, prepared, anointed, upheld, and glorified Christ’s humanity. Jesus Christ always did that which pleased the Father; He obeyed Him; He committed His spirit to Him.

Two heads, husband and wife, cannot exist in the home. Confusion between husband, wife, and children results from such an unscriptural condition. Husband and father must be recognized as head of the home. His final decisions must be adhered to. Jesus Christ is head of the church, and He has committed leadership to the man. There cannot be two heads in the church. Man is in an intermediate position between Christ and the woman. Scripture does not state that Christ is head of the woman but that the man is her head. Woman’s place is in her husband. Jesus Christ directs Christians beyond His human nature to the Godhead. The visible church directs us beyond herself to the universal church. Man directs us beyond himself to his head, Jesus Christ. Woman directs us beyond herself to her head, man.

Subordination must be manifested in public worship (I Cor. 11:4-10). Man’s being forbidden to pray or prophesy with covered head is mentioned only to illustrate the principle. The believer’s head is Jesus Christ who appears for him in heaven and gives him access to God. Therefore, man should appear with open face and uncovered head, manifesting freedom and boldness. Otherwise, his sacrifice and intercession are rendered ineffectual. Man with covered head appears guilty, ashamed, and subjected to men instead of God.

Woman, in contrast to man, dishonors herself when she worships in public assembly with her head uncovered: “But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered” (I Cor. 11:5, 6). She elevates herself to man’s place and classifies herself with women with shaved heads. She must conform to either the reputable or disreputable class of her sex. Departure from one is conformation to the other. The symbol of woman’s subjection is a veil for her long hair. She wears this as a sign of her subjection to her husband. The woman who does not cover her head may as well cut her hair. Since it is a shame for a woman to shave her head or cut her hair, she should cover her head. Her veil is the badge she wears to proclaim that she is not a public but a private person. She performs her duties at home, not in public. The woman’s place was and still is in her husband. Woman’s motive for covering her head proceeds from within, from obedience to God. Every Christian woman will manifest the hidden man of the heart when she hears this truth. She will manifest whether or not she is willing to be submissive.

Two coverings for the Christian woman’s head are taught in I Corinthians 11:6 and 15. The idea that woman’s long hair (v. 15) is her only covering for the worship service is refuted by verses 5 and 6. A woman “uncovered” (*akatakaluptos*, which means uncovered or unveiled) dishonors her husband. Therefore, she might as well have been “shaven” (perfect passive participle of *xurao*, which means to cut off the hair or to be shaved). Furthermore, Paul said, “For if the woman be not covered [present passive indicative of *katakalupto*, to veil], let her also be shorn [aorist middle

imperative of *keiro*, to cut off the hair or shave—she should do it at once]: but if [*ei*, first class condition particle which assumes to be true—since] it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered [present passive imperative of *katakalupto*, which means to veil]” (I Cor. 11:6). There are two imperatives in this verse: (1) If the woman in worship is unveiled, she is commanded to shave her head at once. (2) Since being unveiled is a shame, the command is to be veiled.

Women’s teaching or public witnessing is not discussed in I Corinthians 11. Her covering is the point of emphasis. Speaking is the subject of I Corinthians 14:34-35 — “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” The woman must remain silent in all subjection. She is to assume the place of a learner. Teaching is an authoritative office; it is not committed to women. The reason for her silence is stated in I Timothy 2:11-14 — “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” Eve was the occasion of man’s fall. She was deceived and in the transgression. Woman is not to publicly pray or teach. Prophesying, with respect to women (I Cor. 11:5), means joining in public worship in silent prayer, hearing the word, and singing praises to God with the men. Singing is sometimes called prophesying.

The Lord did bestow extraordinary gifts on some women in the past. Miriam, Deborah, Esther, Anna, the daughters of Philip, and others were used in an extraordinary way. Nevertheless, God’s extraordinary acts do not annul the ordinary rules by which He orders us to be bound. Miriam was used in an unusual way (Ex. 15). She did not make herself positionally equal with Moses. On one occasion she tried to do so, and this brought the judgment of God upon her (Num. 12). She came behind the men in worship and in the company of Israel. She did not wear the same badge as a prophet. All the women sang, but they sang in response to the men: “And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously...” (Ex. 15:21). The song is called the song of Moses, not of Miriam. The women followed the men, not conversely. Lydia, a proselyte, went to a place of prayer: “And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither” (Acts 16:13). Nothing is said about a worship service observed there. Paul just went to a place where prayer was supposed to be made. Lydia worshipped in the same sense as the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27). As the eunuch came from Jerusalem, Philip joined himself to him and taught him the Scriptures. He heard, obeyed, and was baptized.

Woman was made out of man for his help and assistance and to be a crown and glory to him. One is in error when he trusts women to lead, instruct, and defend the truth. Men have been called of God to perform these duties. They are responsible to lead in the church as well as in the home. The Lord does not give His glory to another: “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Is. 42:8). Moreover, He will not surrender the glory that He has given man to woman. Man is the image and glory of God (I Cor. 11:7, 8). Man is the glory of God; therefore, his head should be uncovered in the presence of God. Woman is the glory of the man; therefore, her head should be covered before God. She was made subordinate to man. Hence, she was not designed to reflect the glory of God as ruler. Her mission is to mirror the glory of man as her authority or ruler. She should reveal what there is of majesty in him. She always

assumes his station in life. She becomes queen if he is king and manifests to others the honor which belongs to him.

The covering for woman's long hair during worship is the only symbol given her to manifest to mankind her subjection to her husband and her desire to honor him. As Deity was veiled in human flesh to manifest God to men, woman covers her personal glory (long hair) to reveal her husband's glory.

Some controversy exists about I Corinthians 11:10 — “For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.” The Greek word for “power” is *exousia*, which means authority. Some say the angels refer to ministers. Others claim they are literal angels. With either meaning, the principle is the same. The angels of Isaiah 6 covered their faces, signifying humility in the presence of the Lord. If they are humbled in God's presence, how much more should women be humbled before Him. Since angels are ministering spirits to God's elect (Heb. 1:14), women should be veiled in assembly meetings. Insubordination in the presence of angels, who are subordinate to God, would bring the worship service into disrepute.

Words of encouragement are given to the weaker vessel (I Cor. 11:11-16). The apostle Paul distinguished inferiority from subordination. Woman has a place of her own, but it is not man's. There is a partnership between the sexes, but it is one in which woman is subject to man (v. 11). This verse is given partly to repress the pride and insolence of man so that he will not treat his wife with indifference and neglect. Although woman is subordinate, she is mutually dependent on the Lord (Eph. 5:22-25). Therefore, both man and woman are required to portray the spiritual truth the Lord would have revealed in the assembly.

Appeal is made to what is proper in public worship (I Cor. 11:13-15). A manifestation of insubordination by the woman who names the name of Christ is a shame. Nature itself teaches subordination. Nature gives man short hair and woman long hair. It teaches that long hair is a disgrace to one and an ornament for the other. A man who looks and dresses like a woman or a woman who looks and dresses like a man is abomination to the Lord: “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Deut. 22:5). Long hair has been considered in all ages and countries to be an ornament to woman. It is given her as a covering or natural veil. Because it is a veil, it is a glory not to the man, but to her. Long hair, not cut or shaved (I Cor. 11:6), is woman's personal glory. Mary anointed Christ's feet and wiped them with her hair (necessarily long), signifying that her personal glory was cast at His feet in complete submission to His will. Long hair is woman's natural covering (v. 15). A covering for her natural covering is to be worn in public worship (v. 6).

There is much discussion over the clause “for her hair is given her for a covering” (I Cor. 11:15). It is used by some to try to prove that long hair is woman's only covering. Hence, much discussion arises over the Greek preposition *anti*, which means against, instead of, opposite to, for, or in place of. Here it is used with the noun *peribolaion* (a veil). The expression does not mean “instead of a veil” because that would contradict verse 6 — “...let her be veiled” — which is a command. The preposition *anti* is to be understood in the sense of “and grace for grace” (*kai charin anti charitos*) (John 1:16). As grace is a permanent blessing from God, woman's long hair is God's gift for her

covering. Thus, we have “grace *anti* grace” (John 1:16), and woman’s long hair is given her “*anti peribolaiou*” — for her permanent covering.

Christians are exhorted to avoid contention: “But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (I Cor. 11:16). Controversy and party spirit may sharpen the natural faculties, but few sins dim the spiritual faculty so much. Things can not be correctly judged by the spiritual faculty alone. Christians need a higher consciousness of divine presence. The apostle Paul recognized no other practice in worship than that he had proclaimed. Paul appealed to the established Christian rule. He did not establish a principle and then give excuse for disobedience to it. Paul was saying, “If anyone wants to argue about it, the churches have no other habit in worship.” Paul thought a continuance of his dispute was not worthwhile with those who would not be satisfied with the reasons given for the correct conduct of women in public worship. Those who would not be convinced of this truth contended not for truth, but for human opinion. Enough had been said to convince an honest mind. He only added that if they were bent on causing dissention because of the truth on this subject, then they should do what they were determined to do. They were insubordinate anyway. Paul and the churches recognized no other custom in worship revealed in the word of God. Divine order must be observed. If one will not accept authoritative teaching, let him remain in self-chosen ignorance and bear its consequences. Paul would neither attempt to convince them nor waste time disputing the point. Where the evidence of any truth is abundant and has been clearly presented, those who reject it should be left to their own insubordination which can be cured by grace alone. Care must be taken that all things are done according to the word of God. A good decorum and strict order should be observed in all things that nothing be done contrary to the rule and decency declared by the Lord.

Neither the apostles nor the churches had any such custom as contentiousness, but they did have the custom of women wearing veils to manifest their submission in the worship services (v. 6). The Greek word for “contentious” is *philoneikos*, which means fond of strife, contentious, or disputatious. This is the only place where this particular adjective is used in the New Testament. Paul was saying that after all the evidence given, he had nothing further to say to anyone who wanted to be contentious. They were not to be contentious but submissive to their teachers (Heb. 13:17). The Greek word for “custom” is *sunetheia*, which means an established custom or practice. “But if one is inclined to be contentious, we have no other practice, nor have the churches of God” (NASB). Custom in our text is not used in the sense of “Custom which all mankind to slavery brings—that dull excuse for doing stupid things.” Custom without truth is error grown old, but Paul’s custom appealed to the established Christian rule. To discard the veil meant to cast off man’s authority.

The Lord wills that woman manifest her subordination to man. If she is not allowed to exercise authority in the home, surely she cannot do so in the church. She is not inferior but subordinate. Subordination brings great peace of mind, resulting from knowing and doing the will of God.

MAN AND WOMAN IN SOCIETY

Chastity is considered an outmoded topic in America where there are more divorces than anywhere in the world and where free love and homosexuality are considered other forms of life style. Discrimination, claimed by various ethnic groups, is the cry of the day. But worse than that, homosexuals and other immoralists are making the same claim. Their claim is being heard and supported by politicians and religionists in this country. Hence, one has difficulty determining who is in the worst condition, the homosexuals and immoralists in their immorality or the politicians and religionists in their statesmanship and religion. Christians are experiencing, from a sin-sick society, soul vexation as well as discrimination; but by God's grace, they are not crying out because of their treatment. They know they are in the world, but not of it (John 17:14-16). Furthermore, they know God has a purpose for their being in the world. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13, 14).

Consciences Must Be Void Of Offense

Majority morality is influencing the thinking of many in our society. It advocates that morals change with a changing society. That indicates that morals are determined by the majority. Thus, subjective guilt changes with the changing moral codes of a changing society. We often hear people say, "What is right for me may not be right for you." In this case, the basis for right or wrong would have to be subjective feelings rather than objective truth. Therefore, if one can convince himself that what he wants to do is for his own best interest and that of society in general, he has no subjective guilt. That same attitude motivated unregenerated Saul of Tarsus to persecute the church; therefore, he did it in good conscience.

Relative good compared with that which is worse might be called relative goodness in the conscience of a natural man. This was Paul's concept of goodness before he was regenerated. Therefore, Paul, the apostle of Christ, said before the Jewish council, "...Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). Having been saved by grace, Paul knew that the conscience of the unregenerate could be made subservient to either self-interest or passion. In fact, the conscience can become so seared that it ceases to respond to any objective standard. Subjective feelings become the standard for the natural man's actions. This is why we hear the statement, "Do whatever feels good to you."

Following Paul's regeneration and conversion, he said, "...herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). Conscience is the monitor of human nature. It must be (1) purified, (2) enlightened, and (3) kept sensitive in order that one may have a conscience void of offense. (1) The conscience is purified by the application of Christ's finished work by the power of the sovereign Spirit (Heb. 9:14; 10:1-14). (2) The purified believer, whose mind has been darkened by sin, must study to gain the fullest possible knowledge about spiritual matters. The only law unbelievers have is "the law written in their hearts" (Rom. 2:14, 15). However, Christians have the objective truth of God and must have consciences guided by God's word. (3) The conscience can be kept sensitive only by constant soul searching: "Search

me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23, 24). This searching by God’s objective revelation results in confessing spiritual ignorance and constantly imploring divine guidance in the way everlasting. Scripture reveals that the ways of men are like a mirage.

The conscience void of offense must first be toward God before it can be toward man. Since his conscience is unseen, man may claim that he has a conscience void of offense before God. However, his claim does not make what he has said to be true because conscience acts only on the basis of its light. Therefore, Paul said, “...herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). God looks on the heart. Although man cannot see the heart, he looks on the outward appearance. Eternity will disclose God’s judgment of man, but man’s fruits are judged by men in time.

The two departments of offenseless conscience of man correspond with the two great divisions of his duty. They are inseparable. Some are like the certain man who came to Christ and asked, “...Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life” (Matt. 19:16). This story is repeated by Mark and Luke (Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:18-27). It is a refutation of modern religion. Any religious experience that begins and ends with itself is false. The man’s concept of good was that it is in “things” rather than in a “Person.” Although he did not know God or that Jesus Christ was (and is) incarnate and absolute Good, he addressed Christ as “Good Master.” He then asked, “...what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” The young man did not know that good things are the external fruit of the absolute “Good.” When he was pointed to the second table of the law, he said, “...All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet” (Matt. 19:20). The attention of his conscience (inward judge) was then directed to the first table: “...sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me” (Matt. 19:21). When the man was pointed first to the sacrifice of his things and then to follow Christ, which would be a continual sacrifice of himself, he became sorrowful. Following Christ points to the first table of the law — “...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart [reality of love], and with all thy soul [intensity of love], and with all thy mind [sagacity of love or soundness of judgment]” (Matt. 22:37). The first table of the law unmasked the young man because he loved good things more than incarnate Good, the Person of Jesus Christ.

Because his conscience was void of offense toward men, Paul had a keen sense of concern for the body of Christ. The context of Acts 24:16 must be considered: “...herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). Paul defended himself against the orator (genitive of *hretor*, which means an advocate or orator) Tertullus who brought accusations against him before Felix. The Jews, ignorant of Roman law, employed Roman lawyers to represent them in the courts. All the problems which Paul’s enemies created were blamed on God’s servant, Paul. Tertullus, like many lawyers today, sold his services to the cause of the wrong against the right. The apostle stood against a lawyer who knew too much human law to have a clear view of true justice. Because Tertullus contested both the truth of God and the cause of Christ, Paul was set to defend both of them.

Tertullus was a clever but unprincipled lawyer. He began his prosecution by using professional flattery to a wicked Roman governor: “...Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness” (Acts 24:2, 3). False flattery, however, is nothing but lies

covered with beautiful language which deceived people enjoy hearing. Following the false flattery, Tertullus brought false charges against the apostle who had the care of all the churches: “For we have found this man a pestilent [*loimon*, from *loimos*, a pestilent fellow or a plague] fellow, and a mover of sedition [*kinounta staseis*, an instigator of insurrection against the establishment] among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader [*protostaten*, from *protostates*, a chief or champion] of the sect of the Nazarenes: Who also hath gone about to profane the temple...” (Acts 24:5, 6).

Although Paul was not guilty of any of the charges brought against him, he must not overlook the fact that Christ’s servant is not above his Lord. Coining a name of scorn like “Nazarenes” is not a modern invention. Such names usually come from professing believers. Paul’s conscience void of offense signifies one that is clear of transgression against either God or men. The apostle was dedicated to God, and he had not shunned to declare all the counsel of God to men (Acts 20:27). Paul asserted that the opposite of the charge that was brought against him was true. His apology (defense) had faith in Scripture at the foundation, hope as the effect of faith, and practical holiness as the fruit of faith and hope. No believer can perjure his conscience because it renders a judgment according to the light it possesses.

Tertullus could appear pious in public, but his services could be purchased for an evil cause. He was a genius in hypocrisy in his so-called “concern” about the purity of the temple. How could an unregenerate Roman lawyer have any interest for the Jewish temple? His concern was what he would be paid for having concern. This evil scheme has a wide range of applications, but Christ described its end result when He demonstrated to the Pharisees that it is never wise to be wicked: “...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” (Luke 16:15). Wearing a cloak of piety in order to amass a fortune may be highly esteemed among men, but it is an abomination before God that shall be justly judged.

Paul could not suppress the truth that had been committed to him as a means of conversion (Rom. 1:16), whether he was before men or the powers that be as they falsely accused him. As he stood before the highest tribunal in the land, Paul’s accusers were his own brethren according to the flesh, and the judge was an unprincipled Roman. His defense was presented cheerfully, skillfully, and confidently (Acts 24:10-21). At the beginning, Paul stood before Felix, an evil man; but at the close, Felix stood as captive before Paul (Acts 24:22-27).

No case is so heinous that some advocate will not plead it, and no man is so honest and upright that some will not slander him. Furthermore, no case is so clear that some will not question it, and nothing is so false that some will not embrace and defend it. This succinctly describes the society in which Christians live and to whom we must witness, because some of Christ’s sheep who have not heard the call of the gospel are wandering around in it.

Governments change and rulers die, but Jesus Christ remains the same (Heb. 13:8). Human laws change with a changing society; but God’s laws, like His holy character, never change. Christians know these great truths, and they look forward to the day when unjust rulers, judges, lawyers, and false witnesses of this world shall stand before the righteous judgment of God. A righteous government will never be upon the earth until the government shall rest upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ.

Unnatural Things In A Corrupt Society

Corruption in society is a sign of the last days. “THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come” (II Tim. 3:1). The Greek word for “perilous” is *chalepos*, which means hard to bear, trouble, or dangerous. This adjective is used only twice in the New Testament (Matt. 8:28; II Tim. 3:1). In Matthew 8:28, *chalepos* is used to describe two men who were possessed with demons: “And when he [Christ] was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes [Gadarenes], there met him two possessed with devils [masculine present passive participle of *daimonidzomai*, which means to be possessed by a demon or evil spirit], coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce [*chalepoi lian*], so that no man might pass by that way.” Hence, the two demon-possessed men who came out of the cemetery to meet the Lord Jesus were so vicious that no one but Christ could travel that road in safety. Christ had previously encountered demon-possessed men (Matt. 8:16), but He had not met any that were as crazy, vicious, and strong as the ones who came out of the cemetery.

Although II Timothy 3 cannot be restricted to an eschatological interpretation, verse 13 proves that evil men and impostors will become progressively worse: “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” Some signs, to a degree, are found in every generation. They have been allowed for the purpose of producing watchfulness in the saints. Neither those who embrace the extreme view of eschatology nor those who deny an eschatological kingdom can take any refuge in II Timothy 3. Some go too far, but others do not go far enough in their view of Christ’s second advent. Like other truths, Christ’s coming lies between two extremes. Distinction must be made between Christ’s coming and the exact time of His second advent. No one knows the time, but the passing years plus progress in wickedness intensify watchfulness by informed saints. Nearly two thousand years have passed since Paul was inspired to speak of the last days. Should we not speak of the last of the last days?

The heresy exposed in II Timothy 2 and the corruption in society of chapter 3 have a definite connection. Corruption spreads faster when either heathenism or only “a form of godliness” exists (II Tim. 3:5). Paul named unnatural affection among the signs of the last days. “Without natural affection” (v. 3) is one of the characteristics of a corrupt society. The Greek word translated “Without natural affection” is the plural of *astorgos*. It means devoid of natural instinctive affection or without affection to mankind, and it is used only twice in the New Testament (Rom. 1:31; II Tim. 3:3). Some of the unnatural things in our corrupt society are abortion, artificial insemination, surrogate mothers, choosing motherhood without fatherhood or fatherhood without motherhood, homosexuality as an accepted lifestyle, choosing the desired sex of a child, euthanasia, and cremation, to name a few.

FIRST—Abortion is unnatural. Proabortionists have developed their own code of morals. They assume that the issue is not moral but medical, indicating that God has no right to impose a standard. Some medical voices justify abortion by saying a problem pregnancy is a disease. Thus, for whatever reason, doctors say they can cure the disease by abortion and make their patients well. They further state that when viewed from that perspective, they have no difficulty performing abortions.

Changing terminology does not eliminate abortion from being sin. Too many things that should be called “sin” are being labeled “disease” in our society. Is aborting an unwanted child a disease or a sin? Pathologically, disease is a condition of the body which causes incorrect function resulting

from heredity, infection, illness, or ailment. Theologically, sin is transgression of a divine law. God said, in the judicial aspect of His law, “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman’s husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine” (Ex. 21:22). Does this sound like the fetus is nothing more than a piece of flesh that has no more value than a fibroid tumor?

There is no Scriptural proof that the unborn child is anything less than a human being. Furthermore, there is no principle of Scripture, science, or philosophy authorizing us to pinpoint a time between conception and birth when a human being emerges from something less than a human being. Science and philosophy might rationalize some point to justify the actions of proabortionists, but Scripture is clear on the subject. David saw his own sinful nature originating at the time of conception: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5). Note that David said my mother conceived “me,” not a nonperson. He further explained God’s concern for the unborn human life: “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well” (Ps. 139:13, 14). Jeremiah added to David’s testimony: “Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer. 1:4, 5). John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb (Luke 1:15).

John the Baptist’s being filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb is debated by men. The controversy is over the preposition “from,” which is the translation of the Greek *ek* (Luke 1:15). Some say *ek* in this prepositional phrase is “out from” rather than “in” the mother’s womb. Those who take this view say there is nothing said about John’s being filled with the Holy Spirit “in” (*en*), but rather “from” (*ek*) the womb. Others declare that “from the womb” means from his earliest beginning. They believe he was controlled by the Holy Spirit even while he was in his mother’s womb. Their point is proven by showing that “...the babe leaped in [*en*] her womb...” (v. 41), and when the news of Mary’s being pregnant with Jesus Christ was announced, Elisabeth said, “...the babe leaped in my womb for joy” (v. 44). The Greek preposition *en* is used twice in verse 44 — (1) *en agalliasei*, instrumentally for extreme joy (*agalliasis*); and (2) *en te koilia*, locatively in the sphere of the womb. The movement by John was more than the fetal movement resulting from the mother’s emotion.

The opinion of people who feel that members of other races are less than human is no different from Hitler’s thought about the Jews and the proabortionists’ idea about the “unborn fetus.” They treat the unborn child as a nonperson with no inherent right to life. If the unborn child has not begun to live, how could it be born? If life had not begun, there would be no life at all: “And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” (Rom. 9:10-13).

Each of us began life as only one cell, but that one cell had all the needed ingredients to form a complete human body. Any person who denies the humanness of the fertilized ovum is obligated to prove otherwise. If it is not human life, what kind of life is it? Conception is the time when the woman’s ovum is fertilized by the man’s sperm. Since this is a biological fact, when David said,

“...in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5), he was talking about the beginning of himself. David was not a nonentity between conception and birth. Furthermore, Scripture speaks of a “babe” (*brephos*, which means a child whether unborn or just born) in the womb (Luke 1:41, 44) or subsequent to birth (Luke 2:12, 16). The same word for “babe” is used in II Timothy 3:15 and I Peter 2:2.

Persons who rationalize that a problem pregnancy is a disease or a fetus is something less than human have their consciences seared. Paul spoke of those who would depart from the faith and give heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons in times subsequent to his own. He further stated that they spoke lies hypocritically, because their consciences had been seared into insensibility (perfect passive participle of *kaustriadzo* — *kauterriadzo* in some MSS—which means to be branded with marks of guilt or to be seared into insensibility) (I Tim. 4:1, 2). Consciences that have been seared become calloused: “Who being past feeling [perfect passive participle of *apalgeo*, which means to desist from grief, hence, to become insensible or callous] have given themselves over unto lasciviousness [dative of *aselgeia*, which means outrageous behavior], to work all uncleanness [genitive of *akatharsia*, which means uncleanness, lewdness, or impurity] with greediness [locative of *pleonexia*, which means some advantage which one possesses over another; an inordinate desire for riches; grasping, overreaching, or extortion]” (Eph. 4:19).

Women who want unwanted pregnancies aborted, doctors who abort them, persons who condone such actions, and lawmakers who legalize them are all in the same boat. They are all acting outrageously because their consciences have been seared into insensibility.

Women who want to abort their unwanted pregnancies are acting unnaturally. They love either their jobs or permissive lifestyles more than their offspring. Thus, they manifest selfishness and greed. They falsely claim they have a right to do what they please with their own bodies. Satan has blinded them to the fact that the unwanted fetus is a “babe” (*brephos*). From the day of the fertilization of the ovum, the human embryo is antigenetically foreign to his mother. Some object to this and say the fetus is a part of woman’s body because it is dependent on the mother for survival. There is no argument on that point, but the newly born child is also dependent on its mother for survival. If one can abort a baby in the womb, why not murder a newly born baby? The woman who agrees to have an abortion becomes an accomplice to the murder of her unborn baby.

Doctors who abort unborn babies are murderers. They murder for hire. Their seared consciences have persuaded some of them that abortion is a perfectly acceptable and valid health measure. Therefore, they no longer think abortion is a crime. The Bible gives the reason for their thinking: “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:18).

Persons who condone abortion become accessory to the crime of murder. Proabortionists are as rebellious against God and His unchangeable principle of life as women who agree to the abortion of unborn babies and doctors who abort them.

The Supreme Court has legalized the crime of the murder of unborn babies. Its placing some safeguards on the last trimester of pregnancy proves there was doubt about the fetus’ being a nonperson. The inconsistency of lawmakers is revealed by their making neglect of a newly born

baby that dies a crime, but aborting a baby in the womb not a crime. Thus, the new permissiveness of laws reveals the corruption of this amoral age.

SECOND—Artificial insemination is another unnatural practice among humans in a corrupt society. The word “artificial” means something that either is a substitute or lacks naturalness. Insemination is the injection of male semen into the female reproductive tract for the purpose of impregnating the female. Sterility in the male of a married couple is one reason given for artificial insemination. However, that practice is unnatural, and it raises a moral question. Some may argue that it is not adultery because there is not one-flesh relationship. Although there is not a one-flesh relationship in the sense of I Corinthians 6:16, the female ovum is fertilized by the sperm of a man who is not her husband, and this is immoral. A second reason given for artificial insemination is that it is for the purpose of building a super race. Hence, sperm banks are built with what is considered high-quality semen. The sperm of strong, healthy men with high IQ is sought. That was Hitler’s idea before World War II.

THIRD—Acting as a surrogate mother is unnatural. A surrogate mother is no different from a woman who has children for the purpose of selling them. The word “surrogate” means one who becomes a substitute for another. What is the difference between a woman who becomes pregnant for the purpose of selling the baby and a woman who becomes a surrogate for money? Although some claim to do this for a loved one or friend, the principle is the same. A sterile wife’s consenting for her husband’s semen to be artificially injected into the reproductive tract of a surrogate for the purpose of producing a baby for the childless couple is unnatural.

FOURTH—Single parenthood is unnatural except in the case of the death of one of the parents. A growing number of women and men choose motherhood and fatherhood in the single state. This is unnatural because children need both parents: “CHILDREN, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise” (Eph. 6:1, 2). Single parenthood is justified only in the case of death. Since “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child...” (Prov. 22:15), the rod of correction is needed where words fail. A child neglected is sure to bring shame to his parents (Prov. 29:15, 17). Since man is woman’s head (I Cor. 11:2-16), he has the greater responsibility in the matter of discipline. Eli’s great sin was failure to discipline his sons. God said to Samuel, “In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them” (I Sam. 3:12, 13 NASB). On the other hand, God commended Abraham, “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgement; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him” (Gen. 18:19).

FIFTH—Homosexuality is unnatural. It is a menace to society. It has not only become an accepted lifestyle but threatens the health of many. Homosexuals have come out of their closets and are becoming a political power. Furthermore, they have invaded many religious institutions, claiming there is no Scripture that says homosexuality is a sin. Thus, homosexuals and many religionists alike are blind to Biblical history and Scriptural instruction. Apart from a spiritually circumcised ear, all Scriptural teaching on the subject will be like the seed that was sown by the “way side” (*hodon*, accusative of *hodos*, which means a way or road) (Matt. 13:19).

Among the unrighteous people who shall not inherit the kingdom of God, the inspired apostle mentioned “fornicators” (plural of *pornos*, a fornicator), “idolaters” (plural of *eidololatres*, an idolater or worshipper of idols), “adulterers” (plural of *moichos*, an adulterous person), “effeminate” (plural of *malakos*, a male who submits his body to unnatural lust), and “abusers of themselves with mankind” (plural of *arsenokoites*, one who lies with a male as a female) (I Cor. 6:9). The Greek word *arsenokoites* is used here and in I Timothy 1:10 — “For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind...” This Greek word is a compound word composed of *arsen*, which means male, and *koite*, which means a bed. Hence, the reference is to male homosexuals. Although the Greek word *arsenokoites* is not used in Romans 1:26-27, homosexuals of both sexes are described: “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.”

Homosexuality is not new, but its acceptance by heterosexuals as another lifestyle is new. How can that which is unnatural become an accepted lifestyle with so many? It could not apart from a corrupted society. One must understand that Christians constitute a “little flock” (Luke 12:32) in a world system that is dominated by the spirit of the age: “AND you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others” (Eph. 2:1-3). There was a time when sodomites were restricted to certain places. For example, the Sodom of history was known for its ones set apart for unholy purposes (Gen. 19). However, in today’s society, homosexuals are unrestricted. Modern-day Sodom has enlarged her borders. Christians, like Abraham of old, see by faith that this amoral society is under the judgment of God.

Homosexuality was not only exposed but punished in the Old Testament: “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is abomination” (Lev. 18:22). “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them” (Lev. 20:13). (See Deut. 23:17, 18; Judges 19:22-24; I Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; Is. 3:9.)

The revelation of God’s wrath against sin, which includes homosexuality, is described by Paul in Romans 1:18-3:20. God’s wrath is the counterpart of His righteousness. It is not a passion but a principle. His wrath is the reaction of holy love in the presence of sin. To the nature of God, wrath against sin is as natural as love for holiness. As God cannot be holy without being jealous for His holiness, He cannot be holy without manifesting His wrath against sin. Therefore, God gave sinners over to their evil passions as punishment for their sins.

Concerning sinners, three references to God “gave them over” are recorded in the first chapter of Romans (vv. 24, 26, 28). The Greek word for “gave them over” is an aorist active indicative of *paradidomi*, which means to give over into the power of another or to abandon one to his own sinful lusts for the manifestation of the depths of human depravity. Each of the times Paul said that God “gave them over” must be viewed in the light of what preceded God’s abandonment.

The ones abandoned by God in verse 24 were those who held down truth (v. 18), ignored general revelation (vv. 19, 20), devaluated God (v. 21), professed superior wisdom (v. 22), and exchanged God's glory for man-made idols (v. 23):

1. Holding down truth in unrighteousness is a heinous crime. The Greek participle, *katechonton* (present active participle of *katecho*, which means to hold down, to suppress, or to hold fast), denotes continuous action. The "truth" which wicked men suppress can be either general revelation (Rom. 1:19, 20) or a human understanding of special revelation (Rom. 1:16, 17). Apart from grace, any truth is held down in unrighteousness.
2. General revelation is inadequate for salvation, but it is competent to render every person defenseless before God.
3. Although all men have some knowledge about God, that knowledge is devaluated in preference to their own imaginations, because their hearts have been darkened by sin.
4. They profess to have superior wisdom, but they become fools.
5. They "exchange" (aorist active indicative of *allasso*, which means to change or to exchange one thing for another) God's glory for human idols. God's glory cannot be changed, but it can be exchanged.

God gives men over to uncleanness: "Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them" (Rom. 1:24 NASB). The word "Therefore" (*dio*) indicates that the divine retribution finds its ground in the antecedent sin and is just infliction (vv. 18-23). God withdrew all restraint and left them to their own self-destruction. Because He positively withdrew His restraint, God was not purely passive. God punishes sin by giving people over to more sins. One of the Old Testament words for "punishment" is "sin." Cain said, "...My punishment [sin] is greater than I can bear" (Gen. 4:13).

Verses 25 and 26 record another division of man's sin and God's judgment. The Greek word for "exchange" occurs for the second time: "For they exchanged [aorist active indicative of *metallasso*, which means to exchange] the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 1:25 NASB). Exchanging a pure spring of water for a poisonous pond would be madness, but that is what the sinner does when he exchanges truth for a lie. Furthermore, apart from understanding the depravity of man, exchanging the Creator for the creature would seem insane. This is what every person does apart from grace. He chooses the residence of false gods in place of the eternal God. For this reason God "abandoned" (aorist active indicative of *paradidomi*) those thus described. God's abandonment was judgment for apostasy from the knowledge they possessed.

God's judgment, resulting from the sin described in verse 25, is declared in verse 26: "For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural" (NASB). An examination of the Greek text on this verse is important. Paul did not use the ordinary word for "woman" (*gune*) but the word for "female" (*thelus*, a female). Modesty, woman's most beautiful adornment (I Tim. 2:9), was absent from the females

that God gave over to degrading passions. Hence, the women exchanged natural relations with men in marriage for unnatural ones with other women.

Male homosexuality is clearly described in Romans 1:27 — “...and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error” (NASB). As grievous as fornication and adultery are, the desecration involved in homosexuality is the lowest plane of degeneracy in sexual sins. The word “burned” (aorist passive indicative of *ekkaio*, which means to blaze out or to be inflamed) cannot be equated with “burn” (present passive infinitive of *puroo*, which means to burn) in I Corinthians 7:9. The latter is the burning of a natural sex impulse which is not immoral in the marriage relationship, but the burning of man for man is unnatural. The Greek word for “unseemly” in the KJB is *aschemosune*, which means infamous lust or lewdness. Furthermore, the Greek word for “men” is the plural for *arsen*, which means a male. Thus, the words for “males” and “females,” rather than for “men” and “women,” are used because of their beastly, unnatural sins.

Homosexuals insist that Romans 1:26-27 teaches that they are not wrong to engage in sexual relations with the same sex because it is their nature. On the other hand, they claim that heterosexuals are perverse to engage in homosexual acts because they are contrary to their nature. Such reasoning is the fruit of God’s giving them over to “uncleanness” (v. 24) and “vile” affections (v. 26). Paul concluded that God’s judicial abandonment was not restricted to immoral living but to giving up men to “a reprobate mind” (Rom. 1:28). This is the third reference to God who “gave them over” (aorist active indicative of *paradidomi*). Since the homosexuals did “not” (*ouk*) “approve” (*edokimasan*, aorist active indicative of *dokimadzo*, which means to approve; but with the negative *ouk*, it means they did not approve of God) of having God in their knowledge, God gave them over “to a mind void of moral discernment” (*eis adokimon noun*). The adjective *adokimos* means unable to stand the test or worthless. Hence, the minds of homosexuals are worthless. When they refused to approve God, God gave them over to degenerate thinking. Therefore, when men do those things which are not proper, we know what a worthless mind entails.

Sin is its own punishment in time. Its effects are impaired health, seared conscience, blunted sensibilities, incapacity to appreciate natural affections, and lack of appreciation for the true and good.

Although all homosexuals disapprove of the true God and the true God pronounces them worthless, God does save some. Following the list of sinful persons who shall not inherit the kingdom, Paul said to the Corinthian Christians, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Cor. 6:11). Among the “some of you” were the homosexuals (plural of *arsenokoites*, the compound word made up of *arsen*, which means male, and *koite*, which means a bed) (I Cor. 6:9). There is one thing for sure: when a homosexual is saved, he does not remain a homosexual. He is not saved “in” but “from” his sin of homosexuality.

SIXTH—Infant sex preselection is unnatural. The infant sex preselection program is becoming popular in many hospitals. Since a sperm cell carrying an X-chromosome determines a female and one carrying a Y-chromosome determines a male, separation of the chromosomes determines the sex of an infant. Following a couple’s selection of either sex, the cells are separated in the

laboratory. After the separation of the chromosomes, the chosen chromosome-enriched fraction is placed by a gynecologist into the woman's reproductive tract at the time of ovulation. Those who support the infant sex preselection program claim that the same percentage of birth defects and abnormalities occur as with natural insemination, and they are quick to say the program claims no guarantees regarding defects or abnormalities. Although the program has worked in many cases, Christians have no desire to interfere with God's natural process of childbirth. Sex selection is God's prerogative. God promised Abraham a son (Gen. 18:10). He promised Zacharias and Elisabeth a son (Luke 1:13). Men discover an infant's sex after it is born. Scripture is filled with references to a son or a daughter being born (Gen. 5:4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30; 6:1; 11:11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25; II Chron. 24:3; Job 1:2; Jer. 16:3; 29:6; Ezek. 23:4; Hos. 1:6). The balance of the sexes has worked well through natural means. Too many doctors seem to think they are gods; and to many in a corrupt society, they are.

SEVENTH—Euthanasia is unnatural. It is said to be the act of painlessly putting to death a person suffering from an incurable condition. The differences between active and passive euthanasia are debated. Active euthanasia is called "mercy killing," and passive euthanasia is said to be the same thing achieved by withholding needed treatment. From the human point of view, there may be seemingly little difference between them. Although active euthanasia is murder, passive euthanasia cannot be thus classified. The latter is not as easily defined as the former.

Living in a "sue-happy" society, persons dedicated to health care are forced to take every precaution against malpractice suits. Therefore, they can argue forcefully against withholding medical treatment. Informed Christians, however, know that both life and death are in the hands of the sovereign God. Hence, physical life can be neither lengthened nor shortened. There is "A time to be born, and a time to die" (Eccl. 3:2). Christians are not opposed to the use of means in health care, but they are also cognizant that the termination of life lies in God's will to which they are resigned. In every instance, their submission to treatment may not be with the thought of getting well, but for some relief until they step out of time into eternity.

EIGHTH—Cremation is another unnatural practice in an amoral society. That which is of heathen origin should not be practiced in what is supposed to be a civilized society. (See Deut. 12:31; Judges 15:6; II Kings 17:31; II Chron. 28:3.) However, what the world considers wisdom and what God calls wisdom are two different things: "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:19-21). No one can deny that the wisdom of this world has made things worse rather than better. The inhabitants of this world know about God; but apart from regeneration, they will never know God. God is known essentially by means of general revelation (Rom. 1:19, 20), but He is known representatively in Christ by means of special revelation (Rom. 1:16, 17). Therefore, a true knowledge of God is reached only through Jesus Christ who is Wisdom Incarnate (Prov. 8). Plato lamented that he could not find the Father of the universe. Socrates deemed such knowledge the greatest happiness, but he confessed he did not know how to obtain it. Hence, man's highest wisdom is only folly.

The Moabites were so perverse that they added crime to crime, proving they were wholly inhuman and barbarous: "THUS saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not

turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime: But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth: and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet: And I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD” (Amos 2:1-3). God punished the Moabites because they burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime. The only thing that can be said about those who practice cremation is that people who live like pagans may as well have their bodies disposed of like them. They have no criterion by which to judge what God approves or disapproves. Their depraved subjective opinions have blinded them to the objective truth of God. Consider the pagan religions today that practice cremation. In God’s sight, cremation was the most dishonorable way of disposing of human bodies.

God commanded cremation as the most severe punishment in Israel. The purity of Israel was so important that the strongest punishment was administered upon the sin of Achan (Josh. 7). Had God allowed Israel to triumph at Ai, He would have manifested indifference to the sin of the people and revealed that He could sanction “the accursed thing” (v. 11). Achan could not hide his sin from God. Therefore, God was in the midst of Israel to lay Jericho in ruins not only because of Achan’s sin but because his sin had leavened the whole nation (Josh. 7:10-12; Gal. 5:9).

The whole nation was involved in Achan’s sin because the covenant relationship imparted a unity to all the people. The nation was bound together in such a manner as to involve all in the sin of one. Israel was one nation; therefore, it was impossible for anyone to take an independent stand. The same principle applies to each local church. Realizing that the whole congregation of either Israel or the local church is held responsible for sin in her midst is peculiarly solemn to a Christian. When sin is not dealt with by God’s people, they are deprived of spiritual discernment. Joshua did not understand that the glory of God’s great name necessitated the defeat at Ai, as it had achieved the victory at Jericho.

The appointed leader of Israel should have concluded that something was wrong in the condition of the people. He ought to have known that the failure was with Israel and not with God. Having seen what God’s presence secured, Joshua should have known that God demanded holiness of life. How fearful to think that just one man, for the sake of personal gain, could plunge the whole nation of Israel into trouble and defeat.

Defeat will never be turned into victory until sin is judged. Therefore, Joshua must lead the people to destroy the accursed thing and sanctify themselves against tomorrow (Josh. 7:10-21). There must be no delay regardless of the painfulness of the task. Some are more concerned for the feelings of relatives and friends than the presence and honor of the Lord.

Although Achan’s sin was revealed, he remained impenitent and had to be dealt with in the most severe manner. Achan’s confession could be compared with that of Judas (Matt. 27:4). A true confession of sin is impossible until one first gets a glimpse of divine perfection and human imperfection. The Israelites were responsible to take Achan, his family, and his possessions and exercise God’s most severe punishment upon them: “And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after

they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor, unto this day” (Josh. 7:24-26). The burning of the children does not contradict Deuteronomy 24:16 because it is the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 13:16-17. Achan’s family became participants with him in his crime; therefore, they fell under the same judgment with him.

God commanded cremation as punishment not only for certain individuals but for idols: “The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God” (Deut. 7:25). “And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel” (Josh. 7:15). “And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them” (II Kings 10:26). Cremation was Tamar’s punishment for playing the whore (Gen. 38:24). Hazor, head of the kingdoms against Israel, was burned (Josh. 11:11).

God’s method of disposing of the deceased human body is given after the fall of man: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19). As wonderful as the human body is, according to Psalm 139:14-16, God formed it from the dust of the ground rather than from the celestial (heavenly) bodies (Gen. 2:7). The realization of “...dust thou art...” is a humbling thought to man. This points to the transitoriness of the material from which the human body was made; “...unto dust shalt thou return” points to the corruption to which the body is destined in time (Gen. 3:19). Job attested this truth: “And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God” (Job 19:26).

The deceased bodies of saints are not to be treated as being divinely cursed but as belonging to God (I Cor. 6:19, 20). These bodies which have served as temples of the Holy Spirit in life should never be treated as being under God’s curse in death. Therefore, Abraham purchased land in which Sarah was buried (Gen. 23). Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah were all buried in the same place (Gen. 49:30, 31; 50:13). Joseph died and was put in a coffin in Egypt; but some 300 years later, Moses moved his bones to Shechem for burial (Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32). Jesus Christ was buried in Joseph’s borrowed tomb (Mark 15:42-47). Both John the Baptist and the first Christian martyr were buried (Matt. 14:10-12; Acts 8:2).

Although many are recommending cremation today because it is sanitary and economic, the bodies of saints are not to be treated like those of pagans. To treat the body which belongs to God as if it were the body of a pagan is a sin. No one will deny that cremation is cheaper, but economics must not take precedence over that which honors God. Furthermore, no one will deny that cremation is sanitary, but so is burning garbage in a garbage dump.