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# MARRIAGE

Its Origin, Object, Sanctity, and  
Permanence

Also a Consideration of

Celibacy, Bigamy, Polygamy,  
Concubinage, Adultery  
and Divorce

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Marriage is honorable, and the bed undefiled.

—Heb. 13:4.

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*1101 Forest Ave.  
Waterloo  
Iowa*

Published by

A. H. ZILMER

~~508 W. Church St.~~

~~Morrilton, Arkansas~~



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## PREFACE

This booklet is the result of earnest, prayerful study of the subject with which it deals, and its publication is prompted by the necessity for something along the lines indicated in these pages. It is intended especially for our unmarried young people. Grave danger lurks in worldly standards both as regards marriage and related subjects, and other questions as relating to conduct. Having been called out of the world, and having been elevated to a vastly higher altitude, and breathing a diviner atmosphere, than that of the present evil world, we must perforce view the question of morality in general, and that of marriage in particular, from the viewpoint of the divine revelation as presented with great clearness in the Scriptures of truth.

We have submitted the manuscript of this booklet to a number of brethren in different parts of the country, and all give it their hearty indorsement.

With the devout wish and the earnest prayer that these pages may be used of God to warn against existing dangers, and assist our young people in choosing the right course as marked out in the word of the living God, we send forth these pages upon their mission.

Morrilton, Arkansas, January, 1928.

AUTHOR.

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# MARRIAGE

The institution of marriage implies two things, the first of which is the division of the human species into the sexes, male and female. This sex distinction owes its existence to the will and creative act of God. The second of these is the divine establishment of the union of the man and the woman in the bonds of wedlock. God is the author of both the sex distinction and the married state. They were established in the beginning of the present order of things on the earth, and were intended to co-exist throughout mortal human history. Each requires the other. Marriage involves the sex relation, and this implies that a man and a woman live together as husband and wife, though it does not necessarily follow from this that all men and women should marry. This is the general rule.

## Marriage Is Honorable

It is written, "Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled" (Heb. 13:4). In ordinary usage the word "honor" has the meaning of consideration due or paid, as on account of worth, high character, or distinguished services. The Greek word in this passage translated "honorable" is *timios*, and is rendered "dear" once, "had in admiration" once, and "precious" eleven times.

Whence does marriage derive the honor here attributed to it? Not primarily from man who enters the married state, but from God, the Creator of all things, who also for wise and benevolent ends created and established the marriage relation between man and woman.

Though the man Adam, along with all other created beings was "very good" as he came from the Creator's hand (Gen. 1:31), it was "not good" that he be "alone," or by himself. That is, it was not good for the object for which all things, including man, had been created. Hence the necessity, as well as wisdom, of making "an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). As the marginal reading suggests, this "help" was to be "before" him, in his presence, or about him. As a being endowed with intellect equal to the tremendous task of exercising dominion over the earth and subduing it, he must have a suitable companion about him with whom he may communicate regarding their wellbeing, and the work entrusted to them. So the Lord God made "an help meet for him"; and this was the manner thereof:

"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 the Lord had taken from the man made He a woman, and brought her unto the man" (vss. 21, 22).

"Meet" means suitable. Being bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:23), the woman was one with the man in substance. Being "meet" for him she was suited to him in intellect as well as bodily structure, so that they could enter sympathetically and with mutual helpfulness into the work committed to their hands. The woman being Adam's "help," it is clear that he could not accomplish alone the stupendous work of subduing the earth, and peopling it with beings of his kind. He must have a help—a suitable help—who can share with him his labors and his concerns, and be the mother of his children, as he is their father. Being of his bone and flesh, she is placed at his side as his help, not under his feet as his slave. Share and share alike in sorrow as well as in joy, is the rule, although the sphere of each, owing to the fact of being male and female, is in a class of its own. The one is not a lord, a tyrant or a dictator, nor the other a cringing subject or a slave. Together they bear their burdens; together they share their successes and their joys. Mutual love is the bond that unites and holds them together. In this bond each remains the personality the Creator made, and each consecrates and dedicates that personality to the common good.

The margin at vs. 7 says that God "builided" a woman, or the woman. The

Hebrew word here rendered "make" is *banah*, and is translated "make" 3 times, and "build" 328 times in the Old Testament, thus fully justifying the marginal reading. Hence we see that the Lord God built a woman as a help "meet" for the man. We do not know what was the exact process by which the woman was builded, or how long time was consumed as we compute time; nor is this necessary. But we know that the relation of husband and wife as established by the Creator at the beginning was "honorable," and it was intended that marriage be held in honor by all who would enter this state. The lapse of time since then has not in the least degree lessened this honor so far as the Creator's intention is concerned. It was so when the above-cited pronouncement was made regarding the honorableness of the married state, and it is so today.

#### At the Beginning

Jesus referred to this beginning when answering certain questions put to Him by some captious persons of His day who sought to entrap Him. To these He said, "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female"? (Matt. 19:4). The "beginning" here mentioned is the creation, as we see by reference to Mark 10:6: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." Again: "From the beginning it was not so" (vs. 8).

What was done at this "beginning" of the human race unmistakably indicates the divine intent for as long as the married relation between man and woman was to continue, that is, during the entire history of man in his mortal state. That rule never having been repealed or modified, there can be no departure therefrom anywhere or at any time without doing violence to it.

#### The Antecedents of Marriage

These are, in brief, courtship and mutual love. While there is, in the parlance of the world, "love at first sight," yet as a rule true conjugal love is neither an accident nor suddenly created. It requires, first, acquaintance, then mutual attraction, esteem, and those qualities of mind that unite more and more two hearts, so that in time each sees in the other his or her complement, and a companion for the rest of mortal life. True love is sentiment; but it is more than this; it is sentiment tempered by reason. It is reason, or good judgment, sweetened and sanctified by the sentiment of love, and sooner or later results in the agreement, mutually arrived at, that two lives shall henceforth be merged into one, two persons unite their destinies, found a home, and lay the foundation for a family. Yet however wholehearted and genuine their love may be before they are married, they are not yet "joined together," and may not and *must not* live together as husband and wife. They must first be "married." It is by such marriage that the man "takes" the woman of his choice to be his wife; and she is "given in marriage" to the man of her choice. Underlying the marriage is the deep and abiding love of each for the other, and growing out of such love is the marriage which makes them husband and wife.

#### Monogamy

By this is meant single marriage as opposed to bigamy or polygamy. This is also according to the divine rule, and is implied in the fact that the Creator at the beginning made them, as one rendering puts the matter, "a male and a female" (Gen. 1:26, 27). It was manifestly His intention that one man and one woman should be related as husband and wife during their natural life. This appears from the mandatory words, also cited by Jesus, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife" (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; Mark 10:7). "Cleave" in Gen. 2:24 means to remain attached, or faithful. In the New Testament it means to be closely united. This union is to be regarded by both parties as sacred and indissoluble while life endures.



## The Object of Marriage

This is indicated in the language addressed to the first pair, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28). We would not spend time in dealing with the word "replenish," but simply say that the Hebrew word *male* means to fill up; whether a first time or oftener does not appear. This command was repeated to Noah and his family (Gen. 9:1, 7).

Fruitfulness, or the power of reproduction, and the consequent continuance of the race with a view to filling the earth with human beings, was the object in view in the establishment of the married relation. However, we cannot believe that the mere filling of the earth with human beings is all that entered into the divine plan at the beginning. All things were made for the Creator's pleasure. We read, "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive honor, and glory, and power; for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11. Oldest Greek text). The Most High was looking to the end when He created the first man and woman. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). A world of discord, strife, disgrace, shame and death intervenes between the beginning and the attainment of the divine objective. But these did not deter the Creator from entering upon the task of peopling the earth with human beings.

### Joined Together

"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6; Mark 10:9). Here are three terms that claim our attention, viz., "therefore," "joined together," and "put asunder."

1. The "therefore" has its basis in the fact that the man and the woman who are united as husband and wife are "no more twain, but one flesh." This involves the further fact that the man leaves father and mother, and cleaves to his wife, which in turn has its reason in the fact that they are male and female; and this is due to the divine creative will (Matt. 19:4-6).

2. The second of these terms is "joined together." Who are "joined together"? Are every man and every woman? By no means, but the "man" and the "wife" in the question asked of Jesus by the Pharisees (vs. 3). It was the man who left father and mother and married a wife; and it was God who joined them together as such by the operation of the rule established at the beginning. That this union is a very close one is evident from the Greek word *suzugneoo*, which literally means yoked together. When or how were these two persons thus "joined" or "yoked"? Was it done in Eden? This could not be, for they did not then exist. Was it purely because they were male and female? Not so, for the reason that not every man and every woman are joined together. Though they were male and female, they were not thus joined together until a certain time after reaching maturity. Since they were joined together they are husband and wife, and for no other reason.

As it is employed in Scripture as well as common use the word "marry" means either to unite a man and a woman as husband and wife, or else to be so united. This is the sense of the Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible rendered "marry." In Deut. 24:1 a man has "taken" a wife and "married" her. The Hebrew *baal* signifies that he became the possessor of a wife. In Neh. 13:27 certain Israelites are said to have committed a great trespass against God in "marrying strange wives." What did they do? They took those women, and established them in their homes as their wives.

In the New Testament the word for marry is *gameo*. From this are derived the words monogamy, one marriage; bigamy, two marriages at once; polygamy, many marriages. In every case the marriage unites or joins together a man and a woman as husband and wife, either lawfully or otherwise. Where this is done lawfully, that is, in keeping with the divine rule established at the beginning, it is "honorable"; where it is done contrary to the divine law it is "not lawful." Before such marriage takes place the parties are not husband and wife; they are not "joined together," and hence it would be impossible to put them asunder, as this can only apply to persons who are married.

God did not prescribe the exact age at which a man and a woman may become united as husband and wife, nor what man and what woman should be thus joined, nor the form of the ceremony by which this is to be done; but when two mature human beings of opposite sex by mutual agreement become united as husband and wife, whether by civil, ecclesiastical or other ceremony, they become "joined together" in accordance with the intent of this term as used by Jesus in His answer to the question of the Pharisees. Various marriage ceremonies have obtained at different times among different peoples, and in different countries; and while all were or are binding upon the contracting parties, the validity of the contract, and its binding effect, does not depend upon this ceremony or that, but upon the fact that a man and a woman of marriageable age and status become united as husband and wife in keeping with the intent and law of the Creator when He made them male and female. Not all men and all women are "joined together" because they are male and female, but only the two who have become united as husband and wife.

In Gen. 2:22 God brought to Adam the woman He had made for him. This was all the "ceremony" necessary in this case, as we know from the fact that when this was done Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, and she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man." Various forms of marriage and nuptial ceremonies come to view in the Scriptures, and many more such were or are in vogue in different parts of the world. In Deut. 24:1 it is said that a man "hath taken a wife." In Eph. 5:31 a man is "joined to his wife." In Luke 20:35 they are either "married" or "given in marriage." In none of these is there a hint as to what was the ceremony by which they were "joined" as husband and wife.

The all-wise Creator knew that in the process of subduing and filling the earth, covering thousands of years, many vicissitudes would arise which would render difficult and impractical any set form or ceremony for the union of two persons as husband and wife, and hence He left the precise form to the judgment of those directly concerned.

#### The Permanence of Marriage

It was the intention of the Creator that once a man and a woman were "joined together" as "man and wife," this union should be binding and indissoluble during the life of both parties. And this was to be not merely "at the beginning," when the first man and woman were bound together as husband and wife, but for all time until the earth should be subdued and peopled with human beings. This is proven by the fact that when Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees regarding the lawfulness of divorce, His answer was an appeal to the law established "at the beginning." This law had not been abrogated or in any manner modified when this interview took place. Hence the fitness of its application to the circumstances then existing.

When it was said, "And let them have dominion" (Gen. 1:26), it is manifest that this could not be done according to the full intent of this language by the first pair, but would require thousands of years and a long succession of generations for its accomplishment. During all this long stretch of time they would continue to be male and female, and men and women would marry in keeping with the original design of the Creator. At the same time the institution of marriage would need to be surrounded with proper safeguards in order to maintain it according to its design and sanctity as established by the divine law "at the beginning."

It is said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). This could not apply to Adam, for the reason that he had neither father nor mother. Hence it could have application only to Adam's posterity. Here again it is clear that the marriage relation was and would continue to be subject to the divine supervision. Jesus quoted this language as having been spoken by the Creator. "And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife" (Matt. 19:5). It is the "man" and "his wife" that are "joined together."

### Put Asunder

3. The third of the terms above mentioned is "put asunder." It can apply only to such as have been joined together as husband and wife, or are, as is said, "married." This is clear the moment we consider the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees. The question was asked, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Matt. 19:3). This was the pivot upon which the entire interview turned. It was not a question whether a man had a wife, or by what ceremony he had acquired her, but *having* a wife, might he lawfully PUT HER AWAY "for every cause," or on any pretext? The terms "put away his wife" and "put asunder" are exact equivalents. They are in direct antithesis to "join together." This "man" and his "wife" were "joined together" as husband and wife under the divine law, and with the divine sanction. They are husband and wife. May they now lawfully be "put asunder" or separated by the "man" "putting away his wife" for any and every cause? This was the question. It was not a question of keeping asunder such as had never been married, but of separating such as *were* married and were therefore husband and wife. The Lord's answer was that God had joined them together in keeping with the original intent at the "beginning." The only consistent answer was the one that was given, namely, that it was (and is) not "lawful for a man to put away his wife," and thus put asunder that which God joined together. We shall consider the further course of this conversation later on.

Jesus was not alone in teaching that a man may not "for every cause" put away his wife, or sunder that which God has united. The apostle Paul said in writing to such as were acquainted with law, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if her 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. 7:1-3). The "law of her husband" here aimed at can be no other than the divine law established at the beginning, and designed to regulate the marriage relation for all time until the earth is subdued and filled with human beings.

Note: The married woman is "bound to her husband," and this for "so long as her husband liveth." What law is it that so binds her that does *not* bind the unmarried woman? It is the fact that she and her husband have been "joined together," while the unmarried woman is *not* joined to any man. The only thing that can legally release the married woman from her husband is death. Any other separation or putting asunder is illegal, being contrary to the divine marriage law established at the beginning of the creation.

Elsewhere in the apostolic writings we read, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband" (I Cor. 7:1, 2). Besides inculcating the idea of strict monogamy, this teaches that every married man or woman must "have," that is be united to and retain, the "own" husband or wife.

Further: "And to the married I command, and yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband; but if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife" (vss. 11, 12). When did the Lord issue such "command"? It was "in the beginning" when He enacted the marriage law for the existence of the race of mortal human beings while they marry and are given in marriage.

Once more: "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" (vs. 39). The "law" by which she is "bound" is the rule enacted by the Creator in Eden. Though man sinned, and was subjected to the disabilities announced in the divine sentence, this did not abrogate or in any manner affect the marriage relation, or the divine law relating thereto. Adam and Eve continued to be male and female after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and still required the Eden law enacted and put into

force at their creation; and the same necessity for the divine supervision and regulation has existed to the present hour.

Jesus brought into most clear perspective the divine enactment made at the beginning, emphasised it anew to the confusion of His critics, and gave it His unqualified indorsement. Of those who would put asunder "for every cause" that which God had joined together, He asked, "Have ye not read?" (Matt. 19:4). No excuse could they plead, no palliation could they offer, for their violation of the divine law in divorcing for every cause the wives with whom they had been joined together for life according to the divine rule. Their iniquitous doings in securing divorces from their wives were due to no other cause than "hardness of heart" (Matt. 19:8; Mark 10:5.) A heart not hardened, seared or calloused, a conscience not stifled, would not have sought release from the bond or yoke which the Most High had created, and which they had of their own will assumed in taking their wives.

### Bigamy and Polygamy

Lamech in the line of Cain is mentioned as the first who had two wives, and was therefore a bigamist. It is said, "And Lamech took unto him two wives": Adah and Zillah (Gen. 4:18). Consideration of the circumstances will throw further light upon this matter. "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden" (Gen. 4:16). Having gone out from the presence of the Lord, or the place where His presence was manifested, Cain cast off the restraint which the consciousness of the Lord's presence and the sense of the nearness of the divine law imposed. His descendants were not sons of God, as were those of Seth (chap. 6:1, 2), but mere sons of men, and by the time we reach Lamech, the fifth down the line, we find that instead of being content with the rule of monogamy which the Creator had established at the beginning, he took two wives, and so introduced the practice of bigamy, which in time was followed by polygamy. All such plural marriages were in contravention of the divine rule, and in almost every instance many evils resulted from them, or were in one way or another connected with them.

The divine rule established at the beginning for the regulation of marriage during the process of subduing the earth not having been in any manner changed or modified, bigamy, or the state of marriage to one person when one is already married to another, is just as unlawful, and therefore just as obnoxious to God, now as ever in the history of mankind. It should be no less objectionable among believers than it is to the Most High. Yet this evil has crept into the body, and is excused, condoned and justified upon one pretext or another as if it were a matter of small consequence. What God would not allow in Herod or Felix, but through His faithful servants condemned as unlawful, and out of keeping with justice and self-control, He surely will not tolerate in those who occupy a plane vastly higher than that held by those mentioned. It may appeal to the flesh; it may be in keeping with popular views upon the subject, to live with a "husband" or "wife" while there is another living; but it is shockingly at variance with the divine rule, and comes under the category of "adultery" for one to have two living husbands or wives; and anyone living in such a state is by the divine rule debarred from the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9, 10). No amount of "fixing," either by the guilty party or others, can clear such illicit relationship of its unlawful character, or deprive it of its baneful effects. But one remedy exists, and that is to relinquish such unlawful relationship.

### Concubinage

A concubine is a woman who is kept by a man as his mistress. Concubinage was practised as far back as Abraham (Gen. 22:24), who may have acquired it from his ancestral surroundings. It is said of his immediate ancestors, though not of Abraham himself, that they "served other gods" than Jehovah (Josh. 24:2). Such sinful practices were due in every case to departure in some way, at one time or another, from the divine rule established at the beginning. It is also said that Jacob had two concubines.

## Adultery

The law of Moses said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18). This did not define what adultery was, which shows that what constituted adultery was well understood. The English word is from the Latin *ad*, to, and *alter*, other. To adulterate is to make impure by the admixture of other or foreign substances. Adultery consists of the introduction of another, a strange party, between such as are married.

So grievous was this sin that under the Mosaic law those guilty of it were stoned to death. "The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 20:10). In His conversation with the Pharisees Jesus so clearly defined one form of adultery as to leave no room for uncertainty. "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. 19:9).

Jesus said, "From the beginning it was not so" (vs. 8). Not how? That a man might put away his wife, or put asunder that which God had joined together. It was not intended to be "so." This is further proof of the divine intention that the union of a man and a woman as husband and wife was to be under the divine supervision and regulation for the entire mortal existence of the human race upon the earth. It was this rule that made it not "lawful" to "put away his wife for every cause." The two, the marriage relation, and the divine law regulating it, were intended to be co-existent and co-extensive.

The Pharisees called the attention of Jesus to the Mosaic provision regarding divorce, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and put her away?" (vs. 7). This was intended to offset the negative answer Jesus had just given from the record of the creation, that in view of the divine intent of the marriage law established at the beginning it was *not* "lawful to put away the wife for every cause" (vss. 3-6). Then, lest there be any misunderstanding, Jesus defined adultery in a manner most clear and convincing. Why did men in Israel put away their wives "for every cause"? It was on account of "hardness of heart," callousness, a conscience seared over, and accustomed to unlawful practices. They who by their traditions made the word of God of no effect (Matt. 15:6) would not scruple here; and so, because Moses on account of the hardness of their hearts had given permission to write a letter of divorcement, they eagerly seized this as an excuse, in fact, as justification, of a practice which was anything but "lawful" when placed side by side with the divine rule of marriage, and required just such treatment as it received at the hands of the Just One. It was the "hardness of your hearts" that is, of the nation of Israel, that arbitrarily put asunder what God has united, and sought justification for the loose views and wicked practices that were rife in Israel at that time.

### Cases of Adultery

1. We mention that of Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, an Idumean, who was tetrarch of Galilee and Petrea, and who married his brother Philip's wife. The following facts stand out in the record:

(a) Herod had "married" his brother Philip's wife (Mark 6:17).

(b) He "had" her as his wife while she had another husband living (Matt. 14:3; Mark 6:18).

(c) John "reproved" Herod for this, and "for all the evils which Herod had done" (Luke 3:19).

(d) John said to Herod that it was "not lawful" for him to "have" his brother's wife (Matt. 14:4; Mark 6:18).

We would specially emphasize the two last items. When it is said that John "reproved" Herod for his adultery, "and all the evils which he had done," the word for reprove in the Greek text is *elegcho*, which means to "convict." It is so given in John 8:9. To convict anyone is to prove him

force at their creation; and the same necessity for the divine supervision and regulation has existed to the present hour.

Jesus brought into most clear perspective the divine enactment made at the beginning, emphasised it anew to the confusion of His critics, and gave it His unqualified indorsement. Of those who would put asunder "for every cause" that which God had joined together, He asked, "Have ye not read?" (Matt. 19:4). No excuse could they plead, no palliation could they offer, for their violation of the divine law in divorcing for every cause the wives with whom they had been joined together for life according to the divine rule. Their iniquitous doings in securing divorces from their wives were due to no other cause than "hardness of heart" (Matt. 19:8; Mark 10:5.) A heart not hardened, seared or calloused, a conscience not stifled, would not have sought release from the bond or yoke which the Most High had created, and which they had of their own will assumed in taking their wives.

### Bigamy and Polygamy

Lamech in the line of Cain is mentioned as the first who had two wives, and was therefore a bigamist. It is said, "And Lamech took unto him two wives": Adah and Zillah (Gen. 4:18). Consideration of the circumstances will throw further light upon this matter. "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden" (Gen. 4:16). Having gone out from the presence of the Lord, or the place where His presence was manifested, Cain cast off the restraint which the consciousness of the Lord's presence and the sense of the nearness of the divine law imposed. His descendants were not sons of God, as were those of Seth (chap. 6:1, 2), but mere sons of men, and by the time we reach Lamech, the fifth down the line, we find that instead of being content with the rule of monogamy which the Creator had established at the beginning, he took two wives, and so introduced the practice of bigamy, which in time was followed by polygamy. All such plural marriages were in contravention of the divine rule, and in almost every instance many evils resulted from them, or were in one way or another connected with them.

The divine rule established at the beginning for the regulation of marriage during the process of subduing the earth not having been in any manner changed or modified, bigamy, or the state of marriage to one person when one is already married to another, is just as unlawful, and therefore just as obnoxious to God, now as ever in the history of mankind. It should be no less objectionable among believers than it is to the Most High. Yet this evil has crept into the body, and is excused, condoned and justified upon one pretext or another as if it were a matter of small consequence. What God would not allow in Herod or Felix, but through His faithful servants condemned as unlawful, and out of keeping with justice and self-control, He surely will not tolerate in those who occupy a plane vastly higher than that held by those mentioned. It may appeal to the flesh; it may be in keeping with popular views upon the subject, to live with a "husband" or "wife" while there is another living; but it is shockingly at variance with the divine rule, and comes under the category of "adultery" for one to have two living husbands or wives; and anyone living in such a state is by the divine rule debarred from the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9, 10). No amount of "fixing," either by the guilty party or others, can clear such illicit relationship of its unlawful character, or deprive it of its baneful effects. But one remedy exists, and that is to relinquish such unlawful relationship.

### Concubinage

A concubine is a woman who is kept by a man as his mistress. Concubinage was practised as far back as Abraham (Gen. 22:24), who may have acquired it from his ancestral surroundings. It is said of his immediate ancestors, though not of Abraham himself, that they "served other gods" than Jehovah (Josh. 24:2). Such sinful practices were due in every case to departure in some way, at one time or another, from the divine rule established at the beginning. It is also said that Jacob had two concubines.

## Adultery

The law of Moses said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18). This did not define what adultery was, which shows that what constituted adultery was well understood. The English word is from the Latin *ad*, to, and *alter*, other. To adulterate is to make impure by the admixture of other or foreign substances. Adultery consists of the introduction of another, a strange party, between such as are married.

So grievous was this sin that under the Mosaic law those guilty of it were stoned to death. "The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 20:10). In His conversation with the Pharisees Jesus so clearly defined one form of adultery as to leave no room for uncertainty. "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. 19:9).

Jesus said, "From the beginning it was not so" (vs. 8). Not how? That a man might put away his wife, or put asunder that which God had joined together. It was not intended to be "so." This is further proof of the divine intention that the union of a man and a woman as husband and wife was to be under the divine supervision and regulation for the entire mortal existence of the human race upon the earth. It was this rule that made it not "lawful" to "put away his wife for every cause." The two, the marriage relation, and the divine law regulating it, were intended to be co-existent and co-extensive.

The Pharisees called the attention of Jesus to the Mosaic provision regarding divorce, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and put her away?" (vs. 7). This was intended to offset the negative answer Jesus had just given from the record of the creation, that in view of the divine intent of the marriage law established at the beginning it was *not* "lawful to put away the wife for every cause" (vs. 3-6). Then, lest there be any misunderstanding, Jesus defined adultery in a manner most clear and convincing. Why did men in Israel put away their wives "for every cause"? It was on account of "hardness of heart," callousness, a conscience seared over, and accustomed to unlawful practices. They who by their traditions made the word of God of no effect (Matt. 15:6) would not scruple here; and so, because Moses on account of the hardness of their hearts had given permission to write a letter of divorcement, they eagerly seized this as an excuse, in fact, as justification, of a practice which was anything but "lawful" when placed side by side with the divine rule of marriage, and required just such treatment as it received at the hands of the Just One. It was the "hardness of your hearts" that is, of the nation of Israel, that arbitrarily put asunder what God has united, and sought justification for the loose views and wicked practices that were rife in Israel at that time.

### Cases of Adultery

1. We mention that of Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, an Idumean, who was tetrarch of Galilee and Petrea, and who married his brother Philip's wife. The following facts stand out in the record:

- (a) Herod had "married" his brother Philip's wife (Mark 6:17).
- (b) He "had" her as his wife while she had another husband living (Matt. 14:3; Mark 6:18).
- (c) John "reproved" Herod for this, and "for all the evils which Herod had done" (Luke 3:19).
- (d) John said to Herod that it was "not lawful" for him to "have" his brother's wife (Matt. 14:4; Mark 6:18).

We would specially emphasize the two last items. When it is said that John "reproved" Herod for his adultery, "and all the evils which he had done," the word for reprove in the Greek text is *elegcho*, which means to "convict." It is so given in John 8:9. To convict anyone is to prove him

guilty, as of an offense or crime; to establish guilt. As a scion of an Idumean or Edomite family Herod was neither a Jew nor a Christian. Yet the courageous Baptizer "convicted" him of that which was "not lawful." Not lawful means contrary to law. What "law" was being violated by the wicked king? It was the law in the word of God, of which it is said, "The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." As the result of this John "came into all the country round about Jordan preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Luke 3:2, 3). This is the "word of God" which "came unto John" which he faithfully preached to all who came within reach. Large crowds came to hear him. The record says that "the people" asked of John, "What shall we do then?" (vs. 10). At vs. 12 the publicans asked what they must do. At vs. 14 the soldiers (Roman mercenaries who were on garrison duty in Palestine) asked what they must do. To each class was given its proper command what they must "do." In every case the people were required to "confess their sins" (Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:5). At the end of this record (Luke 3.18) it is said of John, "And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people." To exhort is to admonish to do the neglected good, or to desist from the forbidden evil. This throws further light upon the character of the Baptist's preaching.

Who else came to John? Herod, tetrarch of Galilee (Luke 3:1), a representative of the Roman government. Must he also be told what to "do"? Whether or not he asked the Baptist what he must do, he was told by the courageous preacher of the "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" that it was "not lawful" for him to "have" his brother's wife. Thus was the wicked Herod "convicted" of the violation of the "law" established at the beginning which provided that during the existence of mortal man upon the earth one man shall have one living wife, and one wife one living husband; and that to do otherwise is "not lawful." To "marry" her was to enter into a relationship which was adultery, and therefore "not lawful"; and to "have" her was to continue such unlawful relationship. Each day of his life with his brother's wife was to aggravate this unlawful condition.

There was but one way in which Herod could get right before the divine law, and that was to cease to "have" the wife of another man. On the part of Herod it was necessary to "confess" this unlawful act, put away his illegitimate wife, repent of this and "all the evils he had done," and, like all the sinners who came to John, be "baptized with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Instead of this he "added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison" (Luke 3:20); and later, at the instigation of Herodias, the wife he had stolen from his brother, he caused John to be put to death (Mark 6:22-28).

Reverting to the interview between Jesus and the Pharisees, let us consider another matter of importance, viz., the circumstances surrounding that interview. It occurred in the "coasts of Judea beyond Jordan" (Matt. 19:1). Beyond Jordan was Perea, which was within Herod's jurisdiction. The Pharisees, knowing that John's protest against the unlawful marriage of the king had cost John his life, interrogated Jesus in order to "tempt" Him (vs. 2). They hoped to force Jesus to commit Himself one way or the other upon the question of divorce and remarriage. "If Jesus countenanced Herod's act, this could easily be used against Him. If He condemned it, this could be used to inflame the Herodians, if not Herod himself." But Jesus proved Himself equal to the occasion, as He showed by His appeal to the law which had been enacted at the beginning. At the same time He condemned the adulterous tendency which had gained such headway among the Jews. This put the hard-hearted Jews in the same class with the adulterous alien king, and "convicted" them of the same unlawful deeds whose condemnation had cost John the Baptist his life.

2. The woman at Samaria. Jesus had considerable conversation with this woman about water, the water of life, etc., after which the story goes on: "Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom



thou now hast is not thy husband: in this thou saidst truly" (John 4:16-18).

We may not be sure from the words of Jesus alone whether the five husbands referred to had been lawful husbands, and died one after the other, or whether the woman had lived with them contrary to the divine rule; but we do know that her relation with her sixth husband was out of keeping with the divine law. She was living with a man to whom she had not been lawfully married, which was adultery. Why did Jesus create such an embarrassing situation for this woman belonging to a mixed people with whom the Jews had no dealings? (See vs. 9). It was to bring home to her the fact that her manner of life was grossly at variance with the divine rule pertaining to marriage. Evidently the woman's conscience was awakened by the suggestion to call her husband, for when she called the men of the city she said, "Come see a man which told me all things I ever did; is not this the Christ?" (vs.29). The words, "all things I ever did," suggest that her relation with her present husband was not the only illicit "thing" that was against her, and it seems a fair inference that hers had been a life of shame, of living according to the lusts of the flesh, and not according to the divine rule. The manner of Jesus in dealing with this case was not severe or harsh. It was tactful but firm; gentle but well calculated to rouse to action the slumbering conscience, and rekindle the smoldering moral sentiment that had been buried deep beneath the indulgence of the flesh. Jesus said no more than was necessary; nor did He say less.

3. Felix. This man was the Roman procurator in Palestine in the days of the apostle Paul. His troubles, too, included those of the marital kind. He was married three times, his last marriage being with Drusilla, a Jewess, who was the wife of Azizus, king of Emessa. Josephus tells how Felix employed one Simon, a magician, to use his arts to persuade Drusilla to forsake her husband and marry Felix, promising that if she did this he would make her a happy woman. Drusilla consented to the unlawful union (Josephus *Antiquities*, Book xx:7, 2).

It is related in Acts 24:24 that when Felix and his wife Drusilla came to Jerusalem, the governor "sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ." It is impossible to say of what length Paul's discourse was, or to enumerate all the elements it contained, but whatever the prisoner-apostle said before Felix had to do with "the faith in Christ." We know from vs. 25 that the discourse was of the "reasoning" kind. The historian mentioned three points or items in this discourse which were of special interest and importance. These were "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." From the effect produced upon Felix we can easily see the apostle's line of reasoning. We know from reliable history that neither in his public nor in his private life was Felix given to the practice of righteousness. Many crimes were laid to his charge by those acquainted with his life, besides his adulterous marriage to Drusilla. He had most miserably failed in this particular, which was not unknown to the apostle Paul, whose travels brought him into contact with many people, and gave him an insight into the lives of public men as well as private individuals. Knowing the shortcomings of Felix in relation to righteousness, or right doing, there could be no theme more appropriate to the occasion than that chosen by the speaker, viz., righteousness, together with its companion topic, that of "temperance," or self-control. Righteousness was far removed from the adulterous marriage Felix had consummated, and the unrighteous life he was living. Felix had become enamored of the beautiful Drusilla, and instead of exercising the virtue of temperance (Greek, *egkrateias*, self-control, or self-mastery), he gave way to his wild passion for a bewitching woman, who was the wife of another man, and rested not until he secured her for himself, thus trampling into the mire of an adulterous life all regard for the divine rule of right.

#### The Judgment to Come

There was another element that entered with the distressing directness and persistency into the reasoning of the courageous prisoner, viz., the "judg-

ment to come." Of what possible interest, or even concern, was the judgment to come to this alien Gentile? Whether he was interested or not, or whether he cared or was unconcerned, the judgment to come was an essential part of "the faith in Christ." And Paul, who never shunned to declare all that entered into the counsel of God, boldly stated his proposition, and carefully reasoned about that in which the gay and self-indulging governor had been so openly remiss, and its relation to the judgment to come. It was this that gave point and piquancy to the apostle's words, and struck deep into the slumbering conscience of the wicked ruler.

Where the Authorized Version says that "Felix trembled" at the reasoning of Paul, the Greek text says, *emphobos genomenos*, that he "became affrighted." Why tremble? Why become affrighted? Because in alienating the affections of the wife of another man, and marrying her, he not only put asunder that which had been joined together in lawful wedlock, but was living in a state of open adultery, in direct violation of the rule of right enacted by the Creator at the beginning. No lawful excuse could be offered, no mitigation of the sin could be found, and Felix, and with him Drusilla, the perfidious wife of another man, stood convicted of an atrocious breach of the divine law which made it unlawful for one man to have the wife of another man who was living.

The fact that the apostle's preaching produced such an effect upon Felix shows that the latter felt that the "judgment to come" was a matter which concerned him directly and personally.

As regards the judgment to come, this was an essential feature of the apostolic preaching to those without, including Felix. Peter preached the judgment at the house of the alien Gentile Cornelius; and said the apostles had been "commanded" to preach it (Acts 10:42). The apostle Paul preached it to the alien Greeks at Athens, and in view of its certainty called upon his hearers to "repent," and seek the living God (Acts 17:31). In Heb. 6:1, 2 the judgment is placed by the voice of inspiration among the "principles of the doctrine of Christ." It enters constitutively into the gospel teaching that "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). This applies not only to those within, but also to such as are without (I Cor. 5:13). It was teaching such as this that caused Felix to tremble.

4. We have the teaching of the apostle Paul in I Cor. 6:9-11. We transcribe the passage entire: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 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." Those Corinthians were for the greater part of Gentile birth (chap. 12:2). Many of them had been addicted to the practices mentioned by the apostle. They had been "such"; but something had taken place that had entirely changed their status. They had been "washed." To wash in the ordinary sense is to cleanse by the application of a liquid, especially water. Of what had they been washed? In this instance it meant to cleanse from sin, especially from the fornication, idolatry, adultery, effeminacy, etc., they had previously practised when they were alien Gentiles. Why wash? Because these things are defiling in their effect (Matt. 15:19), and require to be washed or cleansed. They are a blot upon the character, a stain on the reputation, and are in violation of the divine law. Besides this they cause a blot upon the conscience. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. *purge your conscience* from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). It is "old sins" that are "purged" from the individual (II Peter 1:9); "sins that are past" that are forgiven (Rom. 3:23-25); "trespasses and sins" dating from "time past" that are remitted (Eph. 1:7; 2:1-3; 4:32; Col. 1:14; 2:12, 13). "These are the things that defile a man" (Matt. 15:18-20). And it is "because of these things that the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:5-7).

When those Corinthian Gentiles were "washed" from their adultery and other forms of uncleanness, what was done? If they were living in adultery by having another's husband or wife, thus doing that which John the Baptist pronounced "not lawful," and Jesus and Paul most severely condemned, did they continue in the illicit relation they had previously entered? And was it yet true that they were "washed, sanctified (separated, or set apart), and justified" so long as they continued in their adulterous relationship? Is it possible to bring adultery, contracted before conversion, into "the name of the Lord Jesus," and yet be clean? It is an incontrovertible fact that it was not only "not lawful" for the alien king Herod to "marry" his brother's wife, but also to "have" her. So long then as he "had" her, he was living in adultery. Likewise if the Corinthians practised adultery by having unlawful marriages they could not be considered as having been "washed" until they relinquished the adulterous relationships they had previously entered contrary to the divine law enacted at the beginning.

At the time of the apostles Corinth was famous for her wealth, luxury, extravagance, and licentiousness. Outside the city the proverb was current, "I would not advise every man to visit Corinth." When Paul began his missionary activities in that city, he preached "first of all how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-3). According to the apostle's statement this entered as an essential element into "the gospel." Why deal "first of all" with "our sins"? Because the moral condition at Corinth required the cleansing of the lives of its inhabitants. The list of things enumerated by the apostle in I Cor. 6:9, 10 clearly shows that "the city was reeking with moral filth, and contemporary history confirms and justifies the description. Therefore "*our sins*," or transgressions of the divine law, "first of all." The Corinthians were among the "all men everywhere" whom God by the gospel "commandeth to repent" (Acts 17:30). When they did repent, this was from their "dead works" (Heb. 6:1), and its tendency was "unto life" (Acts 11:18). Here, as elsewhere, the apostle showed "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20). This resulted in the rectification of the practices of those who responded to the gospel command, the washing away of their sins, their sanctification, or setting apart from wicked works, and their justification from their offenses. We may be sure the apostles introduced nothing that was superfluous into their preaching to those without. But there was a characteristic fitness about their efforts, whether in public or from house to house; and in every instance where there was outstanding wickedness, this condition received such attention as its nature demanded.

#### Aliens and Sins

That the Divine Being cognizes sins committed by alien sinners, and visits judgments upon the sinners, individuals as well as collective, is manifest when we consider a number of instances which involve this principle.

We direct attention to two passages of this nature in the Book of Revelation. In chapter 9:12-19 we read of divine judgments under the figure of a vast military movement which were visited upon certain portions of the earth's population. It is set forth that these judgments were a "woe" which resulted or would result in death to "the third part of men" in the area affected. An "angel," or messenger of Jehovah, whether celestial or human is not indicated, was sent to inflict the "woe" upon a people inhabiting a region contiguous to "the great river Euphrates." What was the divine object in the visitation of this "woe"? As the context shows, it was that those remaining alive should "repent" of their evil deeds. "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils (demons), and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (vss. 20, 21). There are five evils in this category of wicked "works," of which those concerned

were required to repent, viz., (1) idolatry; (2) murders; (3) sorceries; (4) fornication, and (5) thefts.

In chap. 16:8-11, under the figure of "vials of the wrath of God," we see certain divine judgments visited upon the subjects of the beast. The fourth angel poured his vial upon the sun, while the fifth empties his vial "upon the seat (or throne) of the beast." In the one case the result was that men were "scorched with fire"; in the other that the kingdom of the beast was "full of darkness," and men "gnawed their tongues with pain" (vss. 8, 10). In both cases the object was to move men to repent of their deeds, and give glory to God (vss. 9, 11). It is recorded that these judgments did not result in the repentance of those concerned.

Since repentance, in order to be effective must be individual, and it is individuals that make up the mass, we see that the individuals constituting the mass in the localities referred to did not repent of their wicked deeds; hence the fitness of the divine judgments on account of such practices.

When we inquire as to the philosophy of the divine procedure in these instances, we find that the Most High has the right to command men, regardless of who they are, to repent of their deeds, and glorify Him—a right which He has never during the history of the human race failed to exercise. His judgments are "true and righteous" (chap. 16:11), and derive their character from corresponding divine attributes. God cannot do otherwise than right.

God now "commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:31). Such repentance tends "unto life" (Acts 11:18). The call to repentance is traceable to "the goodness of God," which "leadeth to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). The medium through which God calls men to repent is the gospel, with which Jesus, as the Head of the church, entrusted His followers. "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "Thus it behooved . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Wherever the gospel goes, there goes with it the call to "repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:1820). Hence the people of Rev. 9:20, 21 and 16:8-12, being under the jurisdiction of almighty God, and not heeding the call to repentance, justly fell under the divine reprobation, and the judgments which came upon them under the figures employed in the Apocalypse.

It is in order to revert to the things of which those aliens were required to repent. They are styled "works"—"the works of their hands" (Rev. 9:20). The first of these is idolatry. The apostle Peter referred to "abominable idolatries" that were practised among the Gentiles (I Peter 4:3). This description at once characterizes those idolatries as particularly odious and repugnant to God. Connected with them were "lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings." These had been practiced by some of those "strangers" in "time past of life," and were the rule among those given to the idolatry described as "abominable." The sacrifices made in the idolatrous rituals of the Gentiles were offered "to devils (Greek, *daimonia*, demons), and not to God" (I Cor. 10:20). The devotees of those demons blindly followed the "dumb idols" (chap. 12:2).

Such were the forms of idolatry of which the people in the territories above referred to were required to repent which, however, they stubbornly refused to do. May we blame the Divine Being for pouring His vengeance upon those who refused to yield to Him that which was His due? "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid. for then how shall God judge the world?" (Rom. 3:5).

#### Divorce

The word divorce is used both in common usage, and in Scripture. It implies previous marriage. It means to dissolve by a legal process the marriage bond existing between husband and wife. It would be impossible to divorce persons who never were united in matrimony. Divorce is the exact

opposite of taking a wife, or being given in marriage. It is to "put asunder" that which was "joined together."

"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, then let him write a bill of divorcement, and send her out of his house" (Deut. 24:1).

"And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced doth commit adultery" (Matt. 5:32).

The Hebrew word for divorcement" is *herethuth*, which means to cut off. The Greek word for "divorced" is *apoluoo*, and means to loose off, or away. It puts asunder that which was joined together. It does not mean to prevent from uniting that which never was united, but to dismiss, let depart or go, loose, put away, release, send away, or cause to depart, that which was united. It is rendered "put away" 14 times in the New Testament. This is the word which occurs in Matt. 1:19; 5:31, 32; 19:3, 7, 8, 9; Mark 10:4, 11, 12; Luke 16:18. It was used in this sense by both the Pharisees and Jesus. The former said to Jesus, "Is it lawful for a man to put away (*apoluoo*) his wife for every cause?" (Matt. 19:3).

The question of the Pharisees was one of legality or lawfulness. Was divorce "for every cause" in harmony with law? What law? There were but two laws by which this question could be determined, namely the "law" which was "from the beginning," and the law of Moses. When Jesus gave a negative answer based upon the older law (Matt. 19:4-6), the Pharisees, confident of carrying their point, appealed to Moses, "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and send her away?" (vs. 7). This was a much debated question among the Jews, some giving a strictly literal interpretation to the language of Moses in Deut. 24:1, that a man might not divorce his wife for any cause save uncleanness, such as fornication or adultery; while others gave it a more liberal construction, allowing for divorce on other grounds besides the crimes mentioned. The object of the question was to "tempt" the Lord (vs. 3). Jesus, penetrating their design, answered the question by an appeal to the older or prior law, which made it not "lawful" for a man to put away his wife and marry another "except for fornication." "In the beginning it was not so" that a man might put away his wife for every cause; but once a man and a woman were "joined together" as husband and wife in keeping with the intent of the divine law, man must not by any means put them asunder. The underlying cause of such putting asunder of that which was to remain united was very properly designated by the Lord as "hardness of heart."

When we inquire as to the motive on the part of those Jews in securing divorces from their wives "for every cause," we find that it was to clear the way for further marriages. That this was perceived by the Lord Jesus is evident from His words, "*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marieth her which is put away doth commit adultery*" (Matt. 19:9). It was bad enough to put away their wives for every cause without aggravating the situation by marrying again. This language indicates that the "hardness of heart," laid to the charge of those Jews, had been of long standing, and was a chronic condition. The nation had been from old time given to hardness of heart. "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness" (Heb. 3:7, 8. See also I Sam. 6:6; Neh. 9:16; Prov. 21:29; Mark 8:17). Hence they found it not difficult on one pretext or another to transgress the divine law, and to excuse and justify such transgression. We are not informed whether the Pharisees made further reply to the accusation of putting asunder that which God had joined together.

#### If a Woman Shall Put Away Her Husband

This language occurs in Mark 10:12. There was no provision in the Mosaic system for a wife to put away her husband. Hence this language is more far-reaching than might at first appear. It applies wherever a woman,

with the exception noted elsewhere, puts away her husband, *i. e.*, obtains a divorce from him, and is married to another man. This shows that whosoever, whether Jew or Gentile, citizen or alien, puts away husband or wife, and marries another, commits adultery, of which the Creator certainly takes cognizance. The cases of adultery above noted illustrate this. Whether one be a Herod or a Samaritan, a Felix or a Gentile alien, if he commit adultery, he does that which is not lawful; is subject to the divine reprobation, and must have this sin, along with other sins he may have committed, forgiven or washed away in order to get right with God.

#### Divorce Permissible only under One Condition

Jesus said to the Pharisees, who questioned Him concerning divorce "for every cause," "Whosoever shall put away his wife *except it be for fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matt. 19:9). Fornication being the only exception noted, "whosoever" puts away his wife for any other cause, and marries another, is guilty of adultery.

The marriage bond is binding upon husband and wife for the rest of their natural lives, and cannot be dissolved or "loosed" without arbitrary and violent interference with the divine rule established at the beginning. Divorce cannot be lawfully sought or obtained upon any other pretext. Fornication in this case is sexual intercourse between a married person and another person to whom that one is not married. This act sets aside as of no binding force the married relation between husband and wife. It violates and desecrates the obligation of mutual fidelity voluntarily assumed by the contracting parties. And more than this: It violates and puts asunder the relation provided for by the divine law, and renders this null and void. With this single exception the marriage may not be dissolved by anyone for any cause; and whosoever does so puts asunder that which has been joined together in accordance with the divine decree established in the beginning for the regulation and safeguarding of the marriage relation.

The except clause, "except it be for fornication," gives permission to the innocent party to "put away" the sinning partner, and marry another. The infidel partner, by leaving the lawful partner, and by sexual union with one to whom that one is not united in marriage, makes the divine rule of husband and wife of no effect, and thereby releases the offended partner of the obligation of being further bound to the other. Grave and far-reaching indeed is this crime. Need we wonder that holy men in biblical times set down this act on the part of aliens, as well as those within as a most serious breach of the divine law, and in view of the impending divine judgment convicted men of this crime, and commanded them to repent of it?

#### Modern Divorces

The modern divorce, sanctioned by morbid public sentiment, and upheld by the courts, is an unmitigated evil, and worse. It is a crime against God, and a violation of the sanctity of the married relation. It debases and degrades that which is holy to the level of a horse trade. In a large section of public opinion there is nothing sacred or binding about it. If one or the other of the married partners finds the marriage bond irksome, all that is required is to go to Reno or Paris, by a brief residence (?) establish "jurisdiction" for the court, and the thing is done! The price is paid, the decree is purchased, and the divorced ones are again "free" (?). When we inquire into its motive, we find that, as matters now stand, divorce is sought and obtained upon grounds the most flimsy and shallow, the outstanding object in many cases being to be able to marry again as speedily as possible.

Every person who obtains a divorce upon grounds other than the one specified by the Lord, and marries another, does that which is "not lawful," and to "have" another living partner while there is a living wife or husband, is to be living in adultery no less than was Herod, the woman at Samaria, Felix, or the alien Gentiles at Corinth. No adulterer shall inherit the kingdom of God. Everyone who, except for fornication, marries another while

there is a living husband or wife, is an adulterer, and while living in a state of adultery cannot be an heir of salvation. Such adultery must be repented of, the adulterous life forsaken, and the wrong righted.

#### How Right the Wrong?

How may such wrong be righted? It is not without remedy. The divine rule in cases of wrong doing is to "repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20). Repentance is a change of mind. But this alone is not sufficient: it must be accompanied and followed by "works" which are "meet" for or suitable to repentance. Such change of mind brings the individual to the crisis, the turning point. As he "turns to God" he turns away from the wrong to God's commands and the principles of His way, which are right thinking, followed by right doing. If he has taken that which is not his, whether it be goods or another's wife, he "gives again that which he robbed" (Ezek. 33:15. See also Luke 19:8). From henceforth he does "that which is lawful and right." Since it is "not lawful" to have two living husbands or wives, or to have a husband or wife belonging to another, then to "do that which is lawful" is to relinquish such unlawful relationship. To merely change his mind regarding the character of the thing he has done is no more than a change of theory. To suit his action, conformably to such change of mind, consists in doing "that which is lawful and right." Such action is "meet for repentance." If one be unlawfully married to the neighbor's husband or wife, or to another husband or wife when there is a living partner, the mere mental change with reference to the moral character of such relationship will not legalize in the sight of God that which of itself is "not lawful." If it is not lawful in such circumstances to *marry*, then it is no more lawful to *continue* in such married relation, or to "have" the unlawful husband or wife.

How right the wrong? Dissolve the unlawful relationship without legal process, live separately as if no marriage had taken place, provide for the one separated from if necessary, and especially any children there may be from the union that is dissolved, and walk henceforth "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Besides being action suitable for repentance, such a course will prove the depth and genuineness of conviction, and the sincerity of the desire to conform to the divine rule of action. Sin of any kind, and particularly a sin of this character, is too serious a matter to be either ignored, or lightly passed over; and before the adulterer can reasonably hope for an entrance into the kingdom of God, he must leave his adulterous life, and conform his action to the divine rule, which is as old as the human race, and still in full force.

#### Let not Man Put Asunder

In every case of divorce it is man who puts asunder the marriage bond between husband and wife. Among the Jews, if a man for any cause grew tired of his wife, he gave her a letter or certificate of divorcement, and sent her away. In modern times it is the courts that grant a decree of divorce to the dissatisfied partner. No divine arrangement or provision having been made for putting asunder the bond between husband and wife it is man who out of his own will and the hardness of his heart puts asunder or looses that which was intended to remain "joined" for life. That the courts, which but reflect popular sentiment, grant divorces upon any and all kinds of grounds, does not make this right in the sight of God, or otherwise than "not lawful" according to the divine rule. The public conscience with reference to this matter has become so seared and incrustated that no law framed by man, and no court conducted by him, may be regarded as a criterion. Even believers, following the line of least resistance, are in grave danger of having their standard of right gauged by popular sentiment and modern court decrees. We repeat: In every case of divorce it is man who puts asunder that which the divine law joined together.

## Separation Without Divorce

The apostle Paul addressed some wholesome counsel, coupled with an authoritative command, to married believers: "Let not the wife depart from her husband" (I. Cor. 7:10). Here the question obtrudes itself, "But what if she depart?" The writer anticipated this very question when he said, "But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife" (vs. 11). The believing husband or wife is not at liberty to secure a divorce from the other and least of all to marry again. If either would live in the married state, reconciliation to the husband or wife is the only course left open by the Lord's "command."

## Unbelieving Husband or Wife

The apostle gave his judgment on cases of this kind: "If a brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him" (vss. 12, 13). Why this counsel? "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband" (vs. 14). Sanctified in what sense? In the sense of set apart for the marriage union one with the other. But why this? For the children's sake. "Else were your children unclean; but now they are holy." In what sense "holy"? In the same sense as the husband and wife are sanctified for one another, that is, in the marriage relation. The marriage being sanctified or legitimate, so are the children that are born to such union. This holiness or legitimacy is one having its basis in the mind of God, and not in a Gentile judicature.

"But if the unbelieving (husband or wife) depart, let him depart" (vs. 15). If the unbelieving one be not "pleased to dwell" with the believer, and departs, the believer is not at fault for such departure, but this does not by any means give him the right to marry another.

The reason underlying this wholesome counsel is to be seen in vs. 16: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband; or what knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" It is evident that the word "sanctify" in vs. 14, and the word "save" in vs. 16 do not mean the same thing. The sanctification of the unbelieving partner is for the marriage relation, while the salvation of the one or the other aims at the obtainment of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

## Celibacy

Celibacy, from the Latin *caelebs*, is the state of an unmarried person. It is probable that Jesus referred to persons living in the unmarried state when He spoke of eunuchs, whom He divided into three classes, viz., those who were "so born from their mother's womb"; those who were "made eunuchs of men," and those who "made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake" (Matt. 19:12). The first two classes were eunuchs involuntarily, while those of the last-named class were such of their own will. Primarily the term had reference to an emasculated man, especially one who was an attendant at a harem. It was also applied to an oriental palace official. In Scripture this word often has the sense of an "officer," as we see by reference to I Kings 22:9; II Kings 8:6; 9:32; 20:18; 23:11; Jer. 38:7. In II Kings 23:11 the Hebrew word *saris* is given as "chamberlain." Here it has the sense of an officer who superintended the bedchambers and domestic apartments of a royal household. This is also the meaning of the Greek *eunochos*, from *eune*, bed, and *echo*, keep. We find attached to the court of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, "an eunuch who had charge of all her treasure" (Acts 8:27). Going to Jerusalem to worship, he was either a Jew or a proselyte.

Reverting to Matt. 19, we hear the disciples saying to Jesus after His interview with the Pharisees, "If the case of the man be so with his wife (namely, that he could put her away "for every cause"), it is not good to



marry" (vs. 10). This brought forth the reply from the Lord, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given" (vs. 11). Then follows the causal co-ordinate sentence dealing with the three classes of eunuchs (vs. 12). The first two of these, who were either born eunuchs, or made such by men, could easily "receive" the "saying" of the disciples that it was "not good to marry"; but it was not so easily received by those who were not eunuchs by birth, or were not made such by men. Not all could "make themselves eunuchs," that is be celibates, or abstain from marriage, even "for the kingdom of heaven's sake." This could only be done by such of this class as could "receive" it (vs. 11, 12). The apostle Paul was one of this class. He could say without reserve, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (I Cor. 7:1). He was a living example of the celibate life, and said to the unmarried and widows, "It is good for them if they abide even as I" (vs. 8). He "would" that all men were even as himself in this respect (vs. 7), that is, unmarried. Barnabas also seems to have been a celibate, for the apostle further said, "Have we not power to lead about a sister a wife as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" (chap. 9:5). While Paul "received" and put into practice the idea embodied in the "saying" that it is "not good to marry," these "others" did not receive it, not even Cephas, or Peter. But Jesus had intimated to the disciples what Paul afterward taught, viz., that to remain unmarried was not wrong in itself, but in certain circumstances "good."

Why was it "good not to touch a woman"? Why "good to abide" as did Paul? Because "he that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord how he may please the Lord; but he that is married careth for the things of the world how he may please his wife" (I Cor. 7:32, 33). The former is an eunuch, that is, a celibate "for the kingdom of heaven's sake."

No law is violated, no wrong done, in so "abiding" as Paul. In fact, he said, "He that giveth her (that is, his virgin) in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better" (vs. 37, 38). And in his judgment the widow would be "happier" if she remained unmarried, *i. e.*, were not "bound" to a husband.

From this we see that celibacy being "better" in some cases than the married state, it is not celibacy that puts asunder what God has joined together. It is the arbitrary putting away by divorce proceedings of one kind or another that constitutes the putting asunder of that which is joined together in wedlock in accordance with the divine law established at the beginning. If the practice or state of celibacy constituted such putting asunder, then the apostle Paul and many other noble-minded persons of his day and since have been guilty of sundering that which God joined together. Then Jesus was wrong when He commended those who "received" the idea embodied in the "saying" of the disciples that it is "not good to marry"; and Paul was wrong when he said that it was "good for a man not to touch a woman." Not every man or woman of marriageable age or status must necessarily marry. If those who marry please God, then those who do not marry please Him more, if such abstinence has for its object the undivided and undistracted service of God.

And may we in this connection also advert to the fact that Jesus Himself, while of marriageable age and condition, was an exemplification of the "saying" made by the disciples, viz., that it is "not good to marry." Jesus had a mission in the world, which was to preach the gospel; and to this He devoted Himself to the exclusion of everything else, marriage not excepted. While it is said that He "loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11:5), His love was never of a kind that would seek either of the sisters as a wife, but rather that of a friend who found congenial company in the home of the three at Bethany. Shall we say that in abstaining from marriage He severed that which God had joined together? It is possible, and quite likely, that in speaking of eunuchs who made themselves such "for the kingdom of heaven's sake," He alluded to Himself, and such of the disciples as were not married.

We also refer for a moment to the thousands of trained nurses in the

world who devote themselves wholly to the ministry of the sick. Many of these consecrated women grow old and die in this service for humanity without ever marrying. Shall we therefore charge them with putting asunder that which God has joined together? Such a charge being untrue, it would be extremely unjust. Their motive is to render service to such of their kind as are in need of such service; and since they can do this more effectively in the single than in the married state, they willingly forego the joys and pleasures of married life in order that they may, without let or hindrance, render such service. In their case, too, it is "better to so abide" as did Jesus and Paul.

The celibacy practised in the Roman Catholic Church is not compulsory, but entirely voluntary. It is not forced upon anyone. But the Church has decreed that those who take "holy orders," that is, become priests or nuns, shall remain unmarried. We do not approve of this rule for general application for the reason that while Paul and others practised celibacy, the apostles did not enjoin it upon any, whatever the service they performed in the church. They even instructed those who had charge of the installation of elders or bishops that "a bishop must be blameless the husband of one wife," and one "having his children in subjection with all gravity" (1 Tim. 3:2-4; Titus 1:5, 6). The words, "forbidding to marry" (1 Tim. 4:3), were a prediction of the practice introduced and enforced in later times, as Marcion in the second, and Eustathius in the fourth century, whose excessive austerity led them to prohibit wedlock, as well as the common comforts of life, to all their followers (See Mosheim *Eccl. Hist.* pp. 51, 95; Tertullian *Contra Marcion*, Book I, chap. 29). Marcion admitted none to his communion except such as were unmarried. This was an arbitrary rule preventing the union which the divine law aimed to establish by marriage as husband and wife. But where marriageable persons of their own will refrain from entering the married state, as did Jesus, Paul and others; or where persons today enter certain professions or religious orders which are maintained upon the basis of rigid celibacy, in order to devote themselves wholly to their chosen work, there is no violation of any divine command, nor can it be said in reason that there is a putting asunder of that which is joined together. This is only possible where two persons have actually been married, and not where no marriage has taken place.



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