MARRIAGE and DIVORCE

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PREFACE

THE CHURCH OF GOD STRIVES TO PRESERVE marriages and families.

Yet that very effort has brought vicious accusations of precisely the opposite.

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Human reasonings, when used to subvert the Word of God, often seem more right than the way of God.

For many years the Church of God issued a small booklet explaining the true biblical teaching in regard to human-caused problems of divorce and remarriage. But this plain and simple truth of God has been increasingly challenged.

Technical books have been written purporting to prove that the Word of God allows divorce and remarriage to another. Such is a doctrine of men and not of God.

Some so-called Bible scholars, attempting to justify the prevalent trend in breaking up families by divorce and allowing remarriage, have resorted to a striving about the technical meaning of certain words — especially the Greek word *porneia*.

God's Word admonishes us to "strive not about *words* to no profit, but to the subverting of hearers" (II Timothy 2:14). And the 15th verse continues: "STUDY to show *thy-*

self approved unto God . . . rightly dividing the word of truth."

For those who sincerely want to understand and obey the teaching of our God, this larger booklet is now issued by the Worldwide Church of God. It answers the assumptions of those who choose to strive with words and the Hebrew and Greek derivations. It makes plain the overall PURPOSE of God, and His true MEANING of the institution of marriage.

The guidance of the living Christ, Head of this Church, in the teaching of the Church from the beginning has been completely demonstrated in this enlarged booklet. The object was not to please people, or to please ourselves, but to PROVE what is the true and faithful WORD OF GOD, to show OURSELVES approved unto God, and to RIGHTLY divide His Word of TRUTH. We are all to be JUDGED by this WORD OF GOD, regardless of temporary and imperfect judgments of men.

Received in the attitude of the Holy Spirit of God, this booklet will prove a real BLESSING to all who obey the living God.

MARRIAGE and DIVORCE

Are there "Bible grounds" for divorce and remarriage? Adultery? Mental or physical cruelty? Incompatibility? Or none?

PART I

THE ALARMING rise in the divorce rate is America's growing *national tragedy!* It is MORE! It is America's *national SIN!* Other nations are likewise guilty. Divorce is at an all-time high. In the 12 months ending February 1973, the increase in divorces in the United States was 8.7% over the preceding 12 months.

The very foundation of any nation's solidarity, strength and power is a solid and stable FAMILY structure. When a nation's FAMILY LIFE is breaking down, that nation is disintegrating — committing national suicide!

Every Fourth Home Affected

In some areas, more than every third American family has been broken up by divorce. For the whole nation it's about one in four. For every 100 marriages there now are 31 divorces.

We are only too well aware that the TRUTH on this vital subject will strike home to about every fourth reader. We are aware, too, that some will be offended by the TRUTH. It is not our wish or purpose to offend. But I have been commissioned by the living Creator and universe-

ruling GOD to *"Cry aloud, and spare not!"* To *"lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their SINS!"*

And that I must do even though, unfortunately, some will take offense. This appalling national (and international) sin reaches, as a foul stench, to high Heaven! Because our peoples are thus harming themselves and their children, the living God is aroused and *angered!* It is threatening the destruction of NATIONS!

The very fact that this sin extends into every fourth home is the impelling reason the living God commissions this truth to be sent into those homes. It has been far too long neglected by a guilty clergy!

Where God Places the Blame

Do you realize where the very GOD places the blame for this colossal national sin? Squarely on the clergy who have withheld God's TRUTH from the people! Listen to God's stinging indictment against the ministers of this world:

"My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds [ministers] have caused them to go astray" (Jer. 50:6).

In this booklet we give you the plain, unvarnished WORD OF GOD on this subject. We give it to you precisely as the Eternal God reveals how *HE looks upon this subject* of marriage, divorce, and remarriage!

WHY Marriage?

What is God's PURPOSE in marriage? How does *HE* "look at it?"

For that matter, WHY marriage, anyway? Is there any real REASON for it? What's its MEANING? Or is there any?

Today educational institutions indoctrinate students with the theory of evolution. Evolution is based on the postulated nonexistence of God. It is the atheists' attempt to explain the presence of a creation without a Creator. Disbelief in God and a spirit of rebellion against His laws has led some to question the marriage institution altogether. There have been predictions that marriage is on the way out — soon to be a relic of the past.

To them, marriage has no moral or spiritual authority. No laws bind one to it, except those of the state. No moral codes prevent its dissolution. They cannot account for its origin. They see no PURPOSE in it — no real reason for it.

When, they may ask, in the evolutionary development of man from a lower species of animal, did the marriage custom start? Animals do not marry. Marriage is not necessary for reproduction. Animals procreate, but they do not marry, though some species mate. But they have no HOME and FAMILY life. So when, why, and how did animal-becoming-man decide to start the marriage custom?

The old repressive morality taught that the *only* purpose of sex was reproduction. But if that be true, NO MARRIAGE WOULD BE NECESSARY. Animals are male and female. Animals are of the two sexes — they reproduce, but they don't have married FAMILY life.

So, WHY MARRIAGE? Those who disbelieve in God can see NO AUTHORITY for marriage. No PURPOSE! No MEANING!

So a sick and disbelieving world invents its "NEW MORALITY" which is promiscuous IMMORALITY. And the sin of DIVORCE and REMARRIAGE accompanies it!

But when we come to understand THE PURPOSE for human life on this planet, we begin to understand the REASON for marriage. And it is much more than merely reproduction.

Why MAN?

You can positively PROVE that GOD exists. We refer you to our free booklets *Does God Exist?* and *Seven Proofs God Exists.*

God is the Eternally living Great Designer, Creator, Lawgiver, Source of all basic knowledge, Giver of life, peace, happiness, joy, and abundance. He is the GIVER of every good and perfect gift — including eternal life.

But, now — WHY *MAN?*

Is there a REASON why God put mankind on the earth? God never does things without a PURPOSE!

God, through human life upon the earth, actually is REPRODUCING HIS OWN KIND!

God designed and made cattle after the cattle kind (Gen. 1:24). He made horses after the horse kind — dogs after the dog kind — chimps after the chimp kind. But God said: "Let us make *man* in *OUR* image, after *OUR* likeness" (Gen. 1:26) — after the *GOD* kind!

Man was made to have a close and special relationship with God his Creator. Converted man has actual FELLOWSHIP with God (I John 1:3). Animals have no such relationship!

God's PURPOSE is that man come to *know* the true values from the false — to know THE WAY that causes all GOOD — to come to repent of every false way, and to CHOOSE the right and living WAY, that he may receive the Holy Spirit of God. Thus being begotten as a child of GOD, finally at the time of the resurrection, being BORN INTO the Supreme Divine FAMILY — the *GOD FAMILY* — which Family *IS* the KINGDOM OF GOD! To understand, you need our free booklet, *What Do You Mean — the Kingdom of God?*

Animals have no such potential.

Man, now, is composed of material flesh from the ground. He is formed and shaped like God — but composed of matter. God is composed of SPIRIT! God formed man from the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). That material dust *became* a living SOUL. So the soul is composed of matter! So the Word of God reveals! But when man finally becomes BORN of God, he shall be composed of SPIRIT. Jesus said, "that which is born of the flesh *IS FLESH;* and that which is born of the Spirit *IS SPIRIT*" (John 3:6). Then, at the time of the resurrection, God "shall change our vile body [of corruptible flesh], that it may be fashioned like unto his [Christ's] glorious [SPIRIT-COMPOSED] body" (Phil. 3:21). To fully UNDERSTAND, you need our free booklet, *What Do You Mean — Born Again?*

Then — A Marriage

Then what?

Then there shall be A MARRIAGE! But *HOW?* What kind?

God's PURPOSE involves the raising up of His Church.

It is GOD's Church, named after the FATHER of the God Family — named the Church of God. Every one repentant, an obedient believer and overcomer, upon receiving God's Holy Spirit, is baptized *by* God's Spirit — BY GOD HIMSELF — into His Church. The Church, spoken of as a WOMAN, is the affianced Bride of the living, glorified Christ.

At the time of the resurrection and Christ's coming in supreme Power and Glory, the Church of God, its members being changed to spirit immortality, shall *enter into* the KINGDOM OF GOD.

At that time, Christ shall MARRY His Church (Eph. 5:22-33): At that time, it is written, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth . . . the marriage of the Lamb is come, and *his wife* hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:6-7). And verse 8 shows the *wife* to be "the saints."

Why Church Called His Wife

But WHY, prior to the marriage, is the Church called *"his wife?"* Because God *married* Israel at Mt. Sinai (Jer. 3:14). Much more about that 3rd chapter of Jeremiah later! But the making of the Old Covenant (Exodus 24:6-8) was the marriage ceremony, setting up Israel as not only wife and Church, but also as a KINGDOM — the KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

The LORD (YHWH) of the Old Testament is the CHRIST of the New Testament. When Christ was crucified, Israel's husband DIED, ending that marriage legally (Rom. 7:2).

But the Church *is* ISRAEL, spiritually begotten. Gentile converts are no longer foreigners from Israel (Eph. 2:11-19). Israel is pictured as the natural olive tree; and Gentiles as wild olive trees (Rom. 11). But because of unbelief the natural olive tree branches were broken off, and Gentile converts, as branches of wild olive trees, were grafted into the natural olive tree of Israel (Rom. 11:17). And natural-born Israelites, by repentance, belief and conversion, are grafted back into the ISRAEL tree. The CHURCH is pictured as *converted Israel* — or *Spiritual*

Israel! (Rom. 11:23.) The New Testament Church, then, *IS* Israel, spiritually!

Since Israel's husband died, she is freed from her Old Testament marriage and *free to marry!* Christ's death paid the penalty of her sins (spiritual adultery and harlotries) as a Church or nation, as well as those of the individuals.

So the CHURCH — *spiritual Israel* — becomes the affianced Bride, to MARRY Christ. And when this divine MARRIAGE takes place, Christ will be marrying HIS WIFE!

Betrothed Woman Called Wife

There is another reason why the Church, *prior* to the wedding ceremony, is called "His WIFE." A betrothed woman, in Scripture, is called her fiance's WIFE, though the marriage *has not yet been* BOUND — prior to the marriage ceremony (Matt. 1:18-20, 24). This was ancient Jewish practice. There was a betrothal ceremony, called the *erossin* ceremony. The betrothed or espoused woman remained in her father's house until the wedding ceremony, called the *kiddushin* ceremony. At this *kiddushin* or wedding ceremony, the marriage was BOUND. Then the husband took his wife to his own house.

Marriage Covenant IS the Gospel!

Jesus came as *the Messenger of the Covenant!* (Mal. 3:1.) He was the Messenger bringing us the message of the New Covenant, which is the MARRIAGE covenant which will establish the Church *AS* the KINGDOM OF GOD. Just as Moses was the mediator of the Old Covenant, so is Christ of the New. The GOSPEL is THAT MESSAGE! And just as the MARRIAGE at Sinai *set up* the Kingdom of Israel, so the marriage of the Church to Christ will *set up* the KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH!

So *that marriage IS* the Gospel!

That DIVINE MARRIAGE, which simply *IS* the NEW COVENANT that will establish the KINGDOM OF GOD upon earth was typified by the OLD COVENANT. It was God's marriage to carnal, physical Israel, which established the Kingdom of Israel as one of earth's nations.

Now WHY was the NEW COVENANT made necessary?

The answer is plain in Hebrews 8. "... if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (verse 7). What was the fault with the Old Covenant? "For finding fault with them ..." (verse 8) "which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord" (Jer. 31:32). They committed adultery. They went further and also committed harlotry.

The DIVINE MARRIAGE is to be founded on better promises than the old (Heb. 8:6) which promises are "eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15) which includes the gift of ETERNAL LIFE.

Permanency of Marriage

The DIVINE MARRIAGE to Christ will last FOREVER. The "wife" will not break it, nor depart from her Husband, as Old Testament Israel did, for she shall be divine, in a spirit condition where she CANNOT sin (I John 3:9).

Now some objector, trying to overthrow the truth by a technicality, might argue, "the analogy doesn't hold water, because human marriage, now, is broken by death — whereas the DIVINE MARRIAGE cannot be broken by death."

But, in scriptural terminology, the term "forever" means, "continuously without interruption, so long as the involved factors exist." In that Biblical sense, human marriage, now, is FOREVER! The factors are a husband and a wife. When one dies, the factors involved no longer exist. It does not, therefore continue binding in the resurrection (Matt. 22:28-30).

Therefore, the mortal human marriage now is, indeed, the true type of the immortal divine marriage in the resurrection.

One seeking to justify divorce and remarriage by technical argument might reason: "In the DIVINE MARRIAGE, neither husband nor wife would be able to commit adultery. In this mortal life they can. Therefore it is not true type and antitype.

But IT IS! All factors do not necessarily need be identical in true type and antitype. And this bit of human

argument is the *very reason* there must be a NEW COVENANT!

Why the New Covenant

If there had been no fault with the Old, no place would have been sought for the New (Heb. 8:7). The fact of the disobedience on the part of Israel under the Old is *the very reason* that made necessary the New. Read the whole chapter of Hebrews 8. Because Israel committed adultery — and harlotry and worse — God will make the New Covenant *ONLY* with those who have *proved,* by repentance, overcoming, and obedience through God's Holy Spirit, that they *will not* repeat that fault in the New. The New will be made with those who have *proved* they have God's Laws, by their own volition, written in their minds and hearts. Therefore, in the resurrection, God will make them *as He is,* so it will be impossible for them to sin or be unfaithful. They must first prove it by FAITHFULNESS in this present mortal life.

One may now justify his own sins in his own mind by human reasonings. But he won't be judging himself in the final judgment. GOD WILL! We here are merely making clear HOW GOD LOOKS AT MARRIAGE — and how He will judge!

The Gospel Jesus brought is the GOOD *NEWS* of the coming Kingdom of God.

This is a MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH which has not been fully recognized!

What *IS* Kingdom of God?

Let's be sure we UNDERSTAND it!

The KINGDOM OF GOD *is* the FAMILY OF GOD! The Kingdom of Israel was the "Children of Israel" — as they are called repeatedly in the Old Testament — which actually was the FAMILY OF ISRAEL — which became one of the kingdoms — governments, or nations — of the world. In precisely the same manner, the KINGDOM OF GOD will be the FAMILY (spirit-born CHILDREN) *of GOD!* It will be the one and only world-ruling Kingdom — GOVERNMENT — ruling over ALL NATIONS.

And what will the KINGDOM OF GOD include? It will include those saints spiritually BORN of God the Father, *and MARRIED to God the Son!*

The GOSPEL of Jesus Christ is the GOOD NEWS of this KINGDOM OF GOD. That Kingdom includes those (the Church) MARRIED to Christ!

So what does that mean?

It simply becomes axiomatic that when one becomes converted, and is put by God's Spirit into the Church, he also automatically has become *betrothed* to the marriage with the living CHRIST!

And what of *that* marriage? Will *it* be subject to divorce and remarriage? You know that answer is a THOUSAND TIMES *NO!* That marriage *can never be broken!*

The betrothed wife MUST BE FAITHFUL in her betrothal! In the experience of Joseph, the betrothed — yet unmarried husband of Mary, mother of Jesus — he, supposing she had been unfaithful, was minded to put her away *before the BOUND MARRIAGE.* If one of us, spiritually betrothed to the living Christ, becomes unfaithful through physical divorce and remarriage in this Christian life, would not our espoused spiritual Husband, CHRIST, PUT US AWAY? SIN does cut us off. Unless repented of and forgiven, we would never make it into God's KINGDOM!

What is God's command to us, in this regard? It is:

"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law)," — DO WE know it, or desire to get around it? — "how that the law hath dominion over a man *as long as he liveth?* For the woman which hath an husband *is bound* by the law to her husband as 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 . . ." (Rom. 7:1-3).

No Loophole

Anyone who thinks he has found a loophole to allow divorce and remarriage does violence to this clear, plain statement of GOD'S LAW! Any scripture that would allow

divorce and remarriage would contradict the above-quoted scripture. Then we should be accusing the Word of God of contradicting itself, and nullify the entire Bible. THERE ARE NO CONTRADICTIONS, as we shall clearly show!

If any should claim that scripture applies to women only, notice verse 1: "... how that the law hath dominion *over a man* as long as *he* liveth." In addition, we know that God has no double standard, and is no respecter of persons.

The marriage institution was ordained for man by God *at the creation of man* (Gen. 2:24). Human marriage was given as a TYPE of the spiritual marriage of the spiritual "woman" — the Church — to Christ in the Kingdom of God. *That* marriage to Christ will *NOT* be subject to divorce and remarriage. Therefore neither can the human marriage be subject to divorce and remarriage. God's Law forbids it. No law allows it. Any such law would DO VIOLENCE to the human type of the divine antitype!

To be UNFAITHFUL, now, to the betrothed relation to Christ would, as we shall show by the Scriptures, result in Christ "putting us away" — *BEFORE* that marriage! Why? Because SIN "puts us away."

Marriage is a GOD-plane relationship. Even though a physical union, it is a DIVINE INSTITUTION, ordained of GOD. God had great PURPOSE and MEANING in giving it to man. God's Church, called to preach Christ's GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM (to be established over earth *by* the MARRIAGE COVENANT with Christ — which *IS* the *NEW COVENANT*) — cannot pollute that very Gospel by approving divorce and remarriage!

The True Meaning of Marriage

Remember, in this exposition, we are viewing the subject *as God views it.*

I repeat. Though marriage is a physical union, it is a *divine* institution. God does nothing without a *reason* — a definite PURPOSE! To understand the "WHY" of the Laws of God respecting the marriage institution, we need to know still more about the REASON God had in mind for establishing marriage.

The living Christ already is crowned with GLORY and HONOR (Heb. 2:9). He is the first-BORN of many brethren (meaning us who have His Spirit) (Rom. 8:29). Christ is the "captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10). That is, He is the Pioneer, who has gone on ahead, leading the way, *as the Husband, preparing the dwelling place for His wife* (John 14:2). Jesus rose from the dead. He is alive — and He is DIVINE — as we shall be. He has been GLORIFIED — His eyes as flames of fire, His face bright as the SUN! Full-strength! (Rev. 1:14-16.) That's what WE may inherit!

Are you really comprehending this colossal TRUTH? *Are* you?

And WE, if we repent, believe with living faith, and accept Jesus Christ as personal Saviour *and betrothed Husband,* can receive God's GIFT of the Holy Spirit. That GIFT imparts to us the very *life,* essence, nature, mind and power of GOD! It begets us, now, as God's own (yet unborn) SON! And if we GROW spiritually, (II Pet. 3:18), overcome, and endure we shall, at Christ's coming, be *changed* from mortal flesh to immortal SPIRIT (I Cor. 15:44-45). We, collectively, shall be the BRIDE OF CHRIST!

Man's Transcendent Potential

And *that* is the supreme heritage of human MAN!
Man, now lower than angels, has a destiny far higher!
So grasp this stupendous TRUTH if you can!

For here is the greatest GOOD NEWS you can ever know! That GOOD NEWS *IS* the Gospel. And that very Gospel involves *faithfulness* in any marriage relationship NOW, for it is preparation for the spiritual marriage to Christ for all eternity!

MAN, and man *only,* of all life forms God has created, can be born into the very GOD FAMILY — the KINGDOM OF GOD! And as a most vital part of it, he will enter an eternal, nonbreakable, never-to-be-divorced MARRIAGE relationship.

TO PREPARE us for that, God has made us mortal — human, and ordained the MARRIAGE and FAMILY relationship *in this life!*

WHY?

God has never given animals this MARRIAGE and FAMILY relationship! Angels never marry nor are given in marriage (Matt. 22:30). Angels have never enjoyed FAMILY status!

The God-Plane Relationship

The MARRIAGE and FAMILY relationship is a GOD-PLANE relationship — higher than even an angel-plane relationship. And God bestowed it on MAN *because* man is being now *prepared* for the MARRIAGE and FAMILY relationship FOREVER in the GOD FAMILY!

Think of it! Of all life forms — whether plant, animal, human or angel, in all that God created, *MAN ALONE* was created for MARRIAGE and FAMILY life!

In the Kingdom of God — in the GOD FAMILY — there will be MARRIAGE and FAMILY relationship — *BUT NO DIVORCE!*

God is consistent!

Could we be preparing for that kind of marriage FOREVER by divorcing and remarrying NOW?

What a supreme, matchless, awe-inspiring potential!

You are, if converted with God's Holy Spirit dwelling in you, the *heir* of God, and *co-heir* with Christ, to enjoy eternally this unbreakable marriage and family relationship in God's Kingdom! Even now a begotten child of God! You are betrothed to marry Christ!

The Divine Family

God *IS* the divine FAMILY! The FAMILY relationship demands a husband-and-wife relationship. And that demands *faithfulness* to the matrimonial bond. Human marriage, now, again I repeat, is the TYPE of the divine marriage setting up of God's Kingdom on earth.

God, I repeat, *is consistent!* He does not ordain faithfulness FOREVER in the marriage to Christ, and then PREPARE US for that marriage by ordaining UNfaithfulness, with divorce and remarriage during this preparatory period.

The pivotal REASON for the marriage relationship in this human life is to prepare us, BY FAITHFULNESS now, for

that eternally faithful marriage state THEN! To constantly remind us of our sacred relationship to Christ, as espoused to the NEVER-ending marriage to Him!

How much sense would it make to teach us to be ETERNALLY faithful, *then,* by ruling that we may be UNFAITHFUL, now, divorcing and remarrying? GOD HAS GIVEN NO SUCH LAW! That shall be MADE PLAIN!

One of the most important PURPOSES in our human lives, now, is that we learn the SANCTITY, the SACREDNESS, the *PERMANENCY* of the marriage bond!

Of course, God HAS NOT WILLED that every human must marry. That is made very clear in I Corinthians 7. The Apostle Paul was not married. Yet, I am persuaded that I, like he, have the mind of Christ, and, after all, it was God who said "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Gen. 2:18). However it would be far better to live alone than to be yoked to what might be called "a hell-on-earth" situation. Everyone should take marriage so SERIOUSLY that a wrong marriage is NOT made in the first place. And if THIS TRUTH were known by all, there would be few mis-mated marriages. On the other hand, if this TRUTH were more thoroughly realized, married partners would TRY HARDER to make marriages HAPPY. Our booklet says: "Your Marriage *CAN* Be Happy."

But, whether married or single, all need to learn that marriage is the TYPE of the coming divine Marriage to Christ. And a type cannot be the type unless CONSISTENT with the antitype.

I repeat, God's laws regarding marriage — which is a DIVINE INSTITUTION — could not be consistent if they provided for divorce and remarriage now, when it shall NOT be allowed then!

Marriage "For This CAUSE"

In Ephesians 5:31 we read: "For this cause..." — because of the coming divine marriage of the Church to Christ — "... that He might present it to himself a glorious church ..." (verse 27) — for this REASON God ordained the marriage institution for humans, now!

That is the REASON humans are given this GOD-PLANE

relationship which has been given to NO OTHER species — whether animal or angel. That is God's PURPOSE in granting humans marriage, now. It is a type! And God's Laws DO make the human type consistent with the divine antitype!

What a WONDERFUL privilege God bestowed on us, in giving us the God-plane marriage and family relationship! And WHY? To prepare us for the never-ending JOY and ECSTACY of our spiritual marriage bliss FOR ETERNITY in the KINGDOM OF GOD! In the GOD FAMILY!

GOD'S CHURCH shall *NOT* be unfaithful! The Church of God cannot — *WILL NOT* approve, endorse, or allow in its membership the violation of God's laws respecting marriage, nor the pollution of this God-required *FAITHFULNESS!*

It may be, because this world's ministers have not proclaimed God's TRUTH, that some may have to live separately, ineligible to remarry. It may be difficult. It may mean suffering. But God inspired Paul to write, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18)!

To follow will be the scriptures setting forth God's laws respecting marriage. Then will follow a thorough examination of those passages which some have questioned, as possibly warranting a different conclusion.

PART II

God's Laws Concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

WE COME now to the laws of God regulating the divine institution of marriage, as well as those relating — or purporting to relate — to divorce and remarriage.

Again it is emphasized that we must accept this question of marriage according to God's laws, not man's desires and reasonings. We must view it as GOD looks at it, not as man might *wish* to have it.

For 6,000 years MAN has been attempting to treat the *effect,* ignoring the *cause.* He forgets that everything is a matter of CAUSE and effect. For every evil there has had to be a CAUSE. If we are to enjoy the BLESSINGS of peace, happiness, joy, abundance, something will have to CAUSE it.

The first humans, Adam and Eve, rejected the teaching and laws of God which were set in motion and revealed to them as the CAUSE of every GOOD — every desired blessing. They took to themselves the determination of the knowledge of what is GOOD and what is evil. And their descendants after them have been choosing the WAY that has CAUSED every evil.

Man looks at the *evil* — which is the *result* of a wrong *cause* and tries to deal with the *effect,* without changing the *cause.* In other words man wants to break GOD'S LAWS,

and when the *penalty* appears, he deals with the penalty — the *effect* — trying to prevent God's laws from exacting their penalty.

Man's View VS. God's

How does man, then, usually view this matter of marriage, divorce and remarriage? If — whether through ignorance of God's laws, or neglect or other cause, his marriage did not work out, and he finds himself in a state of having gone through the wringer of divorce, his whole thought is how to remedy his *present* unhappy situation. His whole concern is *self*-concern for his *present suffering.* Even others, sympathetic with him, view the situation entirely from the standpoint of dealing with the *effect* — trying to remedy *that* — trying to eliminate the suffering when that suffering has resulted from BROKEN LAW!

People do not want to *suffer,* but would prefer to break God's laws *further,* to prevent present suffering. They do not often consider what God inspired the Apostle Paul to write: "For I reckon that the SUFFERINGS of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

In the matter of divorce and remarriage, they usually place the blame on the *other* mate, and seek a way to interpret the Scripture to justify removing the penalty being SUFFERED by "the INJURED PARTY."

But we simply CAN'T always relieve the "injured party" from the *effect* being suffered, even though CAUSED by another! A man may have lost an arm because of the carelessness of another automobile driver, or because another deliberately attacked. Sometimes even the victim of accident or design must suffer a penalty he did not himself cause. Undoubtedly, in the above-quoted scripture, Paul was referring to sufferings uncaused by the sufferer.

But sometimes the dedicated Christian, heir of GLORY, spiritually betrothed to the marriage to Christ, must even suffer WRONG and seeming injustice for the Kingdom of God's sake. "Be ye also patient: ... for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8).

God's CHURCH must view this subject as GOD looks at it, not as injured man looks at it. God placed mankind on earth for a PURPOSE. The marriage institution is included in that GREAT PURPOSE. God had a REASON for His law regarding the sanctity and PERMANENCY of marriage. And that REASON leading to permanent eternal GLORY is far more important IN GOD'S eyes than temporarily relieving immediate sufferings by breaking His LAW. God's Church cannot condone what God forbids!

God's Laws Protect the HOME

WHY did God establish the marriage institution? Remember, that although it is a *physical* union, it is a DIVINE institution, ordained by God at the time of the creation of MAN. God created man for the PURPOSE of developing righteous spiritual character and being born into the Kingdom of God, which is the divine FAMILY.

Man was made to ultimately enter that FAMILY — to enjoy FAMILY life for all eternity. Therefore God willed that man ONLY, of all the creatures of His creation, should enjoy FAMILY life in his present physical, mortal state. Family life demands the MARRIAGE institution, a type of the marriage of the Church to Christ.

Therefore it is natural that God's laws — even the basic spiritual Law of the Ten Commandments, are designed to do two things:

1) to keep people in a close relationship to God and right relationship with human neighbor, and

2) to protect the MARRIAGE and FAMILY relationship.

God made the husband the head of the wife, and the parents head over their children. The fifth Commandment protects this relationship: "Honor thy father and thy mother." But of course a rebellious humanity does not like to obey this command. Breaking this command is a major contributing factor in breaking up family life today.

Protecting the MARRIAGE relationship are the seventh and tenth Commandments: "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" and "Thou shalt not covet ... thy neighbor's wife ..." The seventh Commandment protects the marriage against unfaithfulness, which, once started, could

lead to a broken marriage and a broken family. Of course this Commandment *includes* fornication prior to marriage, and all the other sex abuses and perversions, either before or after marriage. Any sexual intercourse or other illicit sex act prior to marriage *mars* the happiness of a marriage that follows. For the GOOD and happiness of the marriage state, God forbids all such violations of chastity.

The tenth Commandment, besides protecting one's neighbor, and expressing the general and all-inclusive principle of LOVE to neighbor — which means outgoing concern for neighbor's welfare equal to concern for one's own — also is given to safeguard against remarriage — coveting any other woman than one's wife. Of course this applies equally to a woman coveting any man other than her husband.

Marriage by God's Authority Only

Now notice the first, original, fundamental, basic rule of all in the husband-wife and family relationship.

When God first created man upon the earth He ordained the marriage union. The marriage and family institution is BASIC in God's PURPOSE for man. MAN, and MARRIAGE, were thus *created together!*

Marriage was not instituted by man. Nor by authority of a man-made legislative body. Nor by laws promulgated by a human-constituted legislative or law-making body.

Notice: "And the Eternal God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him.... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:18, 24). GOD (Heb. *Elohim*) is a *FAMILY OF PERSONS.* God is reproducing Himself. Faithfulness to marriage and family relationship is the REASON for MAN!

And Jesus said: "...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.... What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.... 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" (Mark 10:6-9, 11-12).

There is the FOUNDATION of the marriage union!

There is the BASIS of family life!

There is what man was created *for!*

There is the DIVINE LAW upon which the stability — *or the fate* — of a nation rests!

Do you realize what that basis is?

Why Humans Put on Earth

Almighty GOD, not a human legislative body, created the human race — made us male and female — *for a PURPOSE!* That PURPOSE is that we might, ultimately, enter God's Kingdom. That Kingdom *IS* God — Hebrew, *Elohim* — one GOD, composed of more than one Person. The Hebrew *Elohim* is a uniplural name, like *"family," "church,"* or *"group."* And it *is* the DIVINE FAMILY. We were created for FAMILY relationship, and for MARRIAGE relationship. This mortal flesh-and-blood-state of marriage requires both male and female. So God created us male and female, and *"for this cause"* (Matt. 19:5) — because God made them male and female (Matt. 19:4) God ordained the marriage union.

Understand it! The Creator, at the creation of man, created man male and female, *for the cause* of marriage — for the PURPOSE of *preparing for* the divine, spiritual marriage to Christ in GOD'S KINGDOM!

When this is understood, and straightened in your mind, the whole question of marriage becomes clear. Divorce and remarriage becomes unthinkable. It simply doesn't make sense!

It is GOD, not man, who JOINS husband and wife together! Therefore only GOD can unjoin what He has joined and no scripture provides for that.

We call marriage "HOLY matrimony" or "HOLY wedlock." But WHY? What makes it holy? Only the fact that GOD ordained it — the fact that it is a DIVINE institution — the fact that it is the human TYPE, *preparing* us for the

HOLY spiritual antitype of the marriage to Christ in the Kingdom! And the fact that it is BOUND by the HOLY GOD!

Yet, in spite of all this, would some seek to relieve the "injured" and "suffering" one by human reasoning to justify making the entire PURPOSE and MEANING of God of no effect?

Ordained At Man's Creation

It is GOD who joins and BINDS husband and wife as ONE FLESH. The minister, the Justice of the Peace, the Judge, the ship captain, merely conducts a ceremony. But it is ALMIGHTY GOD who *ties the knot* — who BINDS them *FOR LIFE!* God commands man *to cleave to* his wife — not to leave her and cleave to another.

This was ordained at man's CREATION. It applies to ALL MANKIND. It applies to "converted" and "unconverted" alike. It applies to all races, creeds, and regardless of religion. It is not merely an ordinance of "the Church." The marriage institution started at man's CREATION, long before there was a church.

And God's law regarding the marriage institution says one thing *and one only* can break that marriage bond — DEATH!

God's LAW regarding marriage is stated again in Romans: "Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband *is bound by the law* to her husband as 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. 7:1-3).

This same law of God is repeated in I Corinthians 7:39.

The Way God Looks At It

That law PROVIDES FOR *NO* DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE!

That law is GOD'S LAW. In the same context it is called holy, just and good (v. 12) and spiritual (v. 14).

To put a meaning or interpretation into some *other* passage of Scripture that interprets it to allow for divorce and remarriage, is to collide head-on with this plain, clear, and undisputable statement of GOD'S LAW. It would represent God as contradicting Himself! Those passages supposed to nullify this statement of God's law, or make exception to it, will be clearly examined and the misinterpretation made CLEAR!

This statement of God's law in Romans 7 is simple, plain, and explicit. It states it *THE WAY GOD LOOKS AT IT,* though not the way man, at least in some instances, would like to look at it. This statement of God's law is CONSISTENT with God's PURPOSE — with the MEANING of the marriage institution! Any exception violates and destroys that PURPOSE and meaning!

Understand this basic LAW, and God's PURPOSE, and the MEANING of marriage, and everything is CLEAR — and any contrary conclusion is a flagrant contradiction to this LAW of God, and to God's PURPOSE and MEANING!

Any man-made laws contrary to this plain, straight and clear LAW OF GOD have NO AUTHORITY in GOD'S SIGHT.

PART III

Certain Passages Examined

I HAVE GIVEN YOU the "TRUNK" of the tree. But some, scrutinizing closely, technically, and exhaustively a few minor branches or twigs, and losing sight of the TRUNK, have reasoned that they see a minor branch or twig totally foreign to the TRUNK, and out of harmony with God's purpose.

So they classify the whole tree according to their much-involved analysis of the little branch. But the branches and twigs grow out of the TRUNK and the root structure, and of necessity are of the same classification.

Through Evolutionist's Eyes

How would an evolutionist view this question of divorce and remarriage? He sees NO GOD in the picture. He is aware of NO PURPOSE. He doesn't know HOW marriage got started. He doesn't know its PURPOSE or MEANING. He sees no CAUSE, so he deals with the EFFECT. If his marriage is unhappy, or he tires of his wife, he sees no reason against divorce and remarriage. He views the whole thing according to his present circumstance and desire. If divorced, and he sees a woman he wants to marry, WHY NOT?

I'm afraid some who DO believe in the existence of God view the question in the same way. If one feels he (or she) is the "injured party" to a broken marriage, he looks at the immediate DESIRE, he seeks to remedy his present situation.

But the CHURCH OF GOD cannot look at the question

in that manner. It is GOD'S Church, and its members are, and must be, GOD'S PEOPLE! As Spirit-begotten children of GOD, our lives must be dedicated to God and obedience to His teachings and laws. We are given the breath of life to fulfill His PURPOSE, not to violate it.

"Bible Grounds" For Divorce?

We look, now, to some of the smaller branches and/or twigs of this divorce and remarriage question, where some think they have found "Bible grounds" for divorce and remarriage.

We will look, first, to Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:3-12.

The Matthew 5 passage is part of the so-called "Sermon on the Mount." Jesus had just corrected those who thought He came to abolish God's Law. He had firmly *established* God's Law.

"Think NOT that I am come to destroy the law," He had said. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (verses 17-19).

Then Jesus continued to "magnify the law and make it honorable" (Isa. 42:21) — that is, enlarge upon it, make it more inclusive. Magnify it according to the SPIRIT, not merely the letter. Apply it in principle.

So He continued, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment...." Thus He made the commandment even MORE binding.

He continued: "Ye have heard that it was said of 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" (verses 27-28). He was not relaxing God's Law — He was making it more binding, more inclusive. This was no "liberal" teaching, but the strictest kind of teaching.

Next He came to divorce and remarriage. Some think He became more "liberal" at this point. But He did not change His attitude here. Rather, He made the laws of UNBREAKABLE MARRIAGE even MORE BINDING. He was completely CONSISTENT with the context of what He was here teaching.

He said, "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement . . ." But now see Him make it MORE STRICT, not more liberal! Continue: "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (verses 31-32).

The Greek *Porneia*

I have quoted this in context. Some, by resorting to the original Greek word for "fornication" — *porneia* — would take it completely out of context, and out of character, and have Jesus suddenly shift from a very *strict* law-teacher, to a liberal, granting divorce and remarriage contrary to God's PURPOSE in marriage, and to the MEANING of marriage, and the plain LAWS regarding marriage.

First, "It hath been said, . . ." in verse 31 is a citation from Deuteronomy 24:1. The rival schools in Jerusalem *mis*-used this scripture. Much technical argument is resorted to by some, in an effort to make that Old Testament passage justify divorce and remarriage now, TODAY. That does not apply here, because of Jesus' making it *more strict* BY following it with "But I say unto you." However, I reserve comment on Deuteronomy 24:1 for following pages, when it will be considered *in depth*.

For now, I will answer the arguments of those who put stress on the Greek *porneia*.

Since this same *porneia* is used in Matthew 19:3-12, I will consider these two passages together. In Matthew 19, He was answering trick questions by the Pharisees. The complete passage under consideration is as follows:

"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?" ("for ANY cause" RSV and others.) They undoubtedly had Deuteronomy 24:1 in mind. Notice Jesus' MORE STRICT TEACHING in answer: "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" (Matt. 19:3-6). Notice, He said: "Have ye not read"? implying they should have known the answer, making their trick question ridiculous.

The Pharisees asked about the law respecting marriage. Is it *lawful* to put away (divorce) a wife for any cause? Although they probably were referring to Deuteronomy 24:1, Jesus ignored that, and went back straight to God's law and teaching *at the creation of man*. It made no provision for unbinding what God had BOUND. Jesus here denied man any right to put asunder what *God had BOUND* as ONE! But the tricky Pharisees were not going to let Jesus ignore Deuteronomy 24:1. Continue the passage:

Their Trick Question

"They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?"

The Pharisees thought they had put Jesus where He had to contradict himself. He had answered, in what was LAWFUL, that marriage was BOUND by God, and the law denied man the right to unbind — to sever a union and cut "ONE FLESH" in two. Now they referred directly to Deuteronomy 24:1. They asked, "WHY did Moses, [lawgiver,] *command* a written divorce and putting his wife away?" They thought they had Jesus backed into a corner. They thought they now were forcing Him to make *an exception*, and ALLOW divorce. And that is precisely what some seem to think today!

For Jesus to allow divorce and remarriage after verse 6

would directly contradict what He said in verse 6, or force Him to make *an exception* to that, as well as to such passages as I quoted in the preceding PART II. Yet after verse 6 Jesus could make NO EXCEPTION without directly contradicting Himself! And you *know* Jesus did not contradict Himself!

Jesus answered: "He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts *suffered you* [*not* "commanded you"] to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And *I SAY UNTO YOU . . .*" Jesus did not back down. He did not allow any exception, *in GOD'S* Law. He is enforcing it, now, *just as in the beginning!* What GOD has BOUND, *stays bound — FOR LIFE!* No exceptions!

Moses *did not* "command" them to divorce their wives. The Authorized Version has been so construed by some, in Deuteronomy 24:1. The "then let him" in the AV is, in The Jewish Publication Society version, *"that he* [not 'then let him'] write her a bill of divorcement . . ." The Revised Standard Version renders it *"if . . . and he* [not then let him] write her a bill of divorce . . ." The Moffatt translation renders it: "and IF he writes out a deed of divorce . . ." Jesus' answer showed these latter three to be the correct meaning.

Moses did not command! God did not approve! God *allowed them,* because of the hardness of their hearts, to reject and put away their wives. GOD *ALLOWS* men to KILL, to COMMIT ADULTERY, to DO EVIL. God will ALLOW *you* to divorce and remarry, but you disobey Him if you do — and what you sow you must also reap!

Deuteronomy 24 Voided By Jesus

"But," continued Jesus, "from the beginning it was not so." Jesus here reestablished GOD'S LAW as from the BEGINNING of man's creation! Once GOD has BOUND a marriage it is FOR LIFE. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Then what did His next words mean? Some claim they DID GIVE an exception. But DID THEY? If so Jesus here flagrantly contradicted Himself. Here were His next words:

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication [Greek: *porneia*], and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

IF the "except it be for *porneia*" allows divorce of what GOD HAS BOUND, and remarriage to another, Jesus would have flatly contradicted Himself. Therefore the "except it be for *porneia*" *CANNOT* refer to divorce of one bound by God, and remarriage.

What is the meaning of the Greek *porneia* in this passage? The Church of God for 40 years has said it refers to an illicit sex act committed PRIOR to being bound in marriage, undisclosed to the husband until AFTER the marriage ceremony. The Church has maintained that, the husband having been unaware of it until after the marriage ceremony — but GOD being fully aware of it, a fraud was committed. And God, knowing of this fraud DID NOT BIND them. The betrothed husband, then, putting away the woman NOT BOUND to him, did not put away or UNbind one to whom he had been BOUND by God for life. There simply was NO MARRIAGE. God did not bind them. The man is still single.

But, if the husband, on discovering the fraud, had compassion instead of "hardness of heart," accepted the woman anyway, on his acceptance GOD DID BIND the marriage.

Now some have contended that *porneia* here means "ADULTERY."

This is simply NOT TRUE! God led His Church correctly, as I will show.

The Meaning of Porneia

The Greek word *porneia* has a broad range of meanings. It means sexual immorality in general, sexual intercourse by an unmarried person, *harlotry.* It includes sexual deviations, homosexuality, bestiality, sexual perversion. It is often used, especially its Hebrew equivalent, in the Old Testament for harlotry — repeated multiple sex relations. One, however, thinks of a harlot most often as an unmarried woman selling her body as a "profession."

One argument used to twist *porneia* in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19 into meaning "adultery" (unfaithfulness to one bound in marriage) is the following:

God pictured Old Testament Israel as His WIFE. But she was unfaithful to Him. Unfaithfulness to a bound mate *is* adultery. Therefore Israel committed adultery. But Israel *also* committed something else — committed HARLOTRY. Though married, she became a worse harlot than the professional in a business for which she charges. God said to her: "... thou hast played the harlot with *many lovers. ... Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not* been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them ... and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness" (Jer. 3:1-2). That is NOT mere adultery — it is HARLOTRY — WHOREDOMS, plural. In the Septuagint (Old Testament translated into Greek) this harlotry is called, properly, *porneia.*

So Israel sinned so greatly she did these TWO things — (and much more) — she was unfaithful to her husband — she committed ADULTERY. (Heb., *na-aph,* commit adultery, apostatize). But she also did something ELSE — she not only forsook her husband, she went after MULTIPLE lovers — and even where the professional prostitute charges for her services, God said Israel PAID her lovers (Ezek. 16:33). So, *in addition* to adultery, she committed harlotry — (Heb., *zanah,* Jer. 3:1, 6, 8, commit fornication continually (be an, play the, harlot etc.) (Greek, *porneia.*)

Therefore, says the scripture twister, *porneia* means *adultery* in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19!

Cannot Mean Adultery in This Context

The word *"porneia"* in Matthew 5 and Matthew 19 does not, and CANNOT mean in this context, adultery. Jesus was not describing unfaithfulness to a bound mate by the Greek *porneia.* Once BOUND, His teaching, consistent all the way through, is that there can be NO divorce and remarriage! If Jesus meant that adultery was the "Bible grounds" for divorce and remarriage, He would have used the word for *adultery* (Greek: *moichea*). The fact He used a *different* word than *moichea,* adultery,

which has a DIFFERENT MEANING, in the same sentence, is evidence to any seeking TRUTH instead of selfish license, that *porneia* in Matthew 5 and 19 *does not, and cannot* mean "adultery."

I have shown that it CANNOT mean adultery. It CANNOT refer to breaking a bound marriage. Jesus *could not* say: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, save for the cause of unfaithfulness to a bound mate, causes her to be unfaithful to her bound mate." RIDICULOUS! *Porneia* does mean sexual intercourse of an UNmarried person, as well as perversion, harlotry, many things committed *prior* to marriage. That is the ONLY meaning *consistent with the context.* That is the ONLY MEANING consistent with God's PURPOSE in the marriage institution. That is the ONLY meaning CONSISTENT WITH GOD'S LAW!

Some argue that Jeremiah 3 shows that *porneia* CAN mean adultery. It is plainly stated that Israel, here pictured by analogy as YHWH's "wife" committed adultery. It also portrays her as having committed whoredoms, and having played the harlot "with many lovers."

It is true that the Greek word (Septuagint) for *whoredoms* and *harlotry* is *porneia.* But they do not mean adultery. Adultery is unfaithfulness to a mate.

If a wife was unfaithful sexually with another than her husband once, her act properly would be called adultery. But no one God used in the writing of the Bible would ever have called that *fornication* — or *porneia.* They would have used the Greek word *moichea,* which means unfaithfulness in marriage — adultery. The *only* way *porneia* can be associated with *moichea* is when the same wife commits TWO things — unfaithfulness to her husband, *AND* harlotry (multiple sexual relations with not a few but *MANY* others than her husband, or perversion, deviations, etc.).

Porneia and *moichea* ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS.

Two Different Sins

A woman might enter a liquor store, and commit two different crimes, robbery, and murder. That does not mean that robbery means the same thing as murder.

But in Matthew 5 and 19, *porneia* (fornication) cannot refer to any of those things within the scope of *porneia* committed *after* marriage, because once a wife is bound to her husband she is bound "so long as he lives" (Rom. 7:2). Her husband cannot put her away and marry another. (Also Gen. 2:24; Mark 10:6-9). If the husband commit adultery, "if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called" (not this other man's WIFE) but "AN ADULTERESS" (Rom. 7:3). She is still bound to her husband, no matter what he does.

Porneia can, and more often does mean fornication by an UNmarried person — prior to marriage. THIS IS THE ONLY MEANING THAT FITS THE CONTEXT IN MATTHEW 5 AND 19, consistent with GOD'S LAW and all the other scriptures, and consistent with God's PURPOSE!

Notice these examples of fornication by the UNmarried, or with a meaning *other than* adultery: I Cor. 7:2; Gal. 5:19; Rev. 14:8; 17:2, 4; 18:3, 19:2; I Cor. 5:1.

In Jeremiah 3 (analyzed later), the wife committed *BOTH* adultery and harlotry. But that did not free the Husband (God) to marry another. Nor did it UNbind the marriage. After the Bill of SEPARATION, (Jer. 3:8), God said the marriage was still BINDING ("...for *I AM* [present tense] married unto you" (Jer. 3:14). That God was the one who became CHRIST. He remained FAITHFUL regardless of adultery, and whoredoms. He later gave His life to pay for His "wife's" sins, so she may YET return to Him.

In both Matthew 5 and 19 *porneia* not only CAN, but *must* refer to PRE-marital sex or other fraud in the marriage.

Doesn't it, then, seem a little ridiculous for one to say that *porneia* in Matthew 5 and 19 COULD mean adultery? In these two passages, IT SIMPLY CAN *not* MEAN ADULTERY!

God's Church can accept no such perversion of the holy Word of God!

In Matthew 19, Jesus had affirmed God's Law respecting marriage precisely as God made it "from the beginning." NO DIVORCE and NO REMARRIAGE to another by one bound for life by God. When the Pharisees quoted from Deuteronomy 24, He went back "to the beginning." Adding, "And I say unto you" — which phrase said He denied their argument about Deuteronomy 24 — and was affirming God's Law as it was "from the beginning."

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication [*porneia*], and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (verse 9).

Thus "except it be for fornication [*porneia*]" of necessity MUST refer to an act or condition PRIOR to marriage — *prior* to the marriage being BOUND by God. Once bound by God, the marriage remains BOUND for life!

What If *Porneia* After Marriage?

But some will argue every possible angle to get around God's Law. One might argue: "O.K. *Porneia* means sexual immorality in general. It means intercourse by an *unmarried* person, but it also means harlotry, repeated multiple sex acts, perversion, sexual deviations, bestiality. Now, suppose a husband or wife, any time *after* the bound marriage, commits bestiality, perversion, homosexuality, or harlotry. Israel did commit harlotry *after* marriage. Could not *that* be what Christ referred to, in Matthew 5 and 19?"

EMPHATICALLY *NO!*

A man's wife commits harlotry. Does that allow him to divorce her, and marry another? A woman's husband commits bestiality, or homosexuality, or perversion. May she not, then, be free to divorce him and marry another man?

The answer is *NO!*

God's wife, Israel, did commit harlotry. First, *she left Him* (I Sam. 8:4-9). God DID NOT LEAVE HER! Much later, after sending many prophets to plead with and warn Israel, many generations, God gave her a bill of SEPARATION, but *not* a divorce in the sense many think of divorce today — as an instrument that ends or unbinds the marriage. (The *separation,* II Kings 17:18-24.) Israel's Husband later was born as Jesus Christ, who GAVE HIS LIFE in payment for Israel's sins, (Heb. 9:15) that He yet may

present her to Himself a GLORIOUS wife, without spot or wrinkle (Eph. 5:22-27, 32).

God said, long after Israel's harlotries, and the divorce (legal separation) "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Eternal; for *I AM* [present tense] MARRIED UNTO YOU . . ." (Jer. 3:14). When He does marry redeemed Israel, she is His betrothed wife, prior to the New Testament marriage (Rev. 19:7).

Jesus was the God of the O.T. He set us an example, that we should follow His steps. His wife's *porneia* did not end, abolish, sever, finish the marriage that was BOUND at Sinai. God was still married to Israel (Jer. 3:14).

The woman bound to a husband is BOUND to him AS LONG AS HE LIVES (Rom. 7:2). Now suppose the husband commits *porneia* — perhaps bestiality, perversion, intercourse with 50 other women. His wife gets a legal divorce from the state, and marries another man. Is she the second man's wife, in God's sight?

"So then, *IF* while her husband liveth, [even though he committed *porneia*] she be married to another man, she shall be called AN ADULTERESS" (Rom. 7:3).

THUS SAITH THE LORD! And thus His Church must say.

If, in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, Jesus meant *porneia* committed by a BOUND mate frees the innocent mate to divorce and marry another, you have a direct contradiction with Romans 7:3, and God's example with Israel.

Therefore, it is PROVED that the "except it be for *porneia*" in Matthew 5 and 19, CANNOT refer to *porneia* being committed by a BOUND partner. It MUST apply only to an act committed PRIOR to being bound in marriage by God. There is simply NO WAY we can honestly argue to get around GOD'S LAW!

WHAT, THEN, does "fornication" *(porneia)* mean as Jesus intended it here, and in Matthew 5:32?

The Example of Joseph and Mary

Notice, Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his *wife,* except it be for fornication . . ." Was she already his *wife?* I have explained clearly how it is IMPOSSIBLE she could be his BOUND wife — else Jesus contradicted Himself. The law does not allow divorcing a *bound* wife and remarriage to another.

The Bible refers to a *betrothed* woman, prior to the marriage ceremony, as the *wife;* and the betrothed man, prior to the wedding ceremony, as the "husband." It was ancient Jewish custom to have a betrothal ceremony, corresponding to the modern Western custom of becoming ENGAGED. That betrothal ceremony was called the *erossin* ceremony. It was an *agreement to marry* between the two parties. To break it off was to break an agreement between two human individuals. But since God had not as yet bound them it was not breaking a *bound* marriage. The final wedding was called the *kiddushin* ceremony. Customarily, the espoused wife remained in her father's house until the *kiddushin* or wedding ceremony. Then the husband took her to *his* house.

As mentioned before, Jesus, in heaven, (John 14:1-3) is now preparing the "place," "room," meaning office, position, job, for us. This is the meaning of the "many mansions" or "rooms." Symbolically, He is preparing His "house" to which He will take us — His Bride — at the divine marriage of the Church to Christ.

Not long ago I performed a double wedding. One couple was Japanese, the other American. The Japanese young man, a journalist of some reputation in Japan, had been attending and had just graduated from Ambassador College. His bride had arrived in Pasadena from Japan a few months before the wedding, which did not take place until after graduation. He introduced her as *"his wife."*

After he asked if I would perform the ceremony, I called him to my office.

"Haven't you called the young lady your wife?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"Well is she living with you — are you living together?"

"Oh NO!" he answered. I asked if there had been sex relations.

"Oh NO! Not until after the wedding!" he replied, rather shocked at the question.

The example of Joseph and Mary, mother of Jesus, explains this custom. Notice:

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused [betrothed] to Joseph, *before they came together,"* — prior to the *kiddushin* or BINDING ceremony — "she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph *her husband,* being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily." Notice, this was PRIOR to the binding wedding. Yet the Spirit of God inspired Joseph to be called "her husband." He was minded to "put her away." This is not referring to the kind of "divorce" that would sever a marriage bound by God. Indeed, the word "divorce" *never* has the meaning, in the Bible, of dissolving what God has bound.

Now continue: "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary *thy wife:* for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 1:18-20).

He had not taken her "to him" yet. The wedding ceremony had not yet occurred. God had not yet BOUND them. The contracted agreement was merely between *them* at the time. Yet Joseph is called, in God's Word, "her husband," and Mary is called *"thy wife."*

But *here is the point!*

Joseph thought Mary had COMMITTED FORNICATION — *porneia* — prior to marriage. This is THE BIBLE EXPLANATION of Jesus' teaching, "except it be for fornication — *porneia."* Joseph would have been FREE TO MARRY ANOTHER WOMAN! God had not yet BOUND Joseph to Mary. This was, as Joseph supposed, a situation like Deuteronomy 22:13-14, 20-21. However, in Judah they were not stoning to death those guilty of such premarital fornication any more. He was not willing to make a public example of her, which would have brought an evil name upon her, but was minded to "put her away privately." But the angel prevented, and told Joseph Mary was the

VIRGIN that was to conceive the Messiah, fulfilling Isaiah 7:14.

Joseph *supposed* his betrothed wife Mary had committed fornication *(porneia).* It was *prior* to the marriage. He understood GOD'S LAW. She was already called "his wife." According to Deuteronomy 22:13-14 and 20-21, HE WAS ALLOWED TO PUT AWAY HIS WIFE — before consummating the marriage, upon discovery of fornication — (before they came together) (Matt. 1:18) (before they were BOUND in the *kiddushin* ceremony) "for the cause of fornication [*porneia*], and marry another" (Matt. 5:32). This is what Joseph intended to do — before the angel explained that Mary's conception was by means of the HOLY SPIRIT.

And this is precisely what Jesus meant by the clause "for the cause of fornication" in Matthew 5:32, and "except it be for fornication" in Matthew 19:9.

And that is precisely the reason that the clause "except it be for fornication" is found *only* in Matthew. *Only* Matthew explains the incident of Joseph thinking to put away Mary his betrothed.

When Jesus said these words, recorded in Matthew 5 and 19, He was very conscious of the fact that this very "exception clause" INVOLVED HIS OWN CONCEPTION AND BIRTH.

"Believing" Jews Understood *Porneia*

The "believing" Jews in Jerusalem understood the meaning of *fornication (porneia).* They knew Joseph was not the real father of Jesus. They hurled at Him this insult: *"We* be not born of fornication," implying that Jesus was born as a result of pre-marital intercourse.

Joseph had intended to apply the law, Jesus later mentioned in Matthew 5 and 19 — putting away a wife for the cause of fornication.

Notice I Corinthians 7:2. Fornication *(porneia)* is *prior* to marriage.

Deuteronomy 22

This law is found in Deuteronomy 22:13-21: We examine it briefly.

"If a man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, and give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid [virgin]: then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: and the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; and lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; and they shall amerce [fine] him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days" (Deut. 22:13-19).

Notice this law. If the man falsely accused his wife of having committed fornication prior to marriage — *falsely* trying to take advantage of the law freeing him (verses 20-21) from becoming bound, he is punished and fined. And God, knowing of his false claim, *did bind* the marriage. Now, once BOUND, what does the law state? It says: "He may not put her away all his days."

Once Bound, Always Bound

The LAW says plainly here, ONCE BOUND, it is BOUND FOR LIFE. The "fornication" claimed was PRIOR to marriage. THIS LAW SAYS PLAINLY THAT THE ONLY GROUNDS FOR PUTTING AWAY FOR THE CAUSE OF FORNICATION is PRE-marital fornication, and NOT POST-MARITAL "FORNICATION" INTERPRETED TO MEAN ADULTERY.

Those who try to interpret "fornication" in Matthew 5 and 19 as ADULTERY, are proved 100% WRONG!

But now, notice verses 20-21:

"But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you."

Notice several things here.

First, fornication — sexual intercourse of an unmarried person, is a CAPITAL SIN, according to God's Law. Of course the seventh commandment against adultery *includes* all the forms of fornication or *porneia*. God's Law, however, does not take even one act of pre-marital sex lightly — but a capital sin, imposing capital punishment.

Second, this law was written while Israel was ENCAMPED in the wilderness 40 years, and this death penalty of stoning to death was not carried out in Israel for any great length of time, as historic records show. By the time of the conception of Jesus, it certainly was no longer practiced. Nevertheless, for a man to reject, and "put away" his betrothed wife, on discovering a broken hymen after the marriage ceremony, was to "make a public example" of her — which disgraced her, and set a stigma on her for life. In the case of Joseph, husband of Mary, he was not even minded to impose this on Mary.

Israel Custom

Third, notice this is speaking ONLY of a sex act PRIOR to the bound marriage. Israelitish custom was for the girl to remain in her FATHER'S house after the betrothal, and until the final marriage, when the husband took her to his own house. In this case of Deuteronomy 22:20-21, the girl's fornication had been in *"her father's house."* This was BEFORE the BOUND marriage.

Fourth, the position of the innocent husband, according to this law, is that the girl married him under false pretenses — as a virgin. The husband had been deceived. He was the victim of FRAUD. God, knowing this, DID NOT at the moment of marriage BIND the man to the woman. This left the man FREE TO MARRY, if he refused to accept her as his wife, since God had NOT bound him to this woman. He simply remained an UNmarried single man.

The Principle Involved

Fifth, since, under the NEW covenant, God's Church must live according to the SPIRIT of the law, not merely the *letter,* the principle involved here is that if one party to a marriage is deceiving the other, either by qualifications, or intent, so that FRAUD is committed, the victim of the fraud is NOT BOUND by God, at the time of marriage. If he accepts her, however, he then *is* bound.

It must be stated, in this connection, that in the actual Scriptural examples of Deuteronomy 22:20-21, and Matthew 1:18-19, the guilty woman was put away, in Deuteronomy 22:20-21, at or immediately after the wedding night — immediately upon the discovery of the non-virginity. And in Matthew 1:18-19, Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy even prior to the wedding ceremony, and was intending to "put her away privately" at once, *before* the wedding.

Today there are many borderline cases. In some cases the fraud is not discovered by the defrauded one for perhaps several days.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4

Now continue in Matthew 19:3-12. The Pharisees tried to pin Jesus down on Deuteronomy 24:1-4. *They* completely misunderstood that passage. They said, "Why did Moses then *command* to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?"

But Moses DID NOT *command* them to give the writing of divorce, as Jesus plainly indicated, and other translations show. (Explained later). The Pharisees may have thought it meant putting asunder a BOUND marriage, and being free to MARRY AGAIN. That would have been contrary to GOD'S LAW!

There had been, in Jerusalem, two schools of thought on the divorce and remarriage question. These were the schools of Hillel and Shammai. The Hillel school was the far left liberal school. They interpreted Deuteronomy 24:1-3 to mean that divorce was permissible for "every" reason — or ANY reason. If a woman burnt her husband's toast, he had grounds for divorce. If he didn't like her looks any more, he could divorce her.

But the Shammai school was more conservative. They allowed divorce and remarriage only on grounds of adultery or unchastity (after marriage, of course).

Actually, when the Pharisees came trying to trap Jesus, they were trying to make him answer which school He sided with. But Jesus sided with neither. He sided only with GOD — and God's CHURCH must do the same. Yet both were basing their contention on their misunderstanding of this passage of Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

In Matthew 19:7 the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why did Moses then COMMAND to give a writing of divorcement...?" Then in the parallel passage in Mark, "The Pharisees came to him and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses COMMAND you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away" (Mark 10:2-4).

They simply didn't understand the Scriptures. Moses DID NOT COMMAND them to put away their wives. What he COMMANDED was that the man who put away "his wife" under the circumstances of Deuteronomy 24:1-3 *could not take her back.*

Once again, Jesus answered: "... But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave 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). God did not give even ministers authority to *"bind"* or *loose* a marriage. What *God* bound man is not allowed to unbind. He continued: "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" (verses 11-12). Absolutely NO "except for the cause of" here!

We have now covered "THE TRUNK OF THE TREE." There are a few fairly major "branches" on the subject,

and a number of minor "branches" and "twigs." Some of these are of more or less doubtful translation and interpretation. Actually Jesus, in Matthew 5 and 19, and Mark 10, was clearing up the WHOLE TREE, so to speak.

When Jesus Christ said, "But 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" THAT WAS THE FINAL WORD!

THAT SETTLED IT!

And the case of Joseph and Mary adequately describes the "except it be for fornication." That is an "except" where God has never bound the marriage. There simply has not been any marriage in such a case. Whatever GOD has BOUND is bound for LIFE!

Major "Branches" — Deuteronomy 24

But some have gone into this study exhaustively, searching and researching every major, minor branch, and tiny twig, to fortify their own reasonings and ideas.

We have covered the TRUNK of the tree with such passages as Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:1-3; I Corinthians 7:38; and Ephesians 5:31, beside Matthew 5:31-32; and 19:3-9 and Mark 10:2-12. Add Malachi 2:14-16, and you have a very solid and substantial "TRUNK" of this tree of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

But the Pharisees, and many critics today, bring in some branches such as Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Jeremiah 3, Hosea, etc. Some of these are less clear, and some today even go to other sources, and even to nonrelevant reasonings and arguments to try to justify divorce and remarriage.

Real Meaning of Deuteronomy 24:1-4?

There are various contentions and arguments about the meaning of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. BUT THESE DO NOT CHANGE CHRIST'S FINAL WORD, which *SETTLED* the whole question.

Whatever this passage — Deuteronomy 24:1-4 — says, it is clear from Matthew 19:3-9 that it speaks of

something MOSES ALLOWED, because of "the hardness of their hearts," while still encamped in the wilderness during the 40 years prior to entering the Promised Land — something *not* allowed from Adam to Moses, then ALLOWED from Moses to Christ, but DIS-allowed by Christ from His time on.

Now the BIG QUESTION becomes: Is this passage speaking of Moses allowing men to put away their wives *after* the marriage was BOUND by God — *after* the wedding, and *after* the husband had accepted his wife and lived with her for some time — or is it speaking of a man being ALLOWED to reject — put away his wife immediately — probably on the wedding night *before* being BOUND? In other words, is it speaking of allowing men to REJECT their betrothed wives *before* being bound, for a reason that had NOT been previously allowed, and which CHRIST did not allow from His time on?

Let me state here the Jewish Publication Society translation of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 — which is very close to the RSV.

"When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it come to pass, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing [literal translation 'matter of nakedness,' AV margin] in her, *that he* [not 'then let him,'] writeth her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house, and she departeth out of his house, and goeth and becometh another man's wife, and the latter husband hateth her, and writeth a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife; her former husband who 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 God giveth thee for an inheritance."

Important Difference In Translation

The important difference in translation, from the AV, is that instead of *"then let him* write her a bill of divorcement" the JPS translation has *"that he* writeth her a bill

of divorcement." Moffatt translation has *"if he"* which changes the meaning from being either *permission* or *a command* to write her a divorce. Virtually all other translations — the RSV etc., give the sense of *"if he"* writes the bill of divorce. This harmonizes with Jesus' statement in Matthew 19 that Moses "suffered" them — or *allowed* them to put away.

And, instead of "she may go and become another man's wife," the JPS *and other translations* imply a conditional *"if"* she go and become another man's wife. The AV *"she may go"* does not necessarily imply permission. Of course some would like to argue that this clause in the AV implies a divorced woman is free to marry another man. But the Hebrew implies, as the other translations render it, as meaning "she may decide to become another man's wife." The word *may* can mean permission, and it also can mean volition — the decision of the woman, NOT permission. We could say: "She *may* or she *may not* decide to go." But God's Church assuredly cannot in spite of all *positive* scriptures DENYING such permission, use such a *doubtful* application to be grounds for disobeying so many other positive and clear passages which FORBID remarriage after divorce.

And anyway, Jesus said *it was not so* from the beginning, and *is not* so now. Under no circumstances can this be "Bible grounds" for a divorced person to marry a second mate, now.

The one thing that Moses *did command* in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is that, in the circumstances described in the passage, the first husband could not take her back.

Now just what *does* Deuteronomy 24:1-4 MEAN?

Regardless of its true meaning, it does not apply today. Jesus said that, whatever it means, *it was not so* from the beginning, and *is not, now.*

Keep in mind, according to Jesus in Matthew 19, this passage, alluded to by the Pharisees, speaks of something MOSES ALLOWED because of their "hardness of heart." It was while they were still in the wilderness, encamped, during the 40 years prior to entering the promised land. Whatever Moses allowed because of their selfish carnality,

it was not legally allowable from Adam, nor by Jesus from His time on.

Is this passage saying that IF a man, bound by God in marriage to his wife, divorces her for any cause, that she is free to go and marry another man? And does it say that Moses *allowed* this second marriage — and that *it* was *bound* by the living God? Does God *change* like that? Does it say that the divorce Moses either commanded or allowed UNbound — cut off completely — what God had *bound for life* in the first marriage? And does it say, therefore, that although the first husband still lived, the woman was no longer bound to him, but was now bound to the second man? And forbidden to get REbound to husband number one?

Some would argue YES! Let's carry that hypothetical case a little further. Would that mean that if husband number two divorces her, or dies, that she is free to go to husband number three, and God would bind her as ONE FLESH to the third man? And to carry this principle further, would not this allow her to be divorced from husband number three, and get bound by GOD to husband number FOUR — then number FIVE, and so on and on to as many husbands as she chose?

What did JESUS say?

Did Christ Change?

He said, "Whoso marrieth her which is put away *doth commit adultery"!* (Matt. 19:9.) Is Christ the SAME yesterday, today, and forever? Did He *change* between the time of Moses, and His appearance on earth?

What says the LAW OF GOD?

It says, "... the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth. For a woman which hath an husband IS BOUND by the law to her husband so long as he liveth.... So then IF, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, *she shall be called an ADULTERESS"* (Rom. 7:1-3). Did God CHANGE between Moses and Christ? This says that, once a woman is BOUND in marriage to a husband, (by God Himself) she is bound *TO HIM* as long as he lives. If she marries a second man, she shall not be

called his wife — she shall be called AN ADULTERESS. It IS *NOT MARRIAGE* recognized by God — it is ADULTERY! She is still BOUND to her original husband — she still IS HIS WIFE. Adultery can be forgiven. Still being bound as his wife, she most certainly may go back to him, where she belongs — if she repents and he will take her back.

This is precisely the case of Christ (Old Testament God) and the children of Israel, married to Him. He says to Israel, "Only acknowledge your sins — REPENT, RETURN UNTO ME, O Israel, for I AM MARRIED unto you" (Jer. 3:13-14).

It becomes positively evident that Deuteronomy 24 is *NOT* speaking of UNbinding what God bound FOR LIFE, and leaving the wife free to marry another.

God is CONSISTENT — the SAME yesterday, today, and forever.

Deuteronomy 24 is speaking of something MOSES, without altering God's Law, could ALLOW because of a condition he found among the people.

The "Uncleanness" — What Was it?

It seems no two translations state the same *specific* thing the original husband (of Deuteronomy 24) found in the woman. The AV uses the expression, "some uncleanness." The original Hebrew word is *ervah.* This Hebrew word is derived from a primitive root, *arah* defined to be (causative, make) bare, discover, make naked, uncover." The Hebrew word itself used, *ervah* means "nudity, literally (especially the vulva) or figuratively (disgrace, blemish): nakedness, shame, uncleanness."

Now the AV translates it "he hath found some uncleanness." The Moffatt rendering is "found her immodest in some way." Fenton translates it "found repulsive qualities in her." The JPS has "some unseemly thing." Another AV margin has "indecency."

Now the word *"found"* is from a Hebrew word meaning "to come forth, to appear, come to find." Or, to discover, in the sense of something unknown to him before.

The original Hebrew here does not name specifically the exact particular "repulsive," "uncleanness," shameful, or undesirable thing discovered. It does refer to discovering something in the female pubic region, unknown to the husband until disrobing on the wedding night. It does *not* refer to something discovered days, weeks, or years later.

In those days women's bodies, even to arms, legs, and neck-lines, were kept fully covered. Even today, in the Middle East, some women keep their faces veiled. Usually a woman's face was covered with a veil during a wedding ceremony.

The Case of Jacob and Leah

In the case of Jacob having served Laban seven years for Rachel, whom he loved, he did not discover that old Laban had tricked him by having his elder daughter Leah under the veil at the ceremony until after he had married her, thinking he was marrying Rachel. Undoubtedly, according to God's Law, as Christ explained it, in principle, in Matthew 5, and 19, and also Deuteronomy 22:13-21, Jacob could have rejected Leah on grounds of fraud, refusing to consummate the marriage sexually, and God would not have BOUND him to Leah. But he did not have that kind of "hardness of heart," he accepted her — then served the scheming old Laban seven more years for Rachel.

Putting all this together, it begins to become very evident that what is described in Deuteronomy 24:1 is a man, after marriage upon disrobing on the wedding night, discovered something in the pubic region of the woman's body that he claimed was repulsive or undesirable to him in some way. He had no chance to know of this, before.

Apparently Moses discovered that men in camp were rejecting their new wives — refusing to consummate the marriage — not for any one *specific* thing that was repulsive, but something that they claimed was at least undesirable in some way. A man would REFUSE TO ACCEPT his new wife, reject her on the spot, give her a written bill of divorce (or "of cutting off") and send her away. Since the man had not known previously of the objectionable some-

thing, and the marriage was not sexually consummated, God never bound the marriage.

Apparently Moses learned that men of Israel more and more were rejecting wives on the wedding night for INSUFFICIENT CAUSE, because of their hardness of heart. Because of normally insufficient reason. Rejecting them for any reason that displeased them. That left the betrothed husband UNmarried, and free to marry some other woman. But it publicly disgraced and defiled the woman rejected. By a slight stretch of the imagination, knowing human nature and the selfishness and lustfulness of those who had such "hardness of heart," we may well assume that it was becoming a growing trend for men to marry two, three, or more women in this way, deciding after the marriage-night disrobing which female body pleased him the most. Then they would actually marry in a new ceremony whichever of those thus sampled they decided upon, accepting her and being BOUND to her.

Such a practice escalating was an ABOMINATION!

To put a stop to this promiscuous sampling to choose which wife would be accepted, Moses FORBADE remarrying and being bound to any who had entered into a marriage with another man, whether divorced from him or whether he died.

Thus, Moses put a complete stop to promiscuous sampling of several, then actually accepting a marriage to whichever woman pleased a man the most.

To put away a woman right after the wedding ceremony PUBLICLY, with a written bill of divorce that was a written "cutting off," exposed the woman to public disgrace. Thus she was defiled. Certainly to do that and then receive her back in marriage would be an abomination.

But, if Deuteronomy 24:1-4 were talking of a divorce from a BOUND wife after living with her for some time, she could not have married the second man called "her husband" — it would have been ADULTERY — and her husband *could* take her back, because he was married to her. Thus it is *proved* that this passage does not refer to divorce of a BOUND marriage, and freedom to remarry another.

Next, consider further. The statement that IF the woman, rejected after the first *kiddushin* ceremony, "goeth and becometh another man's wife . . ." (Deut. 24:2) implies that the woman was free to marry this other man. This is further indication that she was *rejected,* not accepted and bound, after the *kiddushin* ceremony with the first betrothed "husband." The implication is that she is BOUND to this second man, and that the first "marriage" was never sexually consummated and bound.

Next, (verses 3 and 4), IF the second and bound husband divorces her, or if he dies (severing that *bound* marriage), the first betrothed "husband" who rejected her, was not allowed to take her again, in another *kiddushin* ceremony to be his wife. I have PROVED, by Romans 7:1-3, and by I Corinthians 7:11, and by God's marriage to Israel, that if that first marriage had been BOUND, she would still be MARRIED to him — still BOUND to him; and allowed to return to him. Therefore, to be consistent with all the Scriptures, the first was not a bound marriage. Whether the second marriage of the woman was, or was not bound, the first "husband" who rejected and cut her off could not take her back. And if the second "husband," like the first, defiled her by rejecting her and sending her away before consummating the marriage — before it was bound — neither could he take her back.

This command restraining the former betrothed "husband" from taking her back was what Moses *commanded,* not as the Pharisees implied before Jesus, what is stated in verse 1. Such a command forced the men of Israel to "count the cost," before rejecting a woman after the marriage ceremony. It deterred impulsiveness. It blocked any ideas of sampling a number of disrobed female bodies, after wedding ceremonies, and then taking back the one he chose.

Time-Setting of Deuteronomy 24:1-4

It has already been shown that any argument that Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is speaking of a husband divorcing a bound wife, some time *after* the bound marriage is untenable.

Some have contended the phrase "and it come to pass" in verse 1 means that a period of time had transpired, after the marriage was bound.

I answer, with credit to the researches of Wilbur A. Berg:

1) The phrase *"When* a man taketh a wife" (JPS trans.) suggests a time of marriage setting.

2) There is no reason to assume it would take a long time — after the wedding night — for a husband to come to find, or discover some unseemly, repulsive blemish, or whatever, in his wife's pubic region. The entire indication is that it was found, and the rejection occurred immediately. If it were not discovered until a month, or a few years, they would have been bound. And it already has been shown how impossible it is that this passage is referring to divorce of a bound marriage, contrary to God's Law, and every other scripture covering such a case.

3) The woman would have been bound to her first husband if the phrase "then it cometh to pass" means "after a period of time." And if this were the case she would *not* be free to go and become another man's *wife,* but instead would become an adulteress. Also, if the first marriage was bound, Moses could not forbid her to return to the husband to whom she was bound for life (Rom. 7:1-3; I Cor. 7:11; Mal. 2:14-16). God's LAW does not change.

But the expression "it cometh to pass" means it "happens" or "occurs." The TIME of happening is indicated in this very verse: *"... then* it cometh to pass." Notice it: *"WHEN* a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, *then* it cometh to pass ..." It is plainly saying the bill of separation came to pass *THEN, when* he married her. It does NOT say "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and *after a long time* it come to pass." The phrase "come to pass" means "happen," without indication of *when,* unless stated in the context. In Exodus 12:41 the precise time is stated: "... even the selfsame day it came to pass." And in verse 51: "And it came to pass the selfsame day, that ..."

4) If the bill of divorcement was given after the first couple had been bound in marriage for some time, and if the woman was allowed to re-marry, this would be totally contradictory to such clear scriptures as Mal. 2:16, Rom. 7:1-3, and I Cor. 7:11, which state or imply that a marriage is bound for *life.* In I Corinthians 7:11 a separated couple is instructed to re*concile,* or remain *un*married. Advocating divorce and remarriage in the Old Testament would mean that God was teaching one thing then and another in the New Testament. But God says He changes NOT (Mal. 3:8, Heb. 13:8).

Additional Cases in Deuteronomy 22

Following the case already covered in Deuteronomy 22, are other examples of sex violations. We cover them briefly:

Some try to say that ADULTERY was grounds for divorce and re-marriage in the Old Testament. Here is a case of adultery:

"If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel" (Deut. 22:22).

NO DIVORCE! NO REMARRIAGE AFTER ADULTERY! *JUST DEATH,* FOR BOTH!

God looks on MARRIAGE as SACRED! Marriage is HOLY! Marriage is intended — FOR A REASON already explained — to be PERMANENT.

Adultery is a capital SIN. It brings the DEATH penalty! Jesus *paid* that penalty for repentant believers! One wonders — what is God going to do to *this* generation?

Further on Adultery

Numbers 5:11-31 clarifies the matter of adultery even further. If a woman committed adultery and was *not* caught in the act (the preceding paragraphs describe what was to be done if she *was* caught), but her husband suspected her of being unfaithful and became jealous, he was instructed to take her to the priest who had performed the procedures prescribed in these verses so that her guilt or innocence could be determined. *Note that the husband was NOT told to divorce his wife because of her suspected adultery.* Rather, the woman was set before God who, in

effect, pronounced her death sentence by causing her thigh to rot and her belly to swell if she was guilty (verses 21 and 30). If she was innocent, she was completely exonerated and conceived seed (verse 28).

Therefore, summarizing the matter of adultery in the Old Testament, it is absolutely clear that *adultery in the normal sense of the word was NEVER grounds for divorce once the marriage was bound.*

What about even a betrothed person? Is even a betrothal *serious* in God's sight? Is the betrothal AGREEMENT, as yet unbound by God, sacred? Is it all right to violate it? NEXT CASE:

"If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband . . ." Notice, in the Bible the betrothed man is already her HUSBAND! Prior to being BOUND in marriage. Even while she still is a virgin. But continue: ". . . and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor's wife; so shalt thou put away evil from among you" (Deut. 22:23-24).

Notice, the betrothed but unmarried virgin is called her fiance's *wife.* Christians, today, are spiritually betrothed to Christ. Does He expect us to be FAITHFUL?

Did you ever wonder WHY we have so much promiscuous and widespread IMMORALITY today? If these laws of God had been strictly enforced, they surely *would have* "put away evil" from our modern society!! These scriptures are showing THE WAY — GOD'S WAY — to put down all our widespread evils of modern society! All this shows the *WHY* of God's apparent strictness in regard to marriage and divorce.

But now suppose the same type of case happens out in the open field, where no one would hear the girl cry out for help if she were raped:

"But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her, then the man only that lay with her shall die: but unto the damsel thou shalt

do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbor, and slayeth him, even so is this matter. For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her" (Deut. 22:25-27).

God looks on the heart, and the intent. The body of the girl here was either injured by raping, or it experienced the same as the city girl. But the city girl consented — she did not cry out for help — and the girl in the field is *presumed* to have cried for help, but none heard her. It was the intent of mind and heart God judged.

Now what about a case of ordinary fornication — with a virgin? It would be presumed, in the following LAW OF GOD, that the girl consented, and did not scream out for help, since there is no mention of being out in the field.

"If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days" (Deut. 22:28-29). But even if not caught: Ex. 22:16: "And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife."

Some have tried to use verse 14 in Deut. 21:10-14 to prove divorce is allowed. This is explained as the same as Deut. 24:1 — the woman was let go *before* a marriage was consummated. Nothing is said here about divorce and remarriage. This cannot be used to nullify God's law by saying that what He has bound in marriage as one flesh may be unbound with freedom to remarry.

As a young man, not knowing God's Laws, or God's Word, or His WAYS, it was my personal code of ethics that to break a girl's virginity (outside of marriage, that is), was as evil as committing murder. Young people don't look at it that way today.

All these scriptures show how SERIOUSLY God looks on MARRIAGE!

Marriage is a WONDERFUL BLESSING from God. People should *work at it* to make their marriages HAPPY. They

should remember its main ingredient is LOVE, and love is outgoing concern for the good, welfare, and happiness of *the other*, not selfish lust or desire for how much one can GET out of the other.

Marriage CAN be happy.

I KNOW!

I was blessed with such a marriage for FIFTY YEARS!

Does GOD Believe in Divorce? Didn't He Divorce Israel?

Next, some who try to prove that God does allow divorce (of a bound marriage) and remarriage to a second husband, in a second *bound* marriage, turn to Jeremiah 3 and compare it to Deuteronomy 24:1-3.

First, we challenge anyone to show any scripture stating that God will bind any man or woman to a second mate while the first mate is still living! It is simply IMPOSSIBLE.

So we examine Jeremiah 3:

Notice, "THEY say, . . ." (Jeremiah 3:1). Not God says — or YHWH says. God is quoting what the people are saying — but the people never did *understand* Deuteronomy 24:1-4! The Pharisees (Matt. 19) did not understand it. Neither do some who contend for divorce and remarriage today. The fact *"they"* were saying, without understanding, is *the very* REASON God referred to Deuteronomy 24:1-4 here — to CORRECT their wrong concept.

But THEY — people — "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 what does God say? — "but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Eternal" (Jer. 3:1).

The "THEY" — the people who were saying this, completely misunderstood Deuteronomy 24:1-4. They thought they could never return to YHWH, their husband. But He is showing that Deuteronomy 24:1-4 *does not apply:* He says, "yet return again unto Me."

He says, you have not only gone off and married another — you have done something much greater — you have played the harlot with MANY lovers. Yet you are still

BOUND to me. You *CAN* return — if you repent. The case is altogether DIFFERENT!

Note these DIFFERENCES between Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and Jeremiah 3:

1) In Deuteronomy 24 the betrothed and UNbound "wife" was put away NOT for adultery after a bound marriage, but because of something discovered and SEEN in her naked body prior to first consummating marriage. She was rejected — not even accepted as a wife. But in Jeremiah 3, God's *bound* wife committed both adultery and multiple harlotry, and was given a "bill of divorcement" (SEPARATION) much later, because she REFUSED to live with her husband, and because of this unfaithfulness to her BOUND Mate.

2) The Deuteronomy 24 marriage was rejected, NOT bound. The Jeremiah 3 marriage was bound at Mt. Sinai. In Deuteronomy 24 the husband rejected and *sent away* the wife *before* bound, while in Jeremiah 3 the bound wife rejected and left her Husband *after* being bound.

3) In Deuteronomy 24:4, the rejected and unbound "wife" (by betrothal only) was barred from returning to the betrothed "husband" who rejected her. In Jeremiah 3 the bound wife was bound to her Husband as long as she lived, and He pleaded with her to return — and later He paid her penalty for her harlotry and sins in her stead by His own shed blood.

4) The Deuteronomy 24 rejected and unbound wife was free to marry, and became another man's WIFE, to whom she was bound. No committing adultery and harlotry. (Being bound to this second man, if he rejected her it would have been adultery to go back to the first man who refused to accept her). The Jeremiah 3 *bound* wife did NOT marry another, but committed adultery (unfaithful to her bound Husband), and also harlotry with MANY lovers.

5) The Deuteronomy 24 "bill of divorcement" was a CUTTING OFF *prior* to being bound in marriage, caused by discovery of "unseemly thing", but in Jeremiah 3 the "bill of divorcement" was a legal SEPARATION because the bound wife REFUSED to return and because of unfaithfulness to a bound marriage that could not be UNbound.

NEITHER "BILL OF DIVORCEMENT" WAS A DIVORCE IN THE SENSE PEOPLE REGARD IT TODAY. NEITHER *UN*BOUND WHAT GOD HAD BOUND FOR LIFE!

There was *NO* SUCH DIVORCE in the Old Testament as people view it today!

Now let's UNDERSTAND Jeremiah 3:

God is saying that "THEY" say, if a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, he shall not return to her again! They probably supposed, as did the Jews of Jesus' day, that Deuteronomy 24:1-4 referred to putting away a bound wife. We have amply proved it is impossible to have meant that.

But God is showing that Israel has done much worse than being "married" to one other man. Israel has become a whore, played the harlot with MANY lovers — yet He begs her to come back to Him.

He says "Lift up thine eyes unto the high places [places of pagan idolatrous worship], and see where thou hast not been lien with." He continues to describe the enormity and multiplicity of her sins. Even the rain was withheld because of her sins, but she refused to be ashamed.

Actually, Israel, YHWH's wife, was bound in the marriage covenant, called "the Old Covenant," which also set up Israel as God's kingdom, or nation, on earth. This "wife-nation" LEFT her Husband in the days of Samuel, described in I Samuel 8:1-9, (about the year 1095 B.C.). The wife refused to obey her Husband, and sought other "lovers" — that is, false pagan gods. But He did not yet "put her away" in a bill of "separation." God gave Israel human kings. He remained a faithful, loving Husband. After the division into two Kingdoms, He continued to send prophets to PLEAD with His Wife to REPENT and RETURN to Him. But the Kingdom of Israel continued through nineteen kings and seven dynasties in the sins of Jereboam, often worse.

Finally, after this continuous pleading through many generations, God gave the northern Kingdom of Israel the "Bill of Divorcement," or SEPARATION.

"Therefore the Eternal ... removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.... So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day" (II Ki. 17:18, 23). (721-718 B.C. — 377 years after God's wife refused to live with, and "left Him.")

Then, *after* this, about 612 B.C., God said to Jeremiah, "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 [SEPARATION; (721-718 B.C.)], yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also" (verses 6-8).

At that time — after Israel had been removed from the land of Israel, God said through Jeremiah:

"The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, RETURN, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Eternal, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Eternal, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity ... TURN, O backsliding children, saith the Eternal, FOR I *AM* [present tense] MARRIED UNTO YOU: ..." (Jer. 3:11-14). Then follows the PROPHECY of Israel's final return to Him, in the millennium.

So the "Bill of Divorce" did not end or unbind the bound MARRIAGE." AFTER He had given the "Bill of Divorce", God said, *I AM* MARRIED UNTO YOU."

I Corinthians 7:10-15 Explains

God, who married Israel at Mt. Sinai, was Spiritual. Israel, His wife, was carnal, an "unbeliever."

In I Corinthians 7:10, it is written: "And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord [who had been the YHWH married to Israel]. Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, *or be reconciled to her husband ...*" (to whom

she is joined for life) "...and let not the husband put away his wife."

Those who try to interpret some O.T. passage to allow a man to divorce (unbind a marriage) his wife and marry another DISOBEY this command of the Lord!

Continue: "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away....But if the unbelieving depart, let him [or her] depart. A brother or sister [in the Lord] is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace." (That is, a brother or sister is not under bondage to fight in strife to prevent the unconverted to remain — or to continue the obligations of support.)

Paul was looking back on the examples of Jeremiah 3 and Hosea 2. The unbelieving wife did depart. He did *not* "put her away" until generations after she LEFT HIM — refused to live with Him or obey Him — until after He had PLEADED and PLEADED for her to return. He had done everything possible to make it a good marriage. He gave her every blessing. But she looked at other "lovers" (the gods of neighbor nations). She loved the ways of the world. She wanted to be like other nations, not God's holy nation (Ex. 19:6). She refused to live with Him — left Him for multiple "lovers." Her relation with the others was NOT marriage but adultery and HARLOTRY.

Still He pleaded with her to RETURN, and, as in I Corinthians 7:11, be reconciled to her husband. If this were a case like Deuteronomy 24:1-4, He could not have taken her back.

God finally gave her a bill of SEPARATION, after exhausting every effort to reconcile the marriage — but He did not UNbind the marriage. It was a legal separation. In such cases the believer is not under bondage to maintain the obligations of marriage — support, etc., on the part of the husband.

But God will *yet* bring Israel (N.T.) back to Him, and re-marry her once she is cleansed.

Several more recent modern translations render the

Hebrew "BAAL" in Jeremiah 3:14 as "master" or "lord." As, in Moffatt, "for it is I who am your lord." The Hebrew word can be rendered either way. Regardless of which way this "BAALI" is rendered, or even if verse 14 is applied to the millennium as one translation renders it, the meaning is the same. A bound marriage is bound for LIFE. And even after the legal separation of verse 8, the marriage was not *un*bound, for God still pleaded (verses 12-14) with Israel to return to Him.

Some might point out that in the analogy of Hosea 2:2 God says "She is not my wife, neither am I her husband." This is referring to the time after the official separation of Jeremiah 3:8. But I have pointed out that Israel had left her Husband (God) hundreds of years before, and had lived those years in whoredom with countless "lovers." Israel was not living with God as an obedient and loving wife lives with a husband. Finally God had driven Israel out of the promised land — "out of His sight." They were not living *AS* husband and wife.

This passage in Hosea DOES NOT show that the marriage was dissolved or that either party was free to remarry another husband or wife. It does show that she had left His "bed-and-board" — and it does show that He, setting the example for us, remained FAITHFUL to the marriage.

Also, in Malachi 2:11, is an indication that Judah did enter a second marriage. But her status is explained in Romans 7:3 "so then, if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called AN ADULTERESS." Not called his WIFE, but an ADULTERESS.

There is absolutely NOTHING in Jeremiah 3, Hosea 1-3, or Isaiah 50, or Deuteronomy 24 or 22, to show that a BOUND marriage, bound by God for life, can be UNbound, or that one bound may be free, by divorce, to *re*marry!

Here is the loving EXAMPLE the living Christ has set for us, that we should follow His steps! It is the perfect example of fidelity, patience, mercy, love that is willing to FORGIVE — perfect outgoing concern — an example of the PERMANENCY of marriage, even when one's mate has sinned more against one than any human has had to

suffer. Through all this abuse on the part of His mate, He remained steadfast. He ENDURED. He still LOVED!

Do *WE?*

IF any want to follow this world's way of divorce, and to re-marry one you think may PLEASE YOU better, *DO YOU?*

"But think of how *I* have been wronged!" one says. "Think of how *I* am the injured party. Think of how I suffer!"

Yes, I know, and my heart goes out to you — BUT THINK OF HOW *GOD* WAS WRONGED — OF HOW HE WAS THE INJURED PARTY — OF HOW HE SUFFERED — OF HOW HE, GOING TO THE CROSS BECAUSE OF HIS WIFE'S SINS, TO PAY HER PENALTY FOR HER, MUST HAVE SUFFERED! But HE REMAINED FAITHFUL to His BOUND MARRIAGE! HE NEVER SOUGHT MARRIAGE TO ANOTHER!

He must have agreed with Paul — or inspired Paul to write: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the *GLORY* which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Christ suffered, endured, bled and died — but He is NOW IN THAT GLORY, and on the THRONE OF GRACE, to help YOU endure and overcome, and SHARE THAT *GLORY* with Him! There will be no suffering then. Jesus did not say that road to *GLORY* is the soft, pleasant, EASY road — but the hard, rough, difficult one.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE!

If there's been suffering, it's because God's LAWS were broken. Breaking God's law of marriage anew again, would only ADD to your suffering!

Hosea Confirms Truth

Some, attempting to justify divorce and re-marriage, try to read their contention into the book of Hosea. Especially the first two chapters, and chapter 4, verse 14.

But Hosea only confirms God's truth, in harmony with all other scriptures touching on the subject.

Remember, Hosea was one of the PROPHETS. His book primarily is a book of prophecy, not a treatise on marriage and divorce. The book as a whole deals with the TWO COVENANTS.

The Old Covenant, made between God and Israel at Mt. Sinai was, by analogy, (as in Jeremiah 3), a MARRIAGE Covenant by which the children of Israel became God's WIFE. Also it made Israel one of the nations (kingdoms) of the earth.

But something was wrong with that covenant. We read in Hebrews 8: "... if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. But finding fault with them [the people of Israel — the WIFE], he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a NEW COVENANT with the House of Israel and the House of Judah" (Heb. 8:7-8).

Once again, this brings us back to the MEANING and the VERY PURPOSE of marriage. Combined with it — intertwined with it — is the VERY PURPOSE for creating humans on this earth. Back to the TRUNK of the tree. This time, *all* the way back.

God created a PERFECT earth. We don't know how long ago. We read of angels here before the creation of man. At the original creation, the angels shouted for JOY (Job 38:7). The earth was BEAUTIFUL! The Government of God ruled the angels who first populated the earth. Their earthly king was a super arch-angel — a Cherub named Lucifer (Isa. 14:12-15). He, too, had been created PERFECT, (Ezek. 28:12), sealing up the sum of wisdom, perfection and beauty. He had previously been over the very throne of God (Ezek. 28:14 and Ex. 25:17-20) and was trained and experienced in the administration of the Government of God over the UNIVERSE. As long as God's Government was administered, the earth was filled with PEACE, happiness and joy.

It is written, "GOD *IS* LOVE." God's Law — the basic Law of God's Government over the entire universe — is LOVE. And LOVE is the fulfilling of that Law.

Love is a WAY of life. It is GOD'S way. It is, as I have written so many times, the way of "*GIVE.*" It is an outgoing concern toward the one loved. It is the WAY of serving, sharing, helping, giving. Toward God, it is mani-

fested in submission, obedience, worship of Him who *IS* Love — the way of humility, belief in, reliance on, and the confidence which is living FAITH. It is the GOD-centered WAY.

There are only TWO general WAYS of life — two divergent philosophies. The other is the way of *"GET."* It is the way of SELF-centeredness, of vanity that lifts SELF above all — even above God. Therefore it resents any authority over self. It is the way of rebellion, lust and greed. It is unconcern for the welfare of others, jealousy, envy, resentment, hatred. It is the way of COMPETITION and STRIFE and WAR.

The Government of God is based on the LAW of God. You don't know of any national government on earth without any LAW. All government is based on law, and the administration and enforcement of that law. Government regulates the way people live in relation to one another.

As long as Lucifer administered GOD'S GOVERNMENT — regulating the way inhabitants lived in relation to God and to one another, all was PEACE, HAPPINESS, JOY, PROSPERITY.

But Lucifer came to reason that he or anyone could enjoy life more living the SELF-CENTERED way. Most people today seem to feel that Satan, the former Lucifer, was right. So he sold his idea to the angels under his jurisdiction. They rebelled with him. They swooped as an invading army, to lay siege on God's throne in heaven (Isa. 14:13-14; Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4). But they miscalculated God's Power and Authority. They were cast back down to earth.

This universal rebellion against God, against His Law, was UNIVERSAL *SIN*. It brought universal destruction to the whole earth. The earth became dark, chaotic, waste and empty (Gen. 1:2).

God had endowed Lucifer and his angels with free moral agency — He allowed them the power of free choice. God did not abolish His principle of allowing freedom of choice. But now He decided on a course to PROVE, once and for all, that the way Lucifer (now Satan) had chosen

was WRONG — against the interest of those who chose that way. He mapped out a 7-thousand-year program.

In seven days, a type of His 7,000 years, God renewed the face of the earth (Ps. 104:30). He brought LIGHT to replace the darkness caused by Satan's way. He produced BEAUTY instead of ugliness and decay. He created, out of material from the ground, animals, fishes, birds — each after its own kind. Then He created His crowning Masterpiece — He made MAN after His OWN kind — the GOD KIND. Man was made of the material dust of the ground, but of the same form and shape as God — and having MIND power as does God. Only man's mind was mortal and confined, of itself, to receiving MATERIAL knowledge. God put in MAN a spirit — spirit essence which imparted the power of intellect and physical comprehension. Also for man God made available His OWN Spirit, flowing from His very Person, which could enter into man, impart to him the presence of GOD'S life — eternal life — and comprehension of SPIRITUAL knowledge.

Upon creating man, His last act on the sixth day of that first week, God began revealing to the man and woman necessary basic knowledge, including knowledge of HIS WAY of life — knowledge of His Law. But Satan, though disqualified, must remain in office until a successor has qualified and been inducted into office.

Now what was God's PURPOSE? WHY was man created? WHAT was God going to demonstrate over the seven-thousand-year allotment?

He was going to PROVE, by allowing man to CHOOSE, through seven millenniums of human EXPERIENCE that Satan's WAY causes only discontent, unhappiness, dissatisfaction, sorrow, pain, anguish, poverty, degeneration of mind, fear and worry, frustration and DEATH. And proving that GOD'S WAY brings PEACE, contentment, happiness, joy, deep satisfaction, comfort, security, prosperity, great vigor and expansion of mind and joy-producing knowledge, assurance for the present and future.

God purposed to DEMONSTRATE this truth so completely and conclusively to the holy angels there could NEVER be any doubt or temptation to repeat Lucifer's

decision, as well as to make it demonstrated once and for all time to those who shall be heirs to His salvation, entering His Kingdom.

Again, WHY was man created? What is God's PURPOSE for man? As explained before, God is reproducing Himself! His PURPOSE is to beget divine children for HIS OWN FAMILY.

God (Hebrew, *Elohim*), is a FAMILY of divine Persons. Jesus, who *was* the God of the Old Testament, came in human form to REVEAL THE FATHER. His Message — His Gospel, was the KINGDOM of God — *the revelation that God is a FAMILY of divine Persons.* That Family has a HEAD — the Father. Jesus is His Son. The Church — plus the Prophets — are to become His divine WIFE — all children of God the Father.

God created man mortal, human, composed of MATERIAL SUBSTANCE. The PURPOSE was that we learn, in this human life, HOW TO LIVE GOD'S WAY — the way the divine Creating-Ruling Family lives — according to GOD'S LAW, the way of LOVE.

Since we are to live for ever AS MEMBERS OF THE DIVINE FAMILY, ruling the Universe, God bequeathed to humans something He gave to NO OTHER kind of life — FAMILY life. FOR THIS PURPOSE, He made us MALE and FEMALE. And for *that* reason, He ordained the MARRIAGE institution, to prepare us to live in a marriage of LOVE — and to the end that we learn the sacredness and the *PERMANENCY* of marriage, which shall remain PERMANENT for all eternity, in God's Kingdom — His divine FAMILY.

God well knew that, being mortal and human, we would make mistakes. Through the very SPIRIT IN MAN, which imparts the wonderful power of intellect to the physical brain, Satan is able to communicate. Satan is the Prince of the Power of the Air. Radio and television communicate *through the air.*

The spirit in each human is, unless we ourselves determine to jam it or reject its impulses, tuned in on Satan's wavelength. He does not broadcast in words, in concrete thoughts, or in sounds. The ear does not hear, nor the eye

see what the devil communicates. He broadcasts in ATTITUDES — in IMPULSES — in THOUGHT SUGGESTIONS. He injects attitudes and impulses of vanity, or rebellion, or envy, of resentment, of fear and worry, of discouragement.

When most people feel such moods coming over them, they do not realize the source of their feelings.

Adam and Eve, first, were taught and instructed by their Creator. But God ALLOWED Satan to get his impulses and attitudes into Eve's mind. She was deceived into making the wrong choice. Your Bible says ALL NATIONS have been DECEIVED, and by this Satan (Rev. 12:9). But, just as God first made His own revelation of TRUTH available to Adam and Eve, so He has made HIS WORD *available* — if humans will seek it and believe it.

Because God KNEW humans would sin, under Satan's sway, His Plan called for the sacrifice of Christ to redeem humans from sin. God *grants* REPENTANCE, when humans really *want* to turn to the RIGHT WAY.

God chose the descendants of Abraham, the Children of Israel. WHY THEM? First, they were Abraham's children, and Abraham made the choice to OBEY and BELIEVE God. Second, they were poor slaves when He called them. He wanted to prove what He could make out of even downtrodden slaves, IF only they would BELIEVE Him and OBEY.

WHY did He "MARRY" Israel? Again, to DEMONSTRATE what that experiment did, that unfaithfulness in marriage leads only to evil results. He allowed Israel, as the "WIFE", under Satan's sway, to demonstrate the unhappiness, suffering and wretchedness that results from going Satan's way.

Israel, from the start, was a SELF-centered wife. She was actuated by the WAY OF "GET".

God proposed marriage (Ex. 19:7-8; 24:3, 7) and the people accepted and glibly promised obedience. God had promised, upon faithful obedience to HIS WAY — HIS LAW — the WAY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD — to give them every material national benefit. They would become the most prosperous, the most powerful, and the happiest nation on earth.

Upon Israel's PROMISE, unproved by performance, God entered into covenant relationship with Israel. Immediately God began showing His love — working MIRACLES on their behalf. By miracles, He had, *before* the marriage, forced Pharaoh to free them from bondage — to let them go. He had started them on their exodus out of Egypt. He performed miracle after miracle in their behalf — getting them across the Red Sea, miraculously giving them water, raining food down from heaven.

But His wife was on the GETTING way. She grumbled, griped and criticized.

After 40 years in the wilderness under Moses — 40 years of partial obedience — not yet going after other gods (lovers) — 40 years of complaining and griping — they entered the Promised Land under Joshua.

"And the people served the Eternal all the days of Joshua, and . . . of the elders that outlived Joshua" — that is, God's "Wife" did not leave Him and seek after other gods (lovers) — 45 years. But they disobeyed Him in many ways — especially in failing to drive out a number of small nations as God commanded. But then the honeymoon was over. ". . . there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Eternal, . . . And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Eternal, and served Baalim: and they forsook the Eternal . . . and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were around them" (Judges 2:7-12).

Under the Judges they obeyed only part of the time (when they were in deep trouble and needed a champion to deliver them). Most of this period they were seeking after the many gods (lovers) of neighbor nations. This covered a period of approximately another 300 years.

Then it was Israel, as the Eternal's WIFE, who said she was not pleased to remain with Him as her Husband (Ruler) any longer (I Sam. 8:1-9). She left Him who had been FAITHFUL — who had given her ALL and received none. She sought many lovers in harlotry (idolatry, which is spiritual adultery and harlotry).

But God purposed to demonstrate to doubting, unbelieving, disobedient mortals that He meant marriage to be a matter of outgoing LOVE — a matter of PERMANENCY and of FAITHFULNESS. Despite a Satan-swayed sinning wife, God gave a perfect demonstration of GOD'S WAY — as it WILL BE in the Kingdom of God.

Even after pleading with her to repent and return through many generations, after sending prophet after prophet to plead with His harlot wife to mend her ways and return, God finally "let her go" — He made the separation legal — but it was not a divorce that *UN*bound the marriage bound at Sinai. He said, "Return unto me, O Israel, for I *AM MARRIED* to you."

God was the faithful HUSBAND, setting the example, showing us how a husband should perform even with a wife more unfaithful and having sunken down lower in degredation than any individual wife I know of. And He showed us that, NO MATTER what the provocation or the abuse or the offense, a husband OUGHT to remain steadfast — that marriage should be based on LOVE of the *out*going kind, and FAITHFULNESS in marriage must remain that, through thick and thin.

WHY The NEW Covenant

Now WHY the NEW Covenant?

How will it be DIFFERENT from the Old?

The FAULT with the Old was the matter of HUMAN *UN*FAITHFULNESS. God says: "For *this* is the Covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Heb. 8:10).

God will not start pouring out blessing and benefits on the mere glib promise of faithfulness on our part. The NEW Covenant will be made only with those who have REPENTED, BELIEVED, received God's Holy Spirit, have been LED by His Spirit, who have GROWN spiritually in grace and Christ's knowledge, and in spiritual character, who have OVERCOME their faults, sins and wrong ways — who have REPENTED after every mis-step, cried out to God to help them overcome, relied on Him through temptations to put within them HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. It will be

made with a people who have PROVED, through their Christian lifetime, that they DON'T WANT to sin — to be unfaithful — who have really *hungered* after God's righteousness, *striven*, crying out to God for help, to overcome, and to be FAITHFUL and ENDURING, no matter what the odds.

This time, Christ says, PROVE your faithfulness, if you want to enter into the NEW Covenant marriage relationship with me. PROVE you would be FAITHFUL by the way you handle your human marriage NOW. Become of ONE MIND and ONE SPIRIT with GOD as you are one flesh *in human marriage.*

What about those who wrest God's Word to allow divorce and re-marriage now? They shall have HAD their marriages — and in them THEIR SOLE REWARD. They shall have been UNFAITHFUL to the spiritual BETROTHAL that every Christian enters into upon spiritual conversion, and receiving God's Holy Spirit.

Again, with the Apostle Paul, I say, I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be COMPARED with the GLORY we shall inherit, if faithful!

What Hosea DOES Say

Now back to the Prophecy of Hosea.

To use Hosea 4:14 to claim that adultery becomes a lawful and permissible reason for divorce and remarriage is to take it entirely out of context. The corrective marginal rendering completely reverses the meaning — *"Shall I NOT punish . . ."* This corrected meaning brings it back into context and harmony with the whole prophecy and other scriptures. We will treat with that in its context.

First, notice the TIME of the prophecy — chapter one, verse 1. It is shortly (perhaps fifty or a hundred years) prior to the final defeat of Israel and their removal to the land of Assyria as slaves.

The PURPOSE of the book of Hosea is NOT to teach that divorce and remarriage (UNFAITHFULNESS) is legal and right in God's sight, but precisely the opposite. It describes with utter disapproval Israel's harlotries and UNfaithfulness, and gives the PROPHECY of the NEW Covenant and the millennium, with Israel redeemed, and the requirement of FAITHFULNESS to the New Testament betrothal, *NOW* (Hosea 2:19).

At the beginning (Hosea 1:2) the prophet is told to take a whore for a wife. He marries Gomer. She, and her children, will represent, by analogy, the harlotries of God's wife, Israel.

Gomer bears him a son, and God instructs Hosea to call him Jezreel, for God will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will bring about the end of the northern kingdom of Israel. This happened, 721-718 B.C.

As recorded earlier, Israel left her Husband — He did not leave her (Judges 2:7-13 and I Sam. 8). He continued to send prophet after prophet to plead with Israel to repent, and return to God and HIS WAYS. Now, after the division into the TWO NATIONS, Israel and Judah, God PUT ISRAEL AWAY, out of His sight (II Kings 17:18, 22-23). This was the divorce that was a LEGAL SEPARATION. However, *after* this "divorce" (Jer. 3:8), God said emphatically, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Eternal, [YHWH], for I AM MARRIED UNTO YOU" (Jer. 3:14). The divorce did not UNbind the bound MARRIAGE!

Neither did God use this divorce to free Himself, (the injured Husband), to marry another! God remained FAITHFUL, He was still married — BOUND — to Israel!

Now Gomer bore another child — a daughter, named Loruhama, meaning, "No mercy," or, not having obtained mercy" for God was not going to have mercy longer upon the Kingdom of Israel. Up to this point, Israel STILL could have received the Birthright promise made originally to Abraham — could have become the most prosperous, the wealthiest, most powerful nation on earth, with PEACE. But now it was to be withheld for 2520 years (Lev. 26:14-18). God would have mercy no longer. "I will utterly take them [House of Israel] away" (verse 6). Utterly SEPARATED — but still bound in marriage!

But, at that time, God would still have mercy on the Kingdom of Judah (verse 7).

Gomer had another son, Loammi (meaning "not my

people.") "You are NOT my people, and I will not be your God" (verse 9).

"BUT" coming to verse 10, skipping over 3,000 years, "in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye *are* the sons of the living God" — speaking of the time when Israel's Husband shall have died (His death ending the Sinai marriage) and to pay the penalty of Israel's sins, and New Testament Israel — the Church of God, repentant, redeemed "... shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together" (verse 11).

As Dr. Clint C. Zimmerman has written,

"The scene shifts again at Hosea 2:2, and we find the words, 'for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband' which gives rise to the question, 'Has Hosea divorced Gomer, and has God divorced Israel?'

"Jeremiah 3 and I Corinthians 7 have already answered the question. This *separation* is not a matter of dissolving a bound marriage. Both separations occur because the wives are not pleased to dwell with their husband, and prove it by repeated adulteries. They depart, and the Husbands are no longer 'under bondage' or obligation to provide food, drink, clothing — the necessities of life (Hosea 2:9). Yes, the husbands are not even required to give proper spiritual instruction any longer — their wives may go into idolatry without any deterrent (Hosea 2:13). Normal husbandly protection, provision and instruction is no longer incumbent. But they are still married, still able to reconcile, for Gomer one day will *return* to Hosea (verse 7). Deuteronomy 24:4 would not allow for such return." (So it is NOT the law governing the situation of Jeremiah 3 and Hosea.)

Continuing the Dr. Zimmerman paper: "It is impossible to make the human analogy of Hosea and Gomer fit the final antitypical marriage of Christ and the Church."

Actually, Hosea departs from the analogy at that point, and Hosea becomes the prophet, giving the future as a "thus saith the LORD."

Dr. Zimmerman's paper continues, "The wife is finally able to call her spouse 'My husband' where heretofore her

only concept of Him had been as a hard taskmaster — *'Baali'* (verse 16).

"Now the picture moves forward to the end of the age — 'in that day' of a new covenant. The book of Hosea is here concerned with end-time prophecy, not Hosea's own literal marriage."

Here is the prophecy for our day.

"And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven ... and will make them to lie down safely. 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 that I am the Eternal.... and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people, and they shall say, Thou art my God."

In chapter 3, Hosea returns to the Old Testament scene.

"Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Eternal toward the children of Israel."

Then he says to her — a prophecy of God to Israel at the time Hosea wrote: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king" — which they did after their capture and exile into captivity, after 718 B.C. Again the prophecy carries over some 3,000 years to a time just future to our day: "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Eternal their God, and David [resurrected] their king, and shall fear [obey] the Eternal with His goodness, *in the latter days"* (chapter 3).

Now chapter 4: There is NO TRUTH in the land (setting: Hosea's lifetime). The Eternal has a controversy with the people of Israel. There is no knowledge of God. But much bloodshed. They have forgotten the Law of God (verse 6). God will forget their children in later generations. "... and I will punish them for their ways" (verse 9). "The spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err" (verse 12). It continues describing Israel's sins. "... Therefore

your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery" (verse 13). "Shall I not" [margin] "punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, and your sons when they commit adultery?" asks God.

This is the verse supposed to allow divorce and remarriage *NOW!* The Authorized Version has "I will not punish your daughters." The marginal rendering corrects it. To say this justifies and makes right whoredom and adultery would be completely out of context, and all that goes before and after. Even if God stopped punishing them (correcting them) that would not make their sins righteous.

No, there is nothing in the book of Hosea that contradicts the LAW OF GOD on MARRIAGE. Once a marriage is *bound* by God, it is BOUND FOR LIFE. There are no exceptions.

God HATES "Putting Away"

In Malachi 2:16 it is stated that God HATES "putting away." But some will cite Jeremiah 3:8, where God gave Israel a divorce. First, it has been explained that was merely a LEGAL SEPARATION, not a divorce as people think of divorce today — not an UNbinding of a bound marriage. For after this, God said to Israel, "I AM MARRIED unto you" (Jer. 3:14).

Even so, God HATED this separation which an unbelieving, rebellious wife insisted on. For more than 600 years, after Israel, the wife, had *left Him,* God had patiently sent prophet after prophet to plead with the wife to return to Him. Yes, He HATED "putting away." The second chapter of Malachi is another example of how God DEMANDS FAITHFULNESS TO THE MARRIAGE COVENANT.

PART IV

OVERVIEW — MAN's VIEW VS. GOD'S

WHY THIS ALARMING breakup of FAMILY LIFE now sweeping the Western world?

Once again, notice where the living CREATOR places the blame. Notice man's view and approach to humanity's problems and evils versus God's. Notice man's approach to solutions versus God's.

In the beginning we quoted Jeremiah 50:6: "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray."

That is only one of many such scriptures. Another, Jeremiah 23:1: "Woe be to the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep [human] of my pasture! saith the Eternal" (verse 1). Then Jeremiah says: "Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets [preachers]; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man . . . For the land is full of adulterers . . . For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Eternal" (Jer. 23:9-11).

There is the great wicked Spirit — who has deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9), who has used his false ministers to withhold the true Gospel, and preach lies and deceits: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also

be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Jesus said MANY would come in HIS NAME — representing themselves to be His ministers, yet deceiving the MANY (Matthew 24:4-5).

Satan has swayed man to deal with the *effect,* ignoring the *cause.* For example, the prevailing attitude toward divorce and remarriage. One looks at his present plight. He has gone through the wringer of divorce. Of course he is the "injured party." Or, if it's the wife, *she* is the innocent victim. What's the attitude? To look at the present *effect,* and try to relieve the present suffering by a new marriage — which means by adultery. Two wrongs never make a right. A second sin never erases a first.

Some people have been misled by a book, written by a clergyman, on this subject. It's a good example of the common approach and viewpoint. Some years before a fellow minister had asked his opinion about whether the wronged, or innocent party to a divorce did not have a "right" to remarry. The author had the *OPINION* that the Bible *COULD* be interpreted to allow remarriage as a result of divorce on the grounds of adultery. (Emphasized words are his.)

So he delved into a study: His motive? It seemed to him he owed it to these divorced people to help solve their present problem — the EFFECT resulting from a breaking of God's Law. His object? To deal with the EFFECT — to try to interpret the Scriptures to suit his desired contention. Weeks later he submitted various *ARGUMENTS* (emphasized words his) to other clergymen designed to show that the Word of God permitted a second marriage to the "injured party."

He had qualms about this, because his denomination did not allow remarriage by divorced persons. His one fear was what might happen to *him.*

Apparently he escaped his denomination's wrath, and fellow ministers urged him to write the book on the subject.

Notice his approach: His motive: *NOT* to learn GOD'S VIEW, GOD'S purpose in marriage, GOD'S Laws concerning

marriage. *NOT* to get at the CAUSE of these unhappy divorcees' trouble, but to start with the EFFECT and try to remedy that! His method? To *INTERPRET* — or, rather, to *MIS*INTERPRET the Holy Word of God to twist it to say what he wanted it to say — to confirm his OPINION!

Here was an example of what God means when He says: "Their shepherds [clergymen] have caused them to go astray!"

I call to the reader's attention that *this* book has sought only GOD'S purposes, and GOD'S Laws — and looking to the CAUSE, not the EFFECT.

What Do You MEAN — Divorce?

WHY do some completely MISUNDERSTAND the Bible teaching on Marriage and Divorce?

I have often said that error is most often arrived at by carelessly ASSUMING — simply taking for granted — a *false premise,* and then basing all supporting arguments on that false premise. The final conclusion is as false as the assumed false premise.

Many false beliefs on the subject of divorce and remarriage have been arrived at in this way.

What comes to your mind, when the word "divorce" is used? It is commonly ASSUMED, and it means in the minds of most people today, the cancelling out of a marriage — the UNBINDING of a marriage.

BUT NOT IN THE BIBLE!

In the Bible, what GOD has joined together, man is FORBIDDEN to separate or UNbind — man is UNABLE to UNbind what God has bound for LIFE. Only God *could* — and God WON'T!

Most people have really lost sight of the fact that it is GOD who binds a marriage. I, personally, did not understand the Bible or Bible teaching on this subject at the time of my own marriage. I believed marriage was FOR LIFE, because that was the teaching I had always heard, and I *assumed* it. I had known of very few divorces then. I knew my parents were bound for life. So had my grandparents been. So were all my uncles and aunts. I simply assumed that was the way it was supposed to be.

But when my own marriage occurred, I merely thought of going to the Courthouse and obtaining a license — which was PERMISSION of the County government to marry. I knew a Justice of the Peace could legally perform the ceremony, but here again, in our family, weddings had always been officiated by a minister. So my wife and I were married by a minister. I didn't think of God's laws in connection with it. I simply did what others had done. But I knew I was married FOR LIFE, and had no least thought of it ever ending until death. Although I knew many very nice girls I respected and thought well of, I had never known — nor have I since — any other I wanted to be my WIFE.

But today, people are growing up and facing marriage under radically different ideas and practices in regard to marriage. Today there are 30 divorces to every 100 marriages.

Today people think of marriage as something merely licensed by and permitted by the STATE. And in the eyes of the STATE divorce ENDS the marriage. The State binds it, and the State UNbinds it — by divorce.

OUR PEOPLE TODAY HAVE FORGOTTEN *GOD!*

They forget that marriage, though a physical union, is A DIVINE INSTITUTION! They forget that it is GOD who binds together a man and woman as ONE. They ignore that God does not UNbind what He has bound.

They FORGET — or simply do not realize — that in the Bible there is NO SUCH THING as a divorce in the sense of UNbinding a bound marriage, bound by the Eternal Creator GOD! They ASSUME, in complete ERROR, that a divorce by the State wipes out a marriage, and frees one to marry a second husband or wife — and a third — and a fourth — etc., etc., etc.

People today NEVER THINK of a divorced woman being married to another man as being *AN ADULTERESS,* instead of a "wife." Or a divorced man married to another woman (by man's law) as *AN ADULTERER* instead of that woman's "husband." Yet that *is precisely what they are* — SO SAYS GOD!

The Bible nowhere speaks of divorce, in the sense

people think of divorce today. In the Bible it is speaking only of separation, made legal — or, made public, or official.

Since divorce in Judah had become fairly common by the time of Christ, even they had come to think of it as severing a marriage — UNbinding what God had bound.

So the Pharisees looked at Deuteronomy 24:1-4. And what did it just naturally mean to them? They ASSUMED without question it was talking about a married man, bound in marriage, writing out a bill of DIVORCE, severing, UNbinding the marriage. And so do most people view it today. That is the ERRONEOUS PREMISE carelessly ASSUMED, upon which their conclusion is based. The same with God's bill of SEPARATION in Jeremiah 3:8. They overlook that later, verse 14, God says He still IS (present tense), MARRIED to Israel.

Some read the first few verses of Jeremiah 3, and ASSUME it is GOD saying "If a man put away his wife...." in verse 1, referring to Deuteronomy 24. But what Jeremiah wrote represented God as saying, *"THEY* say" — *the people* are saying. Then they jump to erroneous conclusions.

God's Church cannot do that.

God's Church must, first, know God's PURPOSE in marriage, and then GOD'S LAWS, consistent with that purpose.

We must realize that the word "divorce" DOES NOT MEAN the same thing in the Bible it probably does to most of us today.

Betrothed Woman Called "WIFE"

Another common erroneous assumption leading to false conclusions is that the word "wife" means always a married woman *bound* to a husband — or, that the word "husband" always refers to a married man *bound* by God to a wife.

But it has been shown that in Matthew 1:19 Joseph was called Mary's HUSBAND before "they came together" (verse 18), and the angel spoke to Joseph of Mary as "Mary thy wife" (verse 20), although she was merely then

"espoused to Joseph" (verse 18). Joseph had not yet "taken unto him Mary his wife," (verse 20).

Again, in Deuteronomy 22:23, a "damsel that is a virgin be *betrothed* unto an HUSBAND" is referred to in verse 24 as the betrothed man's WIFE, although still an unmarried "damsel that is a virgin."

This bit of MISUNDERSTANDING leads many to suppose, erroneously, that when Matthew 5:32 quotes Jesus saying, "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery," the "wife" could mean ONLY a wife bound in marriage. But the word "wife" refers, biblically, to both a betrothed yet UNmarried woman and also to one BOUND in marriage.

What Jesus is saying in Matthew 5:32 is this:

A woman is biblically called a man's *wife* from the time of betrothal — *prior* to the marriage. The man taking advantage of Jesus' exception clause, "saving for the cause of fornication," is a man who, upon marriage to his *betrothed* wife, as in Deuteronomy 22:20, finds her not a virgin, but having committed fornication. Under these circumstances, where the marriage was fraudulent on her part and the husband was deceived, he could refuse to consummate the marriage — reject her — put her away *unbound*. But if he did not put her away while still unbound, but did put her away *later*, after living with her as husband and wife — after being bound to her for life, the divorce does not *UNbind* the marriage, and he causes her to commit adultery, assuming she will go to another man. She is not eligible to marry any other. If she does she becomes an adulteress, and her husband caused her to commit adultery by putting her away from him.

In Matthew 19 Jesus expressed it a little differently. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (verse 9). Unless he put her away upon marriage, and upon discovery of the fraud, thus rejecting her *before consummating* the marriage — *before* being bound (in which case he was still single), then to put her away later, while *bound* for life to her, and have a civil marriage to another

woman would be committing adultery. And whoever married the wife *bound* to him would also commit adultery.

The principle here is that of fraud on the part of one of the betrothed. In this case, literally, the wife represented herself as a virgin. This was a deception. At the marriage, the husband was accepting her conditionally — in this case the condition being that she was, as represented to be, a virgin. On discovery, after the marriage ceremony, of the deception, he rejected her. For this cause — discovered prior fornication — he put her away. He did not accept her.

It is like a man having made a contract to purchase a house and lot. The contract is conditioned on clear title and certain conditions to be found in the house. If the title is found not clear, and other conditions are not met, the buyer refuses to accept the house, refuses to pay for it. The deal is off — never consummated.

The principle involved here is the same. Take the case of a betrothed wife, who became betrothed to spite another who had jilted her. As she enters the marriage ceremony, her mind rebels — she knows she is not intending to really be a wife to the man she is marrying. But she lacks the courage to back out of the ceremony at the last moment, and more to spite the one who jilted her than any other reason she goes through the ceremony. On the wedding night she refuses to consummate the marriage, but fails to explain her reason. A second or third night she tries to "go through with it," but finally rebels and refuses. The next day she leaves with her mother on a trip, returning after several weeks. Again she makes a show of trying to yield sexually, but does only in a most unsatisfactory and hostile manner. Then she goes back to mother again and divorces the man. This case was then brought to the Church. And being satisfied, by responsible witnesses, that events as here stated were true, the Church ruled that there had been deception, or fraud, in the ceremony. The man did not know there was fraud involved till he brought the case before the Church. According to God's Word, God had not bound the marriage. She had not, in sincerity, taken him to be her husband, nor had she

intended to be to him a wife. She had obtained a legal divorce. He was still, in God's sight, *un*married. Later he entered into a bound marriage with another.

This incident will serve to illustrate the principle involved in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. It does not allow for divorce from a bound marriage nor does it allow any second bound marriage. Sometimes fraud in a marriage is not discovered for some time — perhaps a few years. Then the status of the injured one is difficult to determine, but the time-element must be weighed.

What Constitutes Marriage?

Just what does constitute marriage? WHEN, and under what conditions, is one bound by the living God to a mate? When is it a marriage, bound in God's sight, and when is it not a marriage?

We live, today, in the END-time. We live in a permissive society that has lost knowledge of and contact with its God. Marriage is generally taken quite lightly. There has been confusion for thousands of years about marriage, divorce, and remarriage, but more than ever today.

The very PURPOSE for the institution of marriage is intertwined with God's PURPOSE in placing human life on the earth. The basic law of God respecting marriage is stated within the very account of the creation of man.

It begins in the first chapter in the Bible: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:27-28). And, "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).

The PURPOSE is to establish and maintain FAMILY LIFE, preparing humans for immortal family life in the Kingdom of God (which is the divine FAMILY OF GOD).

Notice, first, this basic law establishing the marriage institution says "a man shall *leave* his father and his mother . . ." The Hebrew word relates to forsaking or leaving the parental home, and establishing a new home and family. Of course the fifth Commandment requires honor and respect to parents, whether in or apart from their home.

Before the marriage, the two young people experienced (or so it was intended) a family relationship in two separate households. Their marriage changes that situation. From the two parental households emerges a third family, starting with a new husband-and-wife relationship, from which children shall be born.

Notice, next, in this basic marriage law: ". . . and shall *cleave* unto his wife." The original Hebrew word translated "cleave" means literally *to cling,* or to adhere. Elsewhere the same Hebrew word is translated *to take,* or *to stick.* Jesus referred to and confirmed this basic marriage law in Matthew 19:5, and Mark 10. The Greek word there for "cleave" means literally *to glue* and is elsewhere translated *join.*

The whole emphasis of this original basic law shows the union is to be a *binding* one.

Many have assumed that a marriage is bound by a vow. The Bible nowhere uses the word vow in connection with marriage, but it does refer to it with a word directly related to the word "cleave." In Malachi 2:14, referring to the wife, it states: "She is thy companion, and the wife of thy *covenant.*"

Marriage is a *covenant* with God between husband and wife. It is a type of the New Covenant with Christ. It is referred to thus in Ezekiel 16 and elsewhere. It is a formal, solemn, and binding *agreement* or *compact.* A betrothal is an agreement or compact to be later married, between the two who are betrothed. But the MARRIAGE is an agreement, compact, or covenant they make WITH GOD, who binds it for the remainder of the natural lives of the couple.

Most people being married today do not understand God's laws regarding marriage, or even God's part in it. But though they may be totally oblivious of the fact, *God is part of every marriage.* Few indeed, today, have any conception of the magnitude of their covenant with God,

but ignorant of it or not, it is binding, and all will be judged accordingly in the final judgment. Ignorance does not remove the validity and binding force of this very serious covenant with which, regardless of knowledge, God is none the less directly involved.

The third major element of the basic marriage law of Genesis 2:24 is that the married couple become *"one flesh"* — *"...and they shall be one flesh."*

From two entities — the families of the groom and the bride, now emerge a new and third entity — another *"one flesh"* — another family unit.

The "one flesh" includes sexual intercourse, and it *can* be illegal and too often is. This is shown in I Corinthians 6:16: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh." In marriage this relationship is honorable (Heb. 13:4) and is commanded in Gen. 1:28; I Cor. 7:3-5 and elsewhere. This relationship in marriage is sacred and holy, unless used in an unnatural, lustful or perverted way. God intended it for HOLY use, not lustful or perverted use. It was intended to be a supreme expression of LOVE (not lust), and love is an *outgoing concern* and affection toward the one loved.

Sex in marriage is a prime agent in cementing and gluing a marriage together. In an ever-tightening way, just like glue that becomes a tighter bond as it ages, sexual intercourse in marriage, with a right attitude of mind, cements a marriage tighter as the years go by. One of the most colossal abominations today — one of humanity's greatest tragedies — is the wrong use of sex — both in and out of marriage. Pre-marital promiscuity, adultery in marriage, and even lustful or perverted use of sex between husband and wife can cause serious mental and moral injury to participants.

There are obviously certain qualifications and disqualifications for a valid marriage:

1) The couple must be male and female. In this end-time of abominable immorality, even some ecclesiastics are approving "marriage of two homosexuals or two lesbians." Valid marriage can be only between male and female (Genesis 1:27-28 and 2:24).

2) In this day of the IMmoral "New Morality," of sexual promiscuity, when probably a considerable majority of young men and women have experienced pre-marital sexual intercourse, the Church would rule that, if a young man marries a girl without first questioning her regarding virginity, if he discovers absence of virginity upon marriage it could not be evidence of fraud. Since it is probable today that in a majority of cases the girl is not a virgin, and since today a broken hymen is not necessarily evidence of previous sexual intercourse, it should normally be expected that in many, if not most cases, no evidence of virginity would be found.

If a young man is unwilling to marry any but a virgin, due to present unmoral conditions, he should ascertain the truth from the girl *before* marriage. Truly, we live in the Western world in a condition where the land has been abominably polluted.

There still are a few young men qualified to enter upon marriage without themselves having committed fornication. In this era of frankness about sex, if such a man feels he is entitled to a virgin for a wife, he should ask the girl her own status. Then, if she lies and deceives him, he *could* reject her immediately after marriage, if he is that "hard hearted." Today it is better for converted Spirit-begotten young people to forgive and forget.

What, then, constitutes a valid marriage?

When two people, of marriageable age, sincerely and solemnly covenant with each other, in the presence of witnesses, to take each other as husband and wife, then upon consummating that covenant agreement by becoming "one flesh" in sexual intercourse, they are bound for their natural lives by the Eternal God. Since all are commanded to be subject to the civil powers of government, the marriage should be only by legal marriage license.

God is witness to *all* marriage covenants. He, and He alone, *joins* the marriage bond. It is He who "glues" the marriage, not the minister, rabbi, priest, judge, Justice of the Peace or other human. But of course propriety dictates there *should be* a ceremony.

When such a union is *joined* by God, as Jesus said,

"What therefore GOD hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:6; Rom. 7:1-3; Gen. 2:24). In God's sight man CANNOT put asunder — UNjoin what God has so bound.

These are plain, clear statements in God's Word. They need no interpreting. Arguments based on "obscure" or difficult to understand texts do not reverse them.

God simply makes no provision in His Word for divorce and remarriage in the modern usage of those terms.

Marriage is a very serious relationship, ended only by death. It is a very intimate relationship. The two become ONE — sharing life's problems, troubles, successes together. Much depends on right selection of a life-companion. Much depends on ATTITUDE. Much depends upon LOVE — remembering that love is outgoing concern for the good, welfare, happiness of the other!

God says this about LOVE. Love is very patient. Are YOU? Love is kind — *are you?* Love is not easily provoked. How about *you?* Love is never selfish — are *you?*

A marriage *can* be happy and successful. Read our booklets: *Your Marriage Can Be Happy* and *Modern Dating.*

When you understand the PURPOSE of marriage, the permanency and the seriousness of marriage, it becomes obvious that God wants us to learn a very important lesson. He wants us to be very careful about entering into a marriage covenant relationship. We should exercise all caution, take adequate time to make the right decision.

A person contemplating marriage should use his head as well as his heart. Our book, *The Missing Dimension in Sex* (free) should be considered essential reading, as well as the booklets on Dating and Marriage.

Tragic Cases

Because this world has been so universally and grossly deceived — because this world's clergy, themselves deceived into serving the god of this world and withholding the TRUTH of God — because of the deteriorated, immoral, permissive society in which today's generation has been reared, God's laws have been violated. Tragic situations have resulted.

God's purpose is to create wholesome and happy FAMILIES, based on holy and love-bound marriages. God's purpose is to protect and preserve happy families.

That is also *our* purpose in serving Him — not to break up families.

In teaching GOD'S TRUTH about marriage, our purpose is to guide people into forming happy marriages and a tight family structure. But because the clergy has withheld God's TRUTH about marriage, many tragic circumstances have developed.

God says: "My people are DESTROYED for lack of knowledge: Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing that thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." So says God to the ministers who have failed to teach the people GOD'S LAWS — and especially in regard to marriage.

There are many tragic cases today where there had been a marriage, often hasty and ill-considered. After a few months it ended in divorce, as we know divorce today. Then they each married another. Children were born of this marriage — now three, four, or five children, two or three of these still quite young. Yet these marriages were adulterous, not bound by God.

Now these victims of the popular false but so-called "Christian" NO-LAW teaching learn God's TRUTH about marriage and divorce.

Perhaps one — either a husband or wife — has become a begotten child of God — knows he or she cannot continue living as an adulterer or adulteress.

What TRAGEDY!

There are children. There are now property rights and considerations. There are family and relatives. If one now dares obey God, the persecution will be heavy and full of self-righteous indignation. The Church will be persecuted, accused of "breaking up families," although our whole effort is to preserve family life.

But to most people, GOD IS NOT IN THE PICTURE! Obey

God, and people literally HATE YOU! I said in the beginning this truth will make some readers extremely ANGRY. Suddenly they will become more "righteous" than God.

How do they look at the situation? They see the EFFECT — a family built on an adulterous marriage. They want to deal solely with the EFFECT. Whatever RELIEVES the situation *carnally,* they want to do — and they will become very "righteous" in it. "That family OUGHT NOT BE BROKEN UP!" they say, in hot indignation. If one of the parties to an adulterous marriage, caused by a clergy that has withheld God's Laws from the people — even taught that God's Laws were done away — and also caused by a society which has loved to have it so — I say if one of the parties to this unfortunate adulterous marriage wants to OBEY ALMIGHTY GOD, others will WAX HOT with indignation!

Perhaps cases just like this is what Jesus' disciples had in mind, when, after Jesus answered the Pharisees in Matthew 19:3-9, they asked: "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry."

How did Jesus answer this? He replied, "All men cannot receive this saying, save them to whom it is given." Which is to say, all men are unable or unwilling to obey and live as they must to enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus never said it was the easy way.

Then Jesus said, "For there are some eunuchs, which were so born . . . 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. 19:10-12).

Jesus never once compromised with God's Law. God is a God of MERCY. But He also is a God of JUSTICE, and rather than compromise one-millionth of an inch with His Law, Jesus gave His life to pay the penalty we have incurred by breaking it.

Sometimes it becomes a matter of how much are we willing to suffer — how much are we willing to sacrifice — to be obedient and enter into the Kingdom of God?

Remember, "There is a way which seemeth RIGHT unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

I repeat once again: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the GLORY which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).