

ALL PEOPLE ARE SUBJECT TO CHRIST'S LAWS
ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

by: DAVID L. MILLER



THE DIVORCE DILEMMA AND THE NEW COVENANT

by: DON CAMPBELL

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Introduction

A plight common to many who are guilty of teaching that which is contrary to the truth is the misconception that lengthy and involved discussion somehow justifies the drawing of wholly unrelated and unproven conclusions. The reasoning goes something like this: "There is a brown cow in the pasture; there have been brown cows in the pasture in the past; there are also black cows in the same pasture; therefore, we can expect to find purple cows in the pasture as well." It all has a ring of sense, but the reader still scratches his head and thinks, "that conclusion has absolutely nothing to do with anything that was asserted before!"

The following discussion constitutes a response to a current theory being spread by some in the church regarding divorce and remarriage. Specifically, this paper deals with the thoughts propounded in a manuscript entitled "The Divorce Dilemma and the New Covenant" by Don Campbell. Allusions to this manuscript will be documented by citation of page and line number in parentheses. Each of the following chapters parallels the chapter divisions of Campbell's manuscript and are designed to be a point by point refutation, though such is nonessential to demonstrating the fallacy of the overall thesis presented in the manuscript. Nevertheless, considerable space is being given to show that the lengthy meanderings not only fail to prove the fundamental conclusion being drawn, but also usher the writer into additional errors.

Campbell (hereafter referred to as "the author") admits in his preface that he is proposing an alternative to "...the position most widely received in the past," i.e., "that all people, aliens and citizens of the kingdom alike, are amenable to the law as stated by Christ during His personal ministry" (p. i). Thus the reader should recognize at the outset that the author is implying that through the years, the majority of the brotherhood and the majority of the best minds in the church, have simply been wrong with regard to the usual stand taken on divorce and remarriage. No doubt the day will come in churches of Christ when similar men will rise up and say we've been wrong all along on baptism for the remission of sins, instrumental music, and a host of other biblical teachings!

This manuscript goes forth with absolutely no personal animosity toward the author of the paper being reviewed. However, this study is being sent forth with the understanding that the false teacher has ever been a serious threat to the world. The mouth of the false teacher must be stopped (Tit. 1:11). The false teacher must be marked (Rom. 16:17) and sharply rebuked (Tit. 1:13). While such can be an unpleasant task, it is, nevertheless, one that God portrays as essential. Every member of the

church must see false teaching for what it is--a deadly cancer capable of destroying people's lives and the church. We must also recognize that it is divinely incumbent on every member of the church to study to the point that each may stand up in defense of the truth. Unless the church returns to the status that she once held, when it was generally understood that members of the church of Christ knew their Bibles, we will no doubt live to see the church of our Lord torn asunder by the venom of false teachers. Even now, the complexion of the church is undergoing a swift change. This change is to a large extent due to the work of false teachers who have been permitted to facilitate the instability of a new generation within the church. The time has come. Indeed, the very future of the Lord's church in this country may depend upon the ability of the righteous and faithful within our churches to do what Jeremiah declared those of his generation had to do: "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths" (Jer. 6:16). Only the truth will set people free (Jn. 8:32). Only the truth will save our souls (James 1:21).

I. Sin Prior To The Cross

Much ado is made about conditions from Adam to Moses as regards the imputation of sin and the grounds upon which God condemned those living during that period. However, the fact of the matter is, such has absolutely nothing to do with conditions extant today--unless God specifically tells us there's a parallel. The fallacy so apparent among those who develop their case regarding divorce and remarriage laws for non-Christians living today is that they are relying almost totally upon their own human reasoning to outline their case. Scripture is appealed to in an effort to "pad" the system here and there. In reality, the Scriptures simply do not lay out for us such a system. No where does the Bible even suggest the often made statement, "You can't be held accountable for the covenant--until you're in the covenant!" Such a notion is strictly human reasoning that sounds reasonable, but simply does not possess a shred of evidence from Scripture. Advocates of this theory make statement after statement, point after point, all of which is designed to lead the listener step by step into the web which seeks to exempt non-Christians from amenability to the law of Christ, yet each point is left totally in the realm of human assertion with a glaring absence of scriptural citation.

In fact, let's face it, the theory's whole case is staked upon Rom. 2:15! When it's all said and done, this is the scripture that must be appealed to in an effort to substantiate the fundamental plank of the whole system! If this scripture does not teach what is claimed, there is really no other passage that will even come close to lending credibility to the scheme. Thus, from the outset, this entire theory rests upon very flimsy, shallow ground because of its anemic reliance upon human reasoning in the place of solid scriptural reference.

A. The first point worthy of notice is the author's concession that God gave mankind moral laws from the beginning of time (p. 8, line 12; p. 9, line 24). If God provided man with laws, then there is no such thing as some subjective "law on the heart" which men somehow arrive at from within themselves. Moral consciousness exists for the very reason that God has always delineated precisely what is right and wrong. The author assumes that God's moral laws, given from the beginning, depended upon uninspired, verbal transmission (p. 9, line 26). He then proceeds to assume an even greater fallacy, that men were only held accountable for (i.e., amenable to) moral standards that had grown very lax and perverted in comparison to the original laws. But this simply is not true. When God laid down strict teaching in the very beginning

concerning, for instance, marriage (Gen. 2:24), from that point forward, men are held accountable for that teaching, regardless of how far from that teaching men may drift. It is simply absurd to suggest that God will only hold them accountable for their own heart's imperfect perception of God's original will. Yet, this is precisely what the author means when he speaks of "the law written on the heart" and "the law of conscience" (cf., p. 11, line 14; p. 67, line 9; p. 82, line 1). He's suggesting that those who lived from Adam to Moses could be charged with sin only insofar as they violated their conscience or heart—which, in turn, consisted of some nebulous, imperfect comprehension of right and wrong! In fact, the author goes so far as to state that the Gentiles "had to depend on such laws as they themselves made for their own guidance" (p. 50, line 21)!! Can you believe it?! The author would have us to believe that God permitted and continues to permit some people to make their own laws—and then be judged only on the basis of those laws?? I thought God said people weren't even capable of such (Jer. 10:23)!! But apparently He was not only wrong about such, He set it up that way!! This whole view of a "law written on the heart" is based upon the assumption that men who lived from Adam to Moses received no indication from God concerning right and wrong. The author refers to Hammurabi's Code as "a highly developed example of the ability of man to discern right and wrong" (p. 11, line 19). He assumes that men at that time were drawing solely from their own hearts without the benefit of any previous influence from God. It is assumed that men simply originated within their own hearts feeling of right and wrong, which God then accepts as the standard by which they will be judged. Consider for a moment the ridiculous position into which God is placed by such notions. The heart of one individual may dictate that he may have relations with another man's wife as long as the husband consents (p. 14-Eskimo society). Yet, another man in a different society may have "written" within his heart the idea that having relations with another's wife is wrong—even if the husband gives his consent. In such a case, according to the "law on the heart" theorists, God condemns the latter if he has relations with another's wife, but approves the former having relations with another's wife as long as the husband consents! Thus God becomes guilty of affirming a logical contradiction—having sexual relations with another's wife is both right and wrong! There would, in fact, be millions of standards by which men would be judged, depending upon what was written upon the heart of each person. The exact same standards of right and wrong would not even exist within even two people. Men could not look to their neighbor for examples of how to live, since what's right for him may be wrong for them! Men would thereby be encouraged to not even look outside themselves for a divine standard of right and wrong. Rather, men

would be encouraged, even expected, to look within themselves for perceptions of right and wrong. This is precisely what Joseph Fletcher has been advocating with his notion of "Situation Ethics." I should think he would be pleased with these proponents of "the law written on the heart"!

B. Again, the assertion is made that various societies exist that have never come in contact with Christianity (p. 14, line 3). Yet, the Bible affirms that there was a time when all societies did come into contact with Christianity (Col. 1:23). The extent to which this contact continues to have an influence is unknown and irrelevant. It is totally unnecessary to resort to the formulation of a different set of moral standards (i.e., the "law on the heart") in an effort to soften the sinful condition of a backwoods society. It is simply incorrect to even suggest that God is unjust for holding people accountable for the strict Law of Christ, though many societies have drifted far away from its high standards. The author is trying to argue that unless God goes and speaks to these societies, they cannot be held accountable for God's laws. He is assuming that if "left to themselves," then they will be judged by their own standards. But such absolves man of the responsibility of seeking God. God expects men to seek Him. In fact, He obligates man to seek Him. This is the point that Paul made when he stated that God directed the human condition "so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). This only leads to the conclusion that men are "without excuse" (Rom. 1:20) when they fail to live according to God's laws. It is therefore a false conclusion to suggest that men may live according to their own heart-originated laws, laws that fall short of the standards given by God. God will hold all people accountable for the stipulations of the law of Christ and is precisely one reason why we are commanded to go inform them of such! As J. D. Thomas wrote in his remarks on Rom. 1:18-23, "...man has had ample chance to know right from wrong and is therefore fully responsible for his ungodly living and attitudes...we are indeed 'without excuse' unless we 'ask, seek and knock' until we learn fully what we should do to be saved."¹

C. Another false line of reasoning is seen in the following assertions: "men are charged with sin only up to the extent of applicable revelation" (p. 16, line 5); "those not under the Law of Moses could be guilty of adultery, but only up to the extent that such was recognizable without special revelation" (p. 16, line 18). Here, again, is the basis of this whole theory. It assumes that the only "applicable revelation" was that which was "recognizable without special revelation"! It assumes that when there are

periods in history in which God is silent (i.e., not actively presenting men with written revelation), men cease being accountable to God's laws and are suddenly accountable only to the dictates of their own hearts! It is assumed that the long list of heinous crimes which Paul accused the Gentiles of committing in Rom. 1 were judged sinful because they were violations of their own consciences, rather than necessarily being violations of God's laws--for, it is assumed, God had given them no laws. Yet, Paul clearly stated that these Gentiles knew God's judgement (i.e., righteous decree--Rom. 1:32-NIV). They knew how God (not their own heart) felt about these crimes. Thus God had been in contact with them! They knew that their behavior constituted violation of God's laws! (Notice that one of the sins listed is "gossip"--a sin that hardly goes against one's conscience, unless God has revealed its sinful character). Notice again what Thomas writes concerning the import of Rom. 1: "The biblical statements that Adam and Cain and Abel and all others had information about God and how He was to be worshipped right from the beginning still stand;" "The term 'known of God' (vs. 19) no doubt here means 'what men can know about God.' The whole context indicates that man has had a chance to have information about God and is therefore a responsible being."²

Rom. 5:13 is being twisted. What is Rom. 5:13 teaching? If there's ever a time when law is non-existent, then for the duration of that period, sin is also non-existent. "Imputed" is therefore to be understood to mean that any given action is not considered to be sin. It's not even viewed as sin. Sin, by definition, is violation of law (1 Jn. 3:4). Thus, at any particular period in history, if there are no laws, then there is no sin during that period--"for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). It does not follow that there are periods in time when God's laws do not apply to men. There has never been a period in history when there was no sin or when God's laws were not applicable to men--even though He may not have been actively stating His laws everyday. As Bro. Lard wrote, "to say that sin was in the world, but was not counted, is to say that though men committed sin, God took no notice of it. This is not allowable."³ Notice the following brief survey of the period from Adam to Moses:

1. Adam had specific laws to which he was accountable (Gen. 2:15-17)--including marriage law (Gen. 2:24);
2. Cain and Abel were given laws pertaining to appropriate sacrificial methods and murder (Gen. 4:3-4,7; Heb. 11:4);
3. Those who lived between Cain and Noah were aware of the same things (Gen. 4:15,23-24);
4. Noah's contemporaries were aware that they were violating specific injunc-

tions from God (Gen. 6:2-3). The "wickedness" they were guilty of were specific misdeeds, including evil thoughts (6:5) and violence (6:11). They were not guilty in God's sight simply because they had violated their own hearts; it was their hearts that led them to their evil condition. It was violation of God's laws available to them at that time. They were not merely guilty of the one sin of rejecting God, for their sins had piled up to the point of being labeled "great" (6:5). When Noah, on the other hand, "found favor" (6:8), it was strictly because he possessed a righteous faith. He was considered "righteous" and "blameless" (6:9), not because of his obedience to some intuitive "law on the heart," but because he possessed faith (Heb. 11:7)--which only comes through listening to God's words (Rom. 10:17). He "walked with God" (6:9), i.e., followed God's revealed laws!! He was given numerous laws (Gen. 7:5).

5. After the flood, there continued to be specific external regulations (cf., Gen. 9:4-7, 21-24;

6. Joseph knew that fornication was "sin", not against his own heart or conscience (though it undoubtedly was), but against God (Gen. 39:9)!

7. Even after the Law of Moses was given, non-Jews continued to be charged with and accountable for specific violations of God's will.⁴

These examples prove that direct laws from God existed and were in force during the period from Adam to Moses. God may not have been actively dealing with people through religious leaders, but this does not mean that therefore men were no longer subject to the laws which had been given or that sin prior to Moses' law was not counted sinful. What is Rom. 5:13 saying? It is saying (1) sin existed prior to Moses; (2) this is proof that law existed (Rom. 4:15). Sin cannot be imputed as sin or defined as sin if there's no law, since sin is violation of a particular law given by God. For example, eating of a particular fruit is "sin" only if God has said, "Don't eat that particular fruit." God counts all sin committed by all people in all ages as "sin" when those actions violate His specified words or laws. The converse is also true: sin is imputed where there is law. Thus, since laws from God existed prior to Moses, and since men violated these laws (not just their own hearts), then sin existed prior to Moses and the offenders were held accountable. In spite of the fact that the author relies heavily upon Lard's commentary on Romans, the reader must not be led to believe that Bro. Lard agreed with the false conclusions which have been drawn. The author simply needed to read a little more Lard! Lard argued that the laws that existed within the minds of Gentiles prior to the cross derived their origins--not from within their own hearts--but from objective divine truth previously revealed! Notice the following quotations:

"But here we need to guard a point or two. In every condition of life in which men are lost, they can also be saved. Indeed, the primary provision is always for salvation, the alternative being to be lost. What the special conditions of salvation are in a given case, as in that of the Gentiles, it may be impossible to say. Still they are certainly to be assumed."⁵

"'By nature' means nature without a written law, and not necessarily nature wholly unenlightened by divine truth."⁶

The author argues that Gentiles had no laws from God, while Lard argues the opposite—that the "conditions of salvation" for all men and the enlightenment of "divine truth" were available. With almost uncanny anticipation, Bro. Lard speaks directly to the issue of in what way Gentiles possessed law written within their hearts—and, in so doing, destroys the conjurings of the author:

"They are law to themselves in so far only as they have a correct knowledge of duty. When, in other words, their knowledge of duty corresponds with the requirements of the law, they are then, and to that extent, a law to themselves. ...But they cease to be a law to themselves the moment their knowledge becomes vicious and leads them to do wrong. ...Knowledge which leads men to do wrong is no law in the estimation of God. Law with him is a rule of right, not of wrong."

"It states who are law to themselves, namely, not every nation, but those only who show the law's work written in their hearts. They alone are law to themselves who know what is right. The expression law's work, or work of the law, is general, and means such duties as the law required. Written in their hearts is metaphorical, and signifies not only that they knew certain things to be right, but felt impelled by conscience to do them."⁶

Bro. Lard certainly entertained no vague notions of men being subject and held accountable for merely their own conscience, their own heart's perception of right and wrong! Such a notion, in fact, Bro. Lard labeled a "very hazardous assumption!"

"Some have supposed the reference to be to a natural sense of right inherent in all men, a sense either innate in the soul or springing up spontaneously in it as the inner life unfolds. The reference certainly is to a sense or knowledge of right relative to certain duties. But how came the Gentiles by that sense? I should rather think it formed on unperished traditions of the divine will, communicated to the early fathers of mankind. That the sense might be thus formed can hardly be denied; and what might thus have been, it is perhaps safest to assume as having actually been. A natural or inborn sense of right equivalent to the 'law's work,' or what it requires, I deem a very hazardous assumption."⁷

Indeed! It is precisely this "hazardous assumption" that is duping the minds of those who promote this false theory!

D. Another false line of thinking is seen in the statement, "Jesus' words did not go into effect until after His death" (p. 16, line 14). The statement is misleading. It implies that nothing which Jesus may have said during His life on earth could have application to anyone prior to His death. But such is simply untrue. Many things which Jesus discussed or commented upon were already in effect and Jesus simply reaffirmed their application. For example, when asked what to do to inherit eternal life,

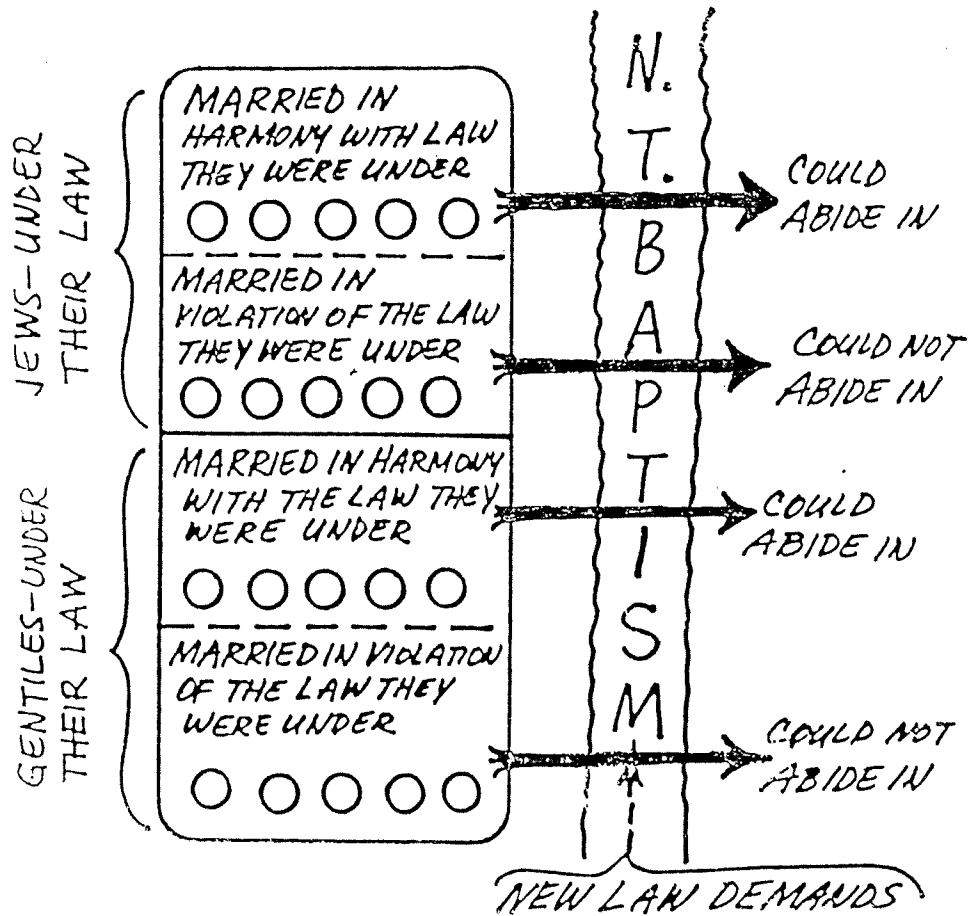
Jesus agreed that loving God and loving fellowman was the answer. He then told the story of the "Good Samaritan" to clarify who one's neighbor is. All of this teaching has application today as part of the New Testament. But the teaching was also in effect the moment it was spoken, and for that matter, was exactly what God intended for those under Mosaic legislation (cf., Lev. 19:18; Ex. 23:4-5). Thus, the same teaching was applicable to different people living under different covenants for the simple reason that it was included in more than one covenant. So it was with Jesus' teaching in Matt. 19:9 on divorce and remarriage. The author, himself, admits this to be true when he states: "Jesus teaches that to put away one's mate and marry another except for the cause of post-nuptial unchastity is a violation of God's moral order established in the beginning" (p. 16, line 10). Notice the words "God's moral order established in the beginning." If Matt. 19:9 was apart of God's moral order from the beginning, then it was in effect prior to Jesus' reaffirmation of them. They went into effect after Jesus' death only in the sense that they are to be considered a part of the new covenant as well. But Jesus Himself is making the point that the one grounds for divorce and remarriage has, in fact, been in effect (and therefore addressed to all men) from the beginning! How dare we then contradict Jesus and say, "No, divorce and remarriage on the basis of only one exception has only come into effect at the cross--and then only for Christians"??? As Bro. Boles wrote, "Jesus here teaches no new laws; he simply declares what has always been the law of God."¹⁰

The advocates of the "no non-Christians subject to Christ's law" theory are quick to respond, "But the Old Law 'permitted polygamy and divorce!'" May I point out that this is precisely the same line of "reasoning" posed by the hard-hearted Pharisees (Matt. 19:7)? Advocates of false teaching on divorce and remarriage simply cannot bring themselves to view sin the way God does and accept the fact that so many will receive condemnation from the mighty Judge! But Jesus didn't have any trouble doing so! He answered the stubborn Pharisees by pointing out that they and their predecessors possessed hard hearts!! Yet, these teachers today want us to believe that stubborn, hard-hearted, disobedient souls are not going to be held accountable for their violation of Christ's law any more than those Pharisees were going to be held accountable for their violation of God's original marriage law! The fact of the matter is, Jesus was saying both they and their predecessors possessed hard hearts that led to a departure from God's laws. He then pointed directly at them (not just Christians today) and said, in effect, "Any of you who divorce and remarry on grounds other than fornication are living in adultery!" In one sweeping statement, Jesus was condemning His Jewish inquirers for misrepresenting Moses as well as living in violation of Gen.

2:24 (which, by implication, permitted only one grounds for divorce). Jesus is thus saying that Moses did not command divorce! Nor is the Old Testament to be interpreted in such a way as to think that Moses or God condoned it! Notice that when Jesus said, "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you..." (Matt. 19:8), He was not suggesting that Moses was giving permission in the sense of placing God's stamp of approval upon and therefore accepting and forgiving such. Then what is He saying? He is saying precisely the same thing that Paul said in Acts 14:16 ("Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways") and Acts 17:30 ("The times of this ignorance God winked at") and Rom. 1:24 ("Wherefore God also gave them up"). What do these statements mean? Do these passages mean that God "condoned," "forgave," and "accepted" the course of life selected by those involved? Do they mean that God did not reckon their actions as sinful since they were merely following "the law written on the heart"? Absolutely not!!! To even suggest that God "overlooks" sin in the sense of condoning and forgiving is to suggest that God has gone against His very nature and essence! But we know that God cannot dwell with darkness (1 Jn. 1:5). All sin must be dealt with in His sight. Anything less totally contradicts God's righteous character. Here we have a key as to what these passages are teaching. Prior to the appearance of Jesus, God let sin occur in the sense that (1) He did not render immediate punishment in every instance and (2) He had not yet provided the final solution, the ultimate cure--Christ. Yet, we are encouraged by those who teach falsely regarding divorce and remarriage to believe that God was completely accepting wickedness and treating it as if it did not exist on the grounds that there was no law addressed to them except some mysterious law in their own hearts! Incredible! To think that the Good God of heaven could conduct Himself so inconsistently and partially--contrary to Peter's own inspired statement: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Peter knew that God required all men to obey Him. The righteousness which He expects men to obey is not some nebulous "law written on the heart," but specific injunctions that delineate what is right and wrong in His sight. When men drift miles away from that will, God does not "shift" them over to accountability to some "law written on the heart." Rather, He labels them evil for the very reason that they have abandoned His laws in exchange for their own hearts' dictates. As the Psalmist declared: "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels" (Ps. 81:12). It's a sad day for the church when some within then declare that God will only hold such people accountable for how well they followed their own counsels!!

But let us suppose for a moment that God did permit those under Moses' Law to divorce and remarry in violation of His original marriage laws without holding them accountable. Those who seek to support their false theory would then argue that so it is today: "when those Jews became Christians, they did not have to dissolve their marriages to suit the dictates of Matt. 19:9--and neither do non-Christians today." But, once again, the conclusion simply does not follow from the foregoing point. If it is true that a person could enter into a marriage relationship that was non-sinful under the Jewish covenant, but which would be counted sinful under the new covenant, God would not require the cessation of that relationship. Such would be true for the reason that God's laws under one covenant would not be retroactive to those who lived under a previous covenant. For example, offering burnt sacrifices was right under the Jewish covenant, but would be wrong today for anyone (in or out of the church) for the simple reason that men living today are under a different covenant which does not authorize such an avenue of approach to God. But you see, the dividing line between what was once right but is now wrong is the cross of Christ! The dividing line for determining what is right and wrong is not the point at which one enters the church by becoming a Christian! So in the first century on the marriage question. The point at which marriages were to be analyzed in light of Matt. 19:9 was the cross of Christ. Those who contracted marriages prior to the cross in harmony with the dictates of the divine laws that were addressed to them at that time were permitted to maintain those marriages after the cross upon entering the church. However, those who contracted a marriage after the cross of Christ (whether in or out of the church), were obligated to do so in harmony with Matt. 19:9.

Notice also that there is no person living on the face of the earth today who is or has been in a situation comparable to those in the first century. They lived at a momentous point in time which never existed before nor ever will again. They lived a portion of their lives under one dispensation (and therefore under one law), but lived the latter portion of their lives under a different dispensation (and therefore different law). No one living today is in such a situation. All persons living today have lived their entire lives under the gospel dispensation and therefore are subject to Christ's laws (rather than their own conscience). The following chart serves to illustrate the preceding discussion:¹¹



Consider the following parallel. Many individuals were baptized by John the Immerser prior to the cross. Presumably, these did not have to be rebaptized after the cross, for John's baptism was God's way of preparing people for the coming kingdom (Matt. 3:1). His baptism was for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4). However, it would be utterly ridiculous to draw the conclusion that people who are baptized today as members of a denomination based upon the dictates of their conscience do not have to be rebaptized! If they were not baptized in harmony with the dictates of the New Testament, then their baptism is invalid. This was why Paul rebaptized those in Acts 19--not simply because they had received John's baptism--but because they had received John's baptism after the cross.

E. The next item of error pertains to the idea that the Law defined sin for those who were unable to perceive sin "by that which is manifested to the mind unaided by special revelation" (p. 7, line 5). Once again, it is assumed that prior to the Law of Moses, there was no "special revelation" from God. This is false. There may have been no written revelation, but there was information given by God. Besides, the Law of Moses was only for Jews and therefore was not God's medium for defining sin

for non-Jews.

The use of Mark 4:28¹² to illustrate the notion of progressive revelation (p. 17, line 22) is unfortunate and misleading. Jesus uttered the teaching to describe the progress of the words of God within the human heart once it is planted there. The verse has nothing to do with progressive revelation is history.

Notice the misuse of Rom. 1:18-32. After quoting the passage to show that certain things are evident to humans as being wrong, the author offers the sin of murder as an example (p. 18, line 7). Two important points are in order. First, Paul did not say in this passage that men somehow perceive from within themselves concepts of right and wrong! Paul did say the "evident truths" are made evident to them by God (vs. 19)--not their own heart! These truths were comprehended through what has been made (vs. 20)--not formulated internally! Secondly, it is most presumptuous to assume that murder is one of these "evident truths," that God had not legislated on murder prior to Moses, and that Cain just somehow intuitively knew that what he was doing was wrong without God informing him of such. The fact of the matter is, Cain had to have received specific legislation against murder or such would not have been wrong (i.e., sinful--Rom. 4:15). Indeed, Jesus' allusion to the spilled blood of righteous Abel (Matt. 23:35), John's reference to Cain's evil actions and his relationship with Satan (1 Jn. 3:12), Jude's allusion to "the way of Cain" (Jude 11), and the Hebrew writer's description of Abel's faith (which can only come by hearing words from God--Rom. 10:17)---all of these statements presuppose the existence of divine instructions! When God asked Cain, "if you do well..." (Gen. 4:7), He obviously had previously defined for Cain what "well" is! In addition, law pertaining to murder was given immediately after the flood (Gen. 9:5). Thus, the sin of murder did not have to await the giving of the Law of Moses before it was "defined" by God. The only way Enoch could "walk with God" (Gen. 5:22-24) was if God had specified or revealed how to do so!

F. The author repeatedly forgets that unless God provides men with laws, there can be no sinful acts committed by those men. Thus, men can be "judged guilty of missing the mark" (p. 20, line 7) only if they have had the "mark" specified. In every period of time (i.e., prior to Moses, during the Mosaic period, and now during the Christian age), God has defined for men the specifics of the "mark." It is ridiculous to suggest that God would judge men guilty of missing the mark (which He did) without ever even giving them the target! Today, when men "miss the mark," they do so by violating revelation from Christ--not some "self-evident truths known from the beginning" (p. 21, line 4). We've already shown there's no such thing. All divine truths are

externally evident through either of two sources: special revelation (i.e., written or spoken information from God) or general revelation (i.e., evidence from the created universe). There's simply no such thing in the Bible as self-evident, instinctive laws originated within one's heart.

So the chart which purports to illustrate "the history of sin from the beginning of time to Sinai" (p. 22) is erroneous. Laws were in the world, sin was imputed, adultery, polygamy, divorce, and concubinage were all regulated by specific recorded revelation from God (Gen. 1:27; 2:24)!! Rom. 7:1-3 is an allusion to God's original marriage law and further confirms that men were not free to formulate their own definition of adultery, but were accountable for God's definition.

Conclusion

The first chapter of the manuscript under discussion simply provides no support for the false theory that maintains that Matt. 19:9 does not apply to non-Christians. It does no good to run to Romans in hopes of drawing some analogy between the conditions that prevailed prior to the cross or prior to Moses and conditions that prevail today. We, and all others living today, live subsequent to the cross of Christ. We are, therefore, all accountable to those laws which have been given "in these last days" (Heb. 1:2).

Chapter I Endnotes

- ¹ J. D. Thomas, Romans (Austin, TX.: Sweet Publishing Co., 1965), p. 11.
- ² Thomas, p. 12.
- ³ Moses E. Lard, Commentary on Romans (Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 171.
- ⁴ The Old Testament is replete with allusions to God's interaction with non-Jewish peoples in which He directed revelation to them and held them accountable for their response to that revelation (as opposed to their own hearts): Balaam (Numb. 22-24,31); Nineveh (Jonah 1:2; 3:2,4,8,9,10; Nahum); Moab (Amos 2:1-3); Syria (Amos 1:3-6); Philistia (Amos 1:6-11); Edom (Obadiah); Babylonians for their greed (2:6-8), idolatry (2:18-19), and violence (2:17); several other Gentile nations (Zeph. 2). It is simply a lack of knowledge of God's word to suggest that Gentiles were without divine instruction--and therefore full accountability.
- ⁵ Lard, p. 83.
- ⁶ Lard, p. 86.
- ⁷ Lard, p. 87.
- ⁸ Lard, pp. 87-88.
- ⁹ Lard, pp. 88-89.
- ¹⁰ H. Leo Boles, Commentary on Matthew (Nashville, TN.: Gospel Advocate Co., 1936), p. 389.
- ¹¹ Adapted from Thomas B. Warren, Keeping the Lock in Wedlock (Jonesboro, Ark.: National Christian Press, Inc., 1980), p. 274.
- ¹² The author apparently inadvertently cited "Mark 4:38."

II. Accountability For What The Law Says

A. The author proceeds to build upon unproven, assumed, fallacious tenets. He makes the statement, "nor have those who violated those intentions been reckoned sinners in all cases" (p. 24, line 14) and notes those Jews who questioned Jesus in Matt. 19:9. As has already been shown in the last chapter, Rom. 5:13 is not saying that God had no laws for the Gentiles. Nor is it saying that men violated God's laws--but were not reckoned sinners for doing so. It is equally false to suggest that Matt. 19:9 was not binding on anybody before Christ's death. It did come into effect at the cross as part of the new testament, but Jesus Himself declared that the same regulations were in effect (and therefore binding) "from the beginning" (Matt. 19:4,8). Notice the self-contradictory reasoning apparent: "Matt. 19:9 was not binding before the cross; violations of it before the cross were not reckoned." If Matt. 19:9 was not binding before the cross, how could there be violations of it? Further, if Matt. 19:9 and Gen. 2:24 were not binding on any prior to the cross or were not reckoned, why in the world did Jesus answer the Pharisees' question by alluding to this material?! When they asked if they could divorce for any reason, Jesus should not have directed their attention to Gen. 2 if they were not amenable to it. He should have directed them to the Law of Moses (which was where they wanted to go--along with the author). He should have at least explained that though God had original intentions of strict marriage laws, they were not binding upon them since they lived prior to the cross! Instead, Jesus "left them hanging" by pointing back to Gen. 2:24 and leaving the impression that such was the appropriate answer to their question and that they were going to be held accountable for such! How different from the shiftings of the author who seeks to soften the force of God's laws prior to the cross!

Again the author contradicts himself by first stating that violation of Matt. 19:9 constituted "violation of God's moral order established in the beginning" (p. 16, line 12), but then turns right around and states that "previous to Sinai, there was no recorded law expressing God's will in this matter" and "no law had been given" (p. 25, line 27 & 29). Notice also that all of this meandering is throwing dust in the air to cloud the issue. The real issue is: Is Matt. 19:9 binding after the cross of Christ? This is the issue. We need not spend any time attempting to ascertain to what extent any before the cross were accountable for which laws. Since Matt. 19:9 is binding during the Christian age, it is applicable to all people.

Still another contradiction is seen when the author states, "no law had been given," but immediately says, "He regulated that which man...had relaxed in practice"

(p. 25, lines 29-30). If no law had been given, what was there to "relax"? "Regulating" and "relaxing" are words that imply standards, i.e., laws from God!

B. The author continues to assert without proof that "there was no recorded law concerning divorce" (p. 26, line 1). But, as shown previously, Gen. 1:27 and 2:24 were guidelines which Adam received from God. These guidelines, by their very nature, exclude divorce, adultery, polygamy, and homosexuality. The author, himself, admits this (p. 24, lines 5-8). If there was no law on divorce, were there also no laws on stealing, homosexuality, lying, drunkenness, etc.? Who can believe that God made man, placed him in the garden with every physical need supplied, and then ignored man's spiritual needs (which are totally dependent upon words from God)--leaving man to flail about and come up with his own laws?? Cf., Gen. 26:5.

The author asserts that the only law against adultery was that which was "recognized" (p. 26, line 2). The author is seeking to imply once again that men came up with their own definition of adultery on the basis of some mysterious, intuitive, self-originated law formulated within their own human hearts! Nonsense! God made plain what "adultery" was and did not leave it up to humans to come up with their own definition. Man's departure from God's strict moral order evoked the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and God's reckoned displeasure upon all others who slumped to the dictates of their own hearts!

C. When the author states: "Two truths are now obvious" (p. 26, line 14), he leaves the impression that the preceding 25 pages have somehow logically led to the recognition of the two truths. In reality, while the two truths are apparent, they do not follow from what was written before. We have no trouble recognizing that "God's laws are binding only upon those to whom they are given" (p. 26, line 14). The Gentiles were not subject to the Law of Moses, for the simple reason that the Law of Moses was addressed to the Jews. No problem. But the author is subtly seeking to drive us to a completely unwarranted conclusion, i.e., that therefore non-Christians are not subject to the law of Christ! Such a conclusion simply does not follow. For the law of Christ is not addressed to a single racial grouping, as was the Law of Moses. The law of Christ is addressed to all men (Mk. 16:15). The author apparently believes that if he can focus our attention long enough on the matter of the Jew and Gentile prior to the cross, that we will somehow accept the totally unproven, unwarranted conclusion which he would have us to draw regarding the Christian and non-Christian after the cross!

We, likewise, have no trouble acknowledging the second truth, i.e., that "God's laws are not retroactive" (p. 26, line 15). Obviously, Moses will not be held accountable at the end of time for failing to observe the Lord's Supper, for the simple reason that the law requiring people to partake of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week was not given to man until after the cross. No problem. Yet, again, we are being prodded into accepting an erroneous conclusion, i.e., that non-Christians are not held accountable for their violations of Christ's laws until they become Christians! The fact that Christ's law went into effect at the cross for all people means that non-Christians living today will be held accountable for their failure to conform to its stipulations. God's laws, therefore, are not retroactive to previous dispensations of time when other laws were in force. However, God's laws do apply to people today--even when they do not decide to bring their lives into conformity with them or have no knowledge of them (2 Thess. 1:8).

D. Then the author argues that Paul's remarks to the Athenians in Acts 17 "charged them with no sin with which they could not have been charged before either the Law or the gospel was inaugurated" (p. 27, line 19). Though the author appears reluctant to come right out and say so, he would like us to presume that the Athenians were therefore not accountable for any violations of Christ's laws. Apparently, the author would not be happy unless Paul stood up and stated explicitly the laws of Christ which the Athenians were violating. Apparently, the author is content to base his case upon silence! Our denominational friends have long been experts at such "argumentation." For example, they allude to Mk. 16:16--"He that believeth not shall be damned"--and maintain, "Now, Jesus didn't say people would be held accountable for failing to be baptized." Likewise, the false theorists say, "Paul didn't say the Athenians were guilty of failing to keep Christ's laws." Never mind the fact that if the individual refuses to believe, he will certainly not be interested in being baptized--nor eligible to do so (Jn. 3:18). Yet how abjectly fallacious to then conclude--"therefore the unbeliever is not amenable to Christ's law on baptism"! There's little point in impressing upon the unbeliever the reality of amenability to baptism--until the unbeliever believes. Likewise, Paul dealt with the polytheistic Athenians quite the way we would expect when he urged upon them the theist position (Acts 17:24) and charged them with adherence to idolatry (Acts 17:29-30). For until he convinced them of these preliminary facts, he would be speaking into the air if he went on to convince them of other aspects of the law of Christ to which they were amenable (including baptism)! It remains patently false to draw the conclusion that simply because individuals are not

eligible or prepared to act upon certain matters, that they are not obligated to do so.¹

E. It does no good to spend considerable space documenting the fact that men throughout history have generally failed to take advantage of the revelation (whether special or general) available to them (pp. 29-33). Such is certainly true. But it does not follow that those people are not accountable to that revelation or that they were without revelation. The author still has not and cannot prove such conclusions.

When the author concedes that once Mosaic law was given, the Gentile "was bound by the same moral principles which bound him from the beginning" (p. 34, line 3), he then contradicts himself by denying that the Gentile had been given divine revelation that defined divorce and polygamy. We have already noted that the author, himself, previously admitted (p. 24, lines 6-8) the fact that Gen. 2:24 was (and is) a law which, by its very nature, prohibited divorce and polygamy.

It is false to suggest that men just sort of came to a consensus that "adultery was recognized as having sexual intercourse with a woman married to another man" (p. 34, line 4). Nonsense. God originally specified what constituted adultery. Men proceeded to depart from that specification in practice and in their own definitions and perceptions of what constituted adultery. In so doing, they sinned against God's law and brought themselves under God's disfavor. God then deals with them on the basis of His law rather than on the basis of their own definitions. Even now, one could go to a hundred different locales, in and out of America, polling peoples to ascertain what they define or recognize as adultery, and receive a hundred different definitions. How ridiculous to then believe those to be the definitions to which those peoples will be held accountable! What a low view of our God to imply that He is so partial and so incapable of giving one holy standard of morality!

Besides, what if a non-Christian divorces and remarries in violation of "his own conscience" and so commits "adultery" as defined in his culture? When he comes to the waters of baptism, the author could not argue that the man could maintain his marriage on the grounds that he is not subject to Matt. 19:9, but only the "law written on the heart," for he violated his conscience in contracting the marriage! The false theologists are never concerned about this! But to be consistent with their doctrine, they must ascertain whether every non-Christian, whom they teach and prepare to immerse, was divorced and remarried in harmony with the so-called "law of conscience." If the individual violated the "law of conscience" and thus committed "adultery" in his own eyes as "recognized" by his own society, he would have to end the marriage before he could then become amenable to a different covenant!

F. The discussion of Herod (pp. 34-37) is superfluous to the establishment of the author's theory. However, some comment is in order. If Herod was reckoned a Jew, then he was subject to the Law of Moses. If not a Jew, he was subject to those laws to which God would hold all Gentiles accountable. Cornelius, on the other hand, was subject to the law of Christ--once the law of Christ came into effect.

It is true that the Mosaic Law was addressed only to Jews, but it does not follow that the Gentiles were "left to themselves" (p. 36, line 14). We've already shown that, though the Gentiles did not have the written Law of Moses, they nevertheless had divine laws addressed to them. They were "accountable for abandoning the knowledge of God" (p. 36, line 16), and this included the abandonment of specific stipulations originally given by God. The tacit admission that the Gentiles sank "deeper and deeper into sin" (p. 36, line 17) confirms that the Gentiles were accountable to laws from God, the violation of which constituted "sin." The allusion to Rom. 2:12 (p. 37, lines 6-8) will receive consideration later in this paper.

Conclusion

The author is no closer to proving his case--that non-Christians are not subject to the law of Christ. It is not enough to quote Rom. 3:19 and note that people are accountable only to those laws which are addressed to them. One must prove that the law of Christ is addressed only to Christians and not to non-Christians. This the author has not done, does not do in the rest of his manuscript, and cannot do.

Chapter II Endnotes

¹ Perhaps the following illustration will help make the point: The alcoholic is in no position to live a life of sobriety until he (1) recognizes and is convinced of the evils of alcohol; (2) decides to cease his own use of alcohol; (3) proceeds to abstain; (4) takes appropriate measures to "dry out;" and (5) with time, accomplishes this "drying out." Only then is the individual in a position to comply with the stipulation--"live a life of sobriety." Should a speaker confront him while he is yet in a drunken condition and proceed to expound to him the evils of alcohol (point 1 above), we would not fault the speaker for failing to expound the specific measures involved in "drying out" (point 4 above). Nor would we suggest that the alcoholic is not subject to point 4 if sobriety is to be accomplished. Likewise, Paul's emphasis upon the sinfulness of idolatry in no way implies that the Athenians were not amenable to and guilty of violating other aspects of the law of Christ which Paul did not explicitly mention.

III. The Relationship Between The Covenants

A. Once again, the author sets forth a false line of reasoning when he suggests Jesus "was setting His own teachings in opposition to the Law of Moses" (p. 39, line 1). The author would have us to believe that Jesus opposed God's laws given through Moses with His own teachings! This was the same false notion which the Jews of Jesus' day possessed. But Jesus pointed out that He came to fulfill (i.e., complete) the Law--not oppose it (Matt. 5:17)! The author seeks to lead us to believe that Jesus disparaged the Law of Moses. But Paul said the Law was "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). Whom should we believe--Jesus and Paul--or the author? Negative views of the Old Law arise from within those who possess an incorrect perspective concerning the Law's function (cf., Rom. 7:7,12,14; Gal. 3:21).

The fact of the matter is, Jesus could not have been contrasting the Old with the New. Notice the context. In Matt. 5:17-18, Jesus reaffirms His positive relationship to the Old Law. He then denounces those who break the Old Testament laws and teach others to do likewise (5:19). Who would do such a thing? Obviously, the scribes and Pharisees! How would they do such? By distorting and misinterpreting the Old Law. This is the very thing of which Jesus repeatedly accused them (e.g., Matt. 15:3,6; 12:7,12). Thus Jesus prefaces His remarks on the Law of Moses by declaring that the peoples' righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, i.e., they must interpret the Old Law properly and act in harmony with it. Next, Jesus proceeds to delineate the divine intentions underlying Mosaic stipulations. He depicts the original spirit of the laws of Moses.

His first allusion to Old Testament legislation is to one of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill." The Jews apparently came to the point to where they felt justifiable when they held resentment and anger in their heart toward another as long as they did not outwardly act on the anger to the extent of murdering. Would the author really like us to believe that Mosaic Law forbade murder--but permitted murderous anger to be harbored within the heart?! It just so happens that the Old Testament repeatedly condemned feelings of anger and hatred (Lev. 19:17; Prov. 24:17-18,29; 25:21-22). Thus in Matt. 5:22-26, Jesus is elaborating, sermonizing upon, and showing the proper application of the original law pertaining to murder.

The second Mosaic injunction is also one of the Ten Commandments. Jesus says, in effect, "You've understood the Old Law to forbid merely the outward act of adultery. But I'm telling you that the original law was designed to discourage lust and divorce--items which go hand in hand with adultery." Jesus then argues that when men

lust in their hearts after a woman, they're committing adultery--the very thing which the Law condemned. A person would do well to completely amputate the member of his body that facilitates such evil (5:29-30). And when the Jews chose to misconstrue Deut. 24 to mean they could divorce their wives for any reason, they were further violating the commandment by causing their wife to go to another man and commit adultery. Thus Jesus is not setting the Law of Moses ("don't commit adultery") "in opposition to" His own teaching ("don't lust after a woman"). The Old Law, itself, explicitly forbade lusting after females (Ex. 20:17; Prov. 5; 6:25; 7:25). So Jesus is showing that the original law forbidding adultery, by implication, forbade anything that would lead or contribute to adultery.

Space considerations prevent us from examining in detail the remainder of the Mosaic laws to which Jesus refers in Matt. 5. Suffice it to say that Jesus was setting the Jews of His day straight on each of the Mosaic regulations to which He referred by asserting what the law originally intended, while exposing precisely how far His fellow Jews had strayed from God's thoughts. Oaths (5:33) and penalties (5:38) were designed to elicit truthful commitment and just retribution. The Old Testament passages dealing with oaths (Lev. 19:12; Numb. 30:2; Deut. 23:21-23) were calling for honesty and truth--not particularly swearing. The passages dealing with penalties (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21) were prescribing just penalty for crimes against other, and thus were restraining measures designed to set limits on punishment while demonstrating God's view of sin and wrong. Hatred of enemies (5:43) was forbidden in the Old Testament (Ex. 23:4-5). God was just as concerned with the "wellsprings" of the heart in the Old Testament (Prov. 4:23; 6:18) as in the New, and just as concerned about the outward action in both. Jesus was telling those Jews who stood before Him that those who were guilty of lust, anger, divorce for the wrong reasons, etc., would be held guilty and accountable on the basis of the Old Testament.

B. We should immediately hold suspect the individual who seeks to raise questions and provide their own answers on matters when the Bible does not even raise the question. It is very subtle and misleading to innocently suggest that "the question 'Who is in the new covenant?' must be answered," when the Scriptures simply do not seek to impress upon us such a line of reasoning! Who's idea is it that such a question "must be answered"? Obviously, the author's! But such is not a biblical must! In fact, the new testament simply does not raise this question the way the author seeks to raise it! No where do we find in Scripture the context which seeks to focus upon the question "who is in the covenant"! To cite Gal. 4:24-26 (p. 39, line 22ff) in order to

leave the impression that Paul is trying to explain "who is in the covenant" is to "handle the word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. 4:2)! Paul tells us point blank what he is driving at when he uses the allegory of Hagar and Sarah. He says he is correcting those who wish to continue to be governed by the Old Law (Gal. 4:21) after it has been abolished. In fact, contextually, Gal. 3-5 is driving at the notion that now that the Christian era has begun, individuals are not to relapse into a previous dispensation and seek justification upon the basis of an obsolete set of regulations (5:4). This question is certainly a far cry from the question "who is in the new covenant?"! Paul is not discussing the question of to whom the new covenant is addressed! He's attempting to get the Galatians to see that they are all accountable to God's laws today and should not revert to a previous dispensation. Thus it would be far more honest with the text to make the point that Paul is enjoining the new covenant upon all people today, than the point that the new covenant is addressed only to Christians! But, again, to be straight with the context, this matter is not even under consideration!

The real issue that the author needs to deal with is not "who is in the new covenant?"--but, "to whom is the new covenant addressed?" The author needs to search the scriptures for the solution to the question, "who is obligated to be obedient to the new covenant?" This is the real issue! Instead, however, the author and those like him, seek to divert attention to a non-biblical question and bark up the wrong tree! They seek to force us to focus upon a question which they have raised in order to accept their conclusions, while ignoring the fact that we should concentrate our efforts only upon questions which the biblical text raises and draw only those conclusions that are warranted by those biblical questions.

The Bible does draw certain parallels between the old covenant and the new covenant. However, the Bible does not draw the parallel which the author seeks to portray! He writes, "the old covenant spoke only to those who were members of the nation created by that covenant" (p. 39, line 19). Fine. This is a biblical point. But the author then "goes beyond what is written" (1 Cor. 4:6) and argues that the new covenant cannot address itself to any who have not received its teachings and "come into the covenant"! But the Bible simply does not launch into this fallacious argumentation! The author is making a "leap" and drawing a conclusion that the scriptures simply do not warrant nor support!

The author labors at length to build his unfounded suppositions upon the details surrounding the inauguration of the old covenant (pp. 40ff). He maintains that the Jews were not subject to the Mosaic covenant until they agreed to accept it and place themselves under its jurisdiction. He then proceeds to maintain that such is the

case today, i.e., non-Christians do not become subject to the new testament until they agree to place themselves under its jurisdiction by becoming a Christian. Sounds real sensible, doesn't it! Never mind the fact that the new testament no where asserts this conclusion! Never mind the fact that the new testament does not provide us with this parallel between the old and new covenants!

In reality, the very way in which the two covenants would have to parallel each other in order for the author's conjurings to be accurate, the Bible makes clear they do not so parallel each other! In the first place, the original Jews who were present when the Mosaic covenant was given were given opportunity to voice their approval and determination to obey the covenant regulations. However, from that point forward, no other Jews were given such an opportunity. All Jews who were subsequently born into the world were obligated to conform to the old covenant--whether they wanted to or not and even before they reached the age of accountability. If you were born a physical Jew, you were automatically obligated and subject to Mosaic legislation--whether you affirmed your "willingness to accept" (p. 40, line 27) the covenant or not. Likewise, Mosaic legislation was addressed only to physical Jews. Today, however, all men (whether Jew or non-Jew) are subject to the new testament, whether they want to be or not. All people will be held accountable for failure to conform their lives to the stipulations of the law of Christ.

It is simply incorrect to liken the new covenant to the old covenant regarding to whom the covenant is addressed. The new testament differs from the old in the very fact that the new testament is addressed to all men, where the old testament never was! This is precisely why we never find God commanding in the old testament, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Law of Moses to every creature." The Law of Moses was not a universal law nor was its function to bring the world into a right relationship with God. But these are precisely the areas in which the new testament differ with the old. God did say, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel (i.e., new testament) to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The new testament is designed by its very nature and function to be a universal law to bring all people into a right relationship with God. It is erroneous thinking to liken the church and the new covenant to, say, the Lion's Club, and then "reason" that "only those who agree to join the Lion's Club become amenable to its regulations." All of humanity is not under obligation to join the Lion's Club! Nor are the Lion's Club regulations designed to be proclaimed to every creature! But the new testament is obligatory upon all the world and to be proclaimed to every creature!

C. Much space could be spent clarifying the author's disregard of the place of the heart under the old testament economy. It is a misunderstanding of the old testament to suggest that obedience from the heart was "not essential to the covenant relationship" (p. 41, line 26). God required obedience from the heart as an essential ingredient to the covenant relationship (cf., Deut. 6:5-6; 4:9; Joel 2:12-13). Jer. 31 is not contrasting stony, external, superficial law keeping with heartfelt lawkeeping and saying the former was acceptable for that day, but it will someday be different. God wanted and even demanded heart obedience then too. Jer. 31 is contrasting the artificial mode of entrance under the Old Law (i.e., racial, physical birth) with the mode of entrance under the New (i.e., spiritual birth). In Heb. 8, the passage is used to show the superiority of this new law--not in terms of its greater demands for personal heart involvement--but in terms of the "better promises" on which it was enacted. In other words, the new law is designed for all men as the only approach to God in order to accrue salvation. On the other hand, the Old Law never had as its purpose to provide salvation (Rom. 3:11,20,28; 8:3, Gal. 2:16). Otherwise, God failed! You have God trying to save men through the Old Law, but failing and trying again with a second law! Actually, the Old Law was great for what it was designed to do (Rom. 7:12; 1 Tim. 1:8-11). But men misused, misinterpreted, and violated the Law, and it is these misconceptions that the Pauline corpus so often attacks.

But the real flaw in the author's framework is seen in his statement, "the same basic steps are followed when God establishes His covenant with individuals as was followed when He established it with Israel" (p. 43, line 8). The author, again, is guilty of drawing a parallel where none exists and following a course of thinking that the Bible simply does not follow. God does not "establish His covenant" with individuals today! The Bible affirms that God established His covenant one time, once for all (i.e., everybody), at one dramatic moment in time (Heb. 8:6; 10:9). Jesus' blood was shed one time in order to usher in the new covenant for all people (Heb. 9:20,25-26; 10:10). It is unbiblical thinking to reason that God establishes His covenant today over and over again everytime an individual obeys the gospel. Rather, it is at the point of conversion that the individual has the blood of the covenant applied to his own personal sins. But once the new testament was placed into effect at the cross of Christ, all individuals who live subsequent become amenable to that testament and guilty of failing to live up to the terms contained therein. How ridiculous to suggest that when non-Christians fail to comply with the terms of the new testament that they remain exempt from obligation to obey the stipulations of that testament! It is diverting attention to argue that the individual does not receive Christ's blood until he obeys the

gospel. For the issue is whether or not the individual is obligated by God to be cleansed of violations of the new testament as a non-Christian. Certainly, there is a "connection between the blood and baptism" (p. 45, line 5), but the ratification of the new covenant by the blood of Christ does not occur at baptism! It occurred at the cross (Heb. 9:12,25-26,28)! Thus when one accepts the "proposal" (p. 45, line 17) of the gospel, "he then becomes a citizen of the kingdom" (p. 45, line 18)--but it does not follow that he then becomes "amenable to the stipulations of the covenant" (p. 45, line 18-19)! This is precisely the "conclusion" that the author has been prodding us to draw but which simply does not follow from what has preceded. It is untrue that non-Christians are in "exactly the same state the Gentile world was in before the blood of the covenant was shed" (p. 45, line 20). As we have already shown, prior to the cross, the Gentiles did not have the written Law of Moses, but did have specific laws from God to which they were amenable. However, now, neither the Jews nor the Gentiles are under those laws which they were under prior to the cross. Now, all people have one and only one written law from God. It is this law that must be preached all over the world to every single individual. They are lost, not because "one need not be under any covenant to be lost" (p. 45, line 23), but because they have violated laws from God (1 Jn. 3:4). There's no passage that argues that non-Christians are lost simply because they've "not come into the covenant"! But there are numerous passages that state non-Christians are lost (and will thus be judged) because they have violated God's laws contained in the New Testament:

1. In Col. 3:5-7, Paul notes that Christians should cease sin (e.g., fornication, etc.). The sins listed are obviously violations of Christ's law, since it is Christians upon whom Paul is urging a cessation of such practices. Yet he then declares that it is these sins that will evoke God's wrath. He notes that these Christians did these things before they were Christians as well. Thus the passage teaches that God's wrath will be executed against Christian and non-Christian alike for violations of the same laws;

2. The same point is clear from Eph. 5:3-8;

3. According to Eph. 4:5, there is "one faith." This means that there is one religion and one body of doctrine to which all are amenable;

4. In 1 Pet. 4:3-6, Peter mentions several sins which his readers were once involved in, including drunkenness and idolatry (which violate few people's consciences). He notes that the pagans can't understand why Christians do not plunge into the same evil activities--which suggests they practice these evil things in full accord with their own hearts. Peter then says they'll have to give account for their ways and that this

constitutes reason for the preaching of the gospel. In other words, God will judge non-Christians on the basis of the gospel and their evil practices which are out of harmony with that gospel;

5. Jesus said man (i.e., mankind--Christians and non-Christian) must live by every word that proceeds from God's mouth (Matt. 4:4)--not their own hearts;

6. Jesus said those who will experience the second death are those who are involved in the same evil practices (Rev. 21:8)--obviously whether Christian or non-Christian.

7. In 1 Tim. 1:8-11, Paul shows that laws are made for lawbreakers. Lawbreakers, by definition, are those who do things in violation of "sound doctrine," i.e., "the glorious gospel." Obviously, this includes both Christians and non-Christians, but especially, in the context, non-Christians!

These are just a few of the many passages that speak of the new testament period in which Christian and non-Christian alike are guilty of the same sins on the basis of amenability to the same law.

D. Once again the author goes to Lard in an effort to substantiate his false line of reasoning, making a great deal out of Lard's omission of the article before the word "law" in Rom. 2:12-16. However, once again, the author misuses and misrepresents Lard. Immediately after quoting Lard's remarks, the author states, "Paul teaches that the Gentile world was without law. Uninspired men say that they lived under the law of patriarchy" (p. 47, line 8). The author seeks to lead us to the false conclusion that both Paul and Lard agreed with the author that the Gentiles had no law--period. But the author needs to grease his conjurings with a little more Lard! Here's what Lard believed Rom. 2 taught:

"But how could the Gentiles sin without law? Without law in some form they could not. But the Gentiles had the truth, at least a measure of it. This Paul has already told us; and in the truth they had law. It was in disobeying this truth that they sinned. They had no direct revelation from God, as had the Jews. It was not, therefore, by violating such revelation that they sinned. The law they had was in the form of tradition. But in breaking it, they as effectually sinned as if it had been an immediate revelation. It was not the less binding because of its form."¹

Bro. Lard did not believe that the Gentile world was without law--and neither did Paul! They had laws from God--though not direct and written like the Jews. Lard proceeded to note, as quoted earlier, that the Gentiles did have "conditions of salvation" made known to them. Commenting on Rom. 2:14, Lard reconfirms what he correctly understands Paul to mean by "nations who have not law": "Not law does not

mean absolutely no law, as the immediate sequel shows, but no written law."² Again, Lard says, "'By nature' means nature without a written law, and not necessarily nature wholly unenlightened by divine truth."³ It is this latter conclusion that the author is having problems with. He wants us to believe that Gentiles were wholly unenlightened by divine truth and are therefore accountable only for their own personal perceptions of right and wrong. Then he can further argue that such is the case today, i.e., that non-Christians are accountable only for their own personal perceptions of right and wrong--the so-called "law of conscience" (p. 67, line 9). We've already shown that even Bro. Lard referred to such nonsense as "a very hazardous assumption."⁴ The fact that Gentiles were without written law--like the Jews--simply does not mean that they were without divine guidance in any form and therefore subject to their own consciences! As Bro. Lard wrote:

"They are law to themselves in so far only as they have a correct knowledge of duty. When, in other words, their knowledge of duty corresponds with the requirements of the law, they are then, and to that extent, a law to themselves."⁵

Having refuted the notions (1) that the Gentiles had no law and (2) no accountability for laws from God, we must add once again that it is just as false to leap to an equally unproven conclusion--that non-Christians are in the same boat as the Gentiles prior to Moses. The Jew-Gentile dichotomy no longer exists. Both are now under the same rule of Christ. Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18) and is King over all kings (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14). Therefore, He is over all and all persons on the face of the earth are subject to His universal will in the New Testament (cf., Lk. 24:47; Acts 15:6-9; 17:30-31). The Bible simply does not make the analogy between pre-cross conditions and post-cross conditions that the author seeks to make. In fact, the emphasis in the New Testament is that we live in a dispensation unlike any other. Whereas in the past, God spoke to people in various ways, He now has one universal law through Christ (Heb. 1:1-2).

E. The author spends a great deal of space destroying a "straw man," i.e., "that the Gentile world became amenable to the new covenant when the gospel was preached to Cornelius" (p. 46, line 10). He discusses this notion on pp. 46-54, quoting at length from R. L. Whiteside. One point worthy of notice is Whiteside's statement concerning Rom. 2:14, i.e., "it seems to me that this means that they had no revealed law, and therefore had to depend on such laws as they themselves made for their own guidance" (p. 50, line 20). This is the same false conclusion that the author has attempted to push. Again, we point out that while the Gentiles may not have had

written law from God, it does not follow that Gentiles "had no revealed law." And it certainly does not follow that they simply depended on laws that they made up themselves! The author's whole case collapses on this one point! It is further worthy of notice that Whiteside and the author, in stating that men depended on laws which they formulated for themselves, are in perfect agreement with the sad state of affairs depicted in the book of Judges when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 21:25). This was the "Dark Ages" of Jewish history and an approach to life that is considered by God to be evil. Yet the author would have us to believe that, not only are non-Christians free to pursue what is right in their own eyes, GOD SET IT UP that way!! According to the author, God is responsible for setting up existence in such a way that men are left to themselves and permitted to set up their own standards of morality--and God permits it, yea, endorses it! This is exactly what Hitler did. He completely revolutionized German existence, creating a new order. This societal structure included the extermination of all non-Aryan ethnic groups. Thus Jews were to be ruthlessly eliminated, treated like rats. According to the author's doctrine, they were "a law unto themselves" and therefore endorsed by God when they merely lived up to their self-created laws!

The author falsely argues that Cornelius was not subject to the law of Christ (p. 48, line 14). We must take into consideration the unique situation the people were in during the first century. They were subject to laws prior to the cross. But once Jesus died, they became subject to the law of Christ. If Cornelius possessed obedient faith in regard to divine instructions addressed to him prior to the cross, he was in a right relationship with God at the time. However, once Jesus died, it became imperative that he submit to the regulations of the new covenant. This was precisely why Peter was told to go preach to him. He was now subject to the law of Christ and accountable for obedience to its regulations. Thus he was unsaved and needed to hear words (i.e., new testament laws) that would save him (Acts 11:14). The author gets no support for his theory by trying to cloud the issue by suggesting that the body of Christ was set up because men were already lost. This implies that men could not be in a right relationship with God prior to the cross and the establishment of the church. But such is simply not true. Abraham (Rom. 4:3), Zechariah (Lk. 1:5), and a host of other individuals were righteous, justified, and saved prior to the cross. Those who were lost were lost on the basis of failure to live faithfully under the laws addressed to them. So it is today. Men are lost for failing to live in harmony with the law of Christ.

Also in this same section, it is noteworthy that the author quotes Lev. 20:23 (p.

54, line 2).⁶ This is certainly an unlikely verse for the author to quote, for if the Gentiles were subject merely to their own consciences, and if God had not provided them with any divine guidance concerning what He defined as evil, then the author has God guilty of "abhorring" people for doing things which God never revealed to them as abhorrent! How misrepresentative of the God of heaven!

The author again quotes Acts 14:15-17 in a vain effort to build his case for non-Christians today. Yet, the passage is obviously speaking of the condition of the Gentiles anterior to the cross. Paul declares that prior to the cross, Gentiles went their own ways, meaning that in spite of any divine instruction available to them, they went their own way, in the same sense that a child often goes his own way. You may tell your child to abstain from alcohol, but he goes off and imbibes anyway, and you let him go his own way. That does not mean he had not been given any idea that his course of action would be wrong. Nor does it mean he will not be held accountable for his error. God permitted the nations to go their own way only in the sense that He had not yet provided the ultimate antidote to their (and Israel's) sin. This came with Christ and the new law. Once the new law was established at the cross of Christ, God holds all men accountable for that revealed will and so commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30)!

F. Another "straw man" is kicked when the author opposes those who say "if men outside the covenant are not amenable to the covenant, then they cannot sin" (p. 55, line 3). This is a misrepresentation of the truth. In the first place, the language is unbiblical. The Bible does not speak in jargon that alludes to men being "outside" or "inside the covenant". The Bible does speak of men being "in Christ" or "in the body." But, using the author's terminology, it is more accurate to say that "if men outside the covenant are not amenable to the covenant, then they cannot violate the stipulations of the covenant." But the Bible does affirm that all people will be held accountable for and judged by the laws of Christ (e.g., Matt. 4:4; Jn. 12:48; Rom. 14:11-12).

Yet the author continues to "throw dirt in the air" in hopes of clouding the issue by insisting that "those in Acts Two could not possibly be charged with violating the new covenant" (p. 56, line 2). We've already noted that the author is being less than honorable when he ignores the fact that those in the first century were in a unique situation that we are not in today, i.e., having lived their lives overlapping two different time periods. Likewise, the author is ignoring the fact that the Hebrew writer makes clear that the new covenant, i.e., Christ's laws, did come into effect at the cross and therefore became binding upon all men at that point. The Jews in Acts 2

were held accountable for those things in their lives that were out of harmony with Christ's laws--once Christ's laws came into effect (Heb. 10:9). Jesus, Himself, told His apostles to teach people to obey everything He commanded (Matt. 28:20). Yet, the author would have us to believe that the apostles violated that command of Christ and told those in Acts 2 to merely repent of violations of laws other than what Jesus commanded! The author would have us to believe that Jews could stand in the presence of the apostles on Pentecost, involved in sexual sins as defined by both the Old Law and the New, with no word from the apostles regarding their need to repent of those sins! If there were any polygamists present on Pentecost, the author would have us to believe that since the Old Law permitted such, they could remain polygamists once they became Christians--since they could not be charged with violations of the new covenant! But the author does not want to accept this conclusion. He only wishes to make it possible for adulterers to be accepted into the church--not polygamists.

G. Another false statement is made concerning the Corinthian Christians: "if that were true, then they were not lost until the new covenant was inaugurated" (p. 57, line 7). Such does not follow since they could be lost prior to the cross for violations of the laws which God had given to Gentiles. But once the new covenant was placed into effect, their lives began to be regulated by Christ's laws. Men were reckoned fornicators, adulterers, and homosexuals prior to the cross on the basis of their violation of the divine laws to which they were accountable. After the cross, fornicators, adulterers, and homosexuals were so reckoned on the basis of the laws of Christ. The word "adultery" is defined by God (not human hearts) the same at every period in human history. Adultery has been sinful in God's sight in every dispensation--and so reckoned. All sins mentioned in both Rom. 1 and 1 Cor. 6 have been reckoned sinful by God in every dispensation, for He has always had laws against such. Regardless of the question concerning which law they had violated, in either case they were required to cease their homosexual or adulterous relationships and then be washed in baptism (1 Cor. 6:11). Therefore, what the Corinthians did prior to "entering the covenant" had to be examined in light of the new covenant. Since Christ had already died, it was that body of doctrine with which men had to bring their lives into compliance. In addition, the author completely ignores the fact that immediately after listing the sins of the Gentiles, Paul declares that they (i.e., the Gentiles) "know the judgement of God" concerning such sins (Rom. 1:32). "Judgement" is the KJV rendering of "dikaionoma," which refers to an ordinance or decree. Thus, the "judgement of God" in this passage means the decree or ordinance of God. In other words, the Gentiles know God's laws.

Prior to the cross, they knew God's laws by methods we've already discussed. After the cross, they knew God's laws on the basis of the law of Christ. In either case, they were not under the author's "law of conscience"!

H. The author dodges the thrust of the argument which he seeks to discount concerning the status of those who enter denominations, use instrumental music, or engage in any other practice out of harmony with the new testament. He does so by stating "men outside the kingdom are lost no matter what they do or don't do" (p. 57, line 22). Would the author have us to believe that once individuals become lost (upon reaching the age of accountability or having fallen from grace after conversion), they can be guilty of no further sin! He would have us to believe that once a person is lost, any sin which he subsequently commits does not count!

Granted, to a certain extent it is academic that denominationalists sin when they use instrumental music in worship or fail to observe the Lord's Supper weekly. However, this is not the issue at stake. The reason for ascertaining whether denominationalists sin when they engage in unauthorized worship practices is not in order to determine whether they're lost or saved. Rather, the purpose lies in determining what constitutes sin. The conduct of non-Christians is taken into account by God as much as the conduct of Christians. A prime example of such is Cornelius who, though unsaved, was nevertheless not guilty of sin when he behaved correctly (i.e., according to the law of Christ) in four areas: devotion, fear of God, generosity to the needy, and prayer (Acts 10:2). Luke states that it was precisely this behavior that God took notice of (Acts 10:4). The author totally misses the point when he says, in effect, "Well, it doesn't matter what Cornelius did or didn't do." For it does matter--to God--what non-Christians do or don't do. They may be lost for never rendering initial obedience to the gospel, but they can be further guilty of violating the demands of Christ by piling sin upon sin and compounding their sinful condition (like those of Noah's day--Gen. 6:5). Their good deeds may avail nothing so far as their eternal destiny is concerned, but good deeds were never designed to save men anyways. But their bad deeds (i.e., violations of new testament legislation) constitute grounds upon which they will be condemned (Jn. 12:48).

When the Bible teaches that it only takes one violation of the law to become a "lawbreaker" and thus guilty of breaking the whole law (James 2:10), it does not follow that all sins after the first don't count or make little difference! Each additional violation of the law is sin! Denominationalists sin when they engage in practices not authorized by God. They are obligated--not only to become Christians--but also to do

everything God has commanded in the new testament (Matt. 28:20). Failure to comply, though they are non-Christians, is to be guilty of sins (plural)!

The author is confused concerning the difference between eligibility and obligation. Non-Christians are obligated to partake of the Lord's Supper in accordance with the new testament. However, they are not eligible to do so until they have complied with the necessary prerequisites (i.e., become a Christian, know how to partake correctly, etc.). The mere fact that they must comply with a series of prerequisites in no way relieves them of amenability to the command! Likewise, the non-Christian is not eligible to be baptized until he has complied with the necessary prerequisites (i.e., faith, repentance, confession). The mere fact that he must comply with these prerequisites before he obeys the command to be baptized in no way means that he is not obligated and accountable to Christ's command! Thus God will hold people accountable for failing to comply with laws, though they failed to place themselves in a position where it became possible to obey those laws.

It is simply incredible that the author could imply that Baptists, Methodists, Mormons, Catholics, etc., do not sin when they involve themselves in multiple false religious practices--and urge others to join them!! The author avoids coming right out and stating such, but this is precisely where his doctrine leads him. He quotes Matt. 15:7-9 to refer to denominational worship practices as "vain worship," but in so doing, refutes his own point. For the only way in which worship can be defined as "vain" is when that worship is out of harmony with Christ's definition of proper worship. The Jews to whom Jesus was addressing Himself were guilty of vain worship for the very reason that they departed from God's pattern of worship under the Old Law. Denominationalists are guilty of vain worship today--not by violating the Old Law which is no longer in effect (Col. 2:14), nor by violating their own conscience--but only by violating Christ's law. Sinful worship, by definition, is that which does not conform to the worship outlined in the new testament. To be consistent, the author must likewise maintain that it didn't matter that Elymas' religious practices were out of harmony with the law of Christ, nor did it count as sin when Elymas did as hundreds of denominational preachers do everyday and thousands do every Sunday--urge Sergius Paulus to turn away from "the faith" (i.e., the law of Christ). Yet, contrary to the author's view, Paul looked straight at Elymas and charged him with sin (i.e., being a perverter of "the right ways of the Lord" (Acts 13:10)! The author's doctrine prods us to accept the notion that denominationalists are not subject to the law of Christ since they're non-Christians. Thus when they urge others to reject the true faith and its pure ingredients (like Elymas did), they are certainly not violating the "law of conscience," and

therefore cannot be guilty of sin in so doing. Yet, such conjurings are in direct contradiction to Paul's inspired analysis of the situation! Elymas was guilty of committing sin, and so are denominational persons today, when they violate new testament teaching. Therefore, non-Christians are subject to the law of Christ! The Athenians were guilty of "worshiping according to the 'art and thought of man'" (p. 58, line 1) which by definition is out of harmony with God's laws--and it is for this reason that they are guilty. The reason idolatry is sinful is that it violates God's laws!

I. The author tacitly admits that Rom. 2 refers to the Gentiles prior to the cross (p. 58, line 7). He would have saved us alot of reading if he would have admitted such at the beginning and spared us his meanderings! Shifting to 1 Cor. 9:20-21 provides no support for the author's theory either. He thinks he has a real point when he states, "By no stretch of the imagination can this refer to a time anterior to the gospel" (p. 58, line 22). Here we have yet another "straw man" which the author wastes his time on. Rom. 2 was the passage that speaks of a period prior to the gospel. We have no trouble recognizing that in 1 Cor. 9 Paul is speaking of his ministry during the Christian era. But the passage still affords no support to the author's theory!

In his allusion to the first of three senses, the author does a fair job of discussing in what sense Jews could be under the Law subsequent to the cross of Christ (p. 59, line 10--p. 61, line 12). He rightly notes that the final end of Judaism as a fully intact religious system came in 70 A.D. in fulfillment of Matt. 24 and Dan. 9. Thus, while the Jews were not actually (in God's sight) still subject to the Law of Moses after the cross, they (1) were able to maintain the Levitical system connected with the Temple, and, more significantly, (2) the Jews perceived themselves to still be accountable to the Law. This latter point is really what Paul is alluding to in 1 Cor. 9. Paul, throughout much of the New Testament, combats the false notion held by many Jewish Christians that they were still subject to Mosaic tenets. The passages cited by the author from Galatians (p. 61, lines 17 & 24) in his "second sense" refer to Christian Jews who were reverting to old testament legislation (Gal. 5:1). Obviously, even the author would admit that Christians are subject only to the law of Christ. Yet, Paul speaks of them still being under Moses' Law. Therefore, these Christian Jews could be "under the Law" only in some sense other than actually amenable to it! Yet, it is precisely in this sense (i.e., actually amenable to it) upon which the author's theory relies! The truth of the matter is that neither Christian Jew nor non-Christian Jew could be under old testament legislation in the sense that they were amenable to it and God would hold them accountable for it. They were "under" it only in the sense that they

viewed themselves still under it. In Gal. 5:11, Paul makes the point that the cross was a stumbling-block to those Jews who refused to accept it. Such is not possible if non-Christian Jews were amenable to the Law rather than to the new testament. As Bro. McGarvey wrote:

"If Paul had preached circumcision, the stumbling-block of the cross would have been done away. Paul taught that the whole Jewish system of ordinances perished at the cross, and that on the cross Jesus made the one and only atonement for sin. Such teaching was a stumbling-block to the Jews."

We might note that the same teaching (i.e., that the whole Jewish system of ordinances perished at the cross) is a stumbling-block to the author as well! Nevertheless, all Jews became subject to the New Law at the cross. Gal. 5:3 is simply saying that one who seeks justification on the basis of the Old Law is obligating himself to a law that cannot save him for the simple reason that (1) it is no longer binding on anyone and (2) it was never designed to save in the first place. Gal. 5:3 is certainly not implying that God suddenly switches the individual over to amenability to that law!

When Paul spoke of those who were "under the Law" (1 Cor. 9:20), he was speaking of Jews who were under the misimpression that they were still subject to Mosaic law. When Paul spoke of those who were "without Law" (1 Cor. 9:21), he was referring to Gentiles who did not have the written law of Moses and who were likewise ignorant of the fact that they were subject to the law of Christ. Notice what other Christian commentators have written on this verse:

Raymond Kelcy--"On the other hand, when Paul was dealing with Gentiles, those without the Mosaic law, he accommodated himself to their customs and manner of life;"⁸

Jimmy Allen--"This is a reference to Gentiles who were outside the law of Moses but not totally without law;"⁹

David Lipscomb--"...hence they were said to be without law, were not under the law of Moses;"¹⁰

J.W. McGarvey--"He did not seek to enforce the laws of Moses among the Gentiles, as did the Jews."¹¹

These brethren all agree that "without law" is simply a phrase that is set in contrast to the phrase "under the law." Thus 1 Cor. 9:20-21 does not support the author's theory that there are persons in the Christian age who are not subject to Christ's law. In Paul's letter, Jews and non-Jews were "under the law" and "without law" in a sense that in no way implied that they were not obligated to obey the laws of Christ.

The reader may find it quite surprising that the author would resort to trying to show the Law of Moses to be still in effect (notice the author's use of the words "can be"--p. 61, line 13). He does this in an effort to exempt non-Christians from the law of Christ. However, surely the author has studied his New Testament enough to know (1) that two covenants cannot be in force at the same time and (2) the Old Law had to be done away before the New could even be established (Heb. 8:13; 10:9-10)!! Yet the author would have us to believe that unbelieving Jews living today are still under the Law of Moses. Thus the Hebrew writer was in error when he wrote that the first was set aside to establish the second! Paul was wrong when he wrote that the Old Law was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14)!! The author wishes us to believe that the Old goes out of force and New comes into force millions of times everytime a Jew is converted!!

J. Next the author seeks to discount the universal application of the term "whosoever" in Matt. 5:32 by arguing that the term may have a limited application (p. 65, line 18). He notes that "Proper textual exegesis must decide the issue" (p. 65, line 19). Why does the author dwell upon Matt. 5:32, rather than deal with the passage that is the real focal point of this whole discussion--Matt. 19:9? Because his "whosoever" argument won't hold on Matt. 19:9! Thus he very conspicuously shys clear of Matt. 19:9 since the term "whosoever" is used there in an obviously unlimited sense. The Greek word used is "hos," a relative pronoun functioning as a universal quantifier. In Matt. 19:9, Jesus is directing His Jewish listeners--not back to the Law of Moses--but back to the beginning of mankind. "Whosoever," therefore, applies to all men--whether Jew or Gentile.

Returning to Matt. 5, it is most significant that when Jesus quotes from Deut. 24:1 in Matt. 5:31, He uses "hos an." However, when He reiterates God's original will for all of humanity in vs. 32, He resorts to the use of "pas" which means "all" or "every." Unquestionably, Jesus is reaffirming the universal application of what God intended from the beginning!

It is therefore unnecessary to spend time on the author's quibble about 1 Cor. 11:25-29 regarding the use of "whosoever" in that context (p. 66, line 13). However, we've already shown that all men are obligated to partake of the Lord's Supper--though not eligible to do so prior to initial obedience to the gospel. Thus "whosoever," i.e., any person whether Christian or non-Christian, who partakes of the Lord's Supper incorrectly, is guilty of sin. Though already lost, the religious non-Christian who mispartakes of the Lord's Supper is guilty of further rebellion and compounding his condition in God's sight.

K. The next point the author makes pertains to the dissolution of marriages which do not comply with the new covenant (p. 66, line 23ff). It has already been shown that marriages contracted in harmony with pre-cross divine legislation were permitted to continue after the cross. If, in God's sight, "what they had done was legal when they did it" (p. 67, line 4), no dissolution was necessary. The author consistently ignores the fact that those in the first century occupied a totally unique and unprecedented situation. Their lives spanned two covenant periods. By no "stretch of the imagination" can we apply such a situation to marriages today.

Besides, we again call attention to the fact that when the author says, "what they had done was legal when they did it," he aligns himself with precisely the same position as that of the Pharisees who moaned, "then why did Moses command us to divorce?" (Matt. 19:7)!! Jesus quickly discounted their "argument" by noting their hard hearts. What shall we note concerning the author?

The author is striving to establish a position which he is quite likely unwilling to hold to consistently. He's arguing that relationships which were "permitted" prior to the cross could be continued in after the cross. In actuality, the author wishes to apply the argument only to divorce and remarriage. For there are far more examples of polygamy in the old testament than divorce and remarriage. No doubt the author is unwilling to accept his own line of reasoning and assert that polygamists could maintain their marriage relationships on Pentecost on the grounds that those under the old testament were permitted such. Surely the author would also be unwilling to permit polygamists in Africa to maintain their marriages after baptism on the grounds that the marriages were formed prior to baptism. Polygamists in Africa (or Utah or Iran) violate neither civil law nor their conscience--yet the author would likely show little hesitation making new testament marriage laws "retroactive" in requiring the polygamist to give up his plurality of wives. In so doing, he completely capitulates his theory on the divorce/remarriage of non-Christians!

L. Very flimsy support is offered when that support relies upon argument from silence. Yet such is the author's approach to his case when he writes, "we find not a single example of such in the New Testament nor a single passage even remotely suggesting it" (p. 66, line 25). This statement is false, as we shall soon show. However, were such true, it would not follow that the dissolution of marriages did not occur. Notice, for instance, the author's own presupposition--that Matt. 19:9 applies to a Christian married to a Christian. If the husband violates Matt. 19:9 and forms an adul-

terous relationship, the author would agree that the husband must dissolve the adulterous marriage to be forgiven. Yet, where's the example of such in the New Testament?

Suppose a Christian male enters into a homosexual relationship with another Christian male (there is today, in fact, a group that claims to be within churches of Christ that promote homosexuality). Surely the author would agree that the two must dissolve the homosexual relationship to be in harmony with Christ's laws. Yet, using his own "logic," we could argue, "it seems remarkable that we find not a single example of such in the New Testament nor a single passage even remotely suggesting it"! The truth is, there are literally scores of matters for which the New Testament provides no explicit examples, but which Christ's doctrine would certainly apply to (e.g., the use of narcotics, smoking, X-rated movie viewing, etc.).

Nevertheless, the New Testament does provide passages that do speak directly to this issue. In 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Paul lists several sins of which the Corinthians had been guilty prior to their conversion, including fornication, adultery, and homosexuality. Does the author seriously expect us to believe that those who lived in homosexuality prior to baptism were permitted to continue to live in homosexuality after baptism?

Oh, no! When Paul declared, "such were some of you" (1 Cor. 6:11), he showed without question the fact that they had severed their homosexual relationships. But the author just can't bring himself to admit that Paul was also showing that the adulterers and fornicators severed their sinful relationships as well!

Likewise, the New Testament speaks clearly and directly to this issue in Matt. 19:9. When Jesus described the conditions under which one becomes an adulterer and the Hebrew writer tells us adulterers will be judged (Heb. 12:4), isn't such good evidence that adulterers must cease their adultery if they expect to avoid being lost?!

M. The author continues to assert that "the Gentile world had no revealed law concerning marriage and divorce" (p. 67, line 8). But we have already shown that this notion is false (cf., Gen. 2:24). We have also already shown that there is no such thing as "the law of conscience" (p. 67, line 9). In fact, we would do well to pause and examine the truth about the "conscience." The conscience is that part of man, given by God, that urges the individual to act in harmony with what that individual has been taught to perceive as "right." The conscience is defined as "moral judgement that opposes the violation of a previously recognized ethical principle" (Webster's). Notice, then, that the conscience does not formulate what is right or wrong nor originate moral principles within the heart. Such information must be taught by an external source. Once the individual's intellect is informed regarding beliefs, morality, conduct, etc.,

the conscience then functions to affect the individual on the basis of whether conduct is consistent with or in opposition to what the individual has learned. Thus, the conscience, by its very nature is neutral in and of itself. The author has confused conscience with that which informs the conscience. There simply is no such thing as the author's "law of conscience." The conscience must be educated. Men may misinform their conscience, and thus develop a false framework of right and wrong, but they continue to be held accountable for the true framework that comes from God.

N. The author seems to think that we simply cannot describe Abraham's involvement with Hagar as "adultery" (p. 67, line 17). I'm surprised the author would hesitate to do so! Abraham succumbed to his wife's proddings (Gen. 16:2-3) and his own eagerness to fulfill the promise that God had made to him concerning an heir (Gen. 15:2-4; 17:18). He, therefore, committed adultery with Hagar! It's not necessary to gloss over the event or act as if such was lawful on the grounds that he was simply following his own heart! Abraham sinned! However, his sexual relationship with Hagar did not continue, he was forgiven, God did not recognize the offspring of the adulterous relationship as the legitimate heir,¹² and Abraham continued to have but one wife.¹³ Abraham's spirituality also sagged a bit when he was guilty of deceit (Gen. 12:19; 20:9). Sodom was guilty of numerous violations of divine law as well. The author wishes to redefine sin in such a way as to exempt such individuals from accountability to divine laws. But such is simply unnecessary!

Of course, the author ignores the numerous righteous figures who lived before Sinai in harmony with God's marriage laws (e.g., Abel, Shem, Ham, Japheth, Isaac, Joseph, Job, Moses). He likewise continues to ignore the fact that however God may have dealt with peoples prior to the cross is irrelevant as far as what He requires of people today (Acts 17:30). People today are not living without divine laws regarding marriage. Such laws are contained in the New Testament and are addressed to all people (Mk. 16:15).

O. Notice the author's absolute refusal to require non-Christians to alter their marital status upon becoming a Christian. Yet his analogy is just as applicable to the polygamist, bigamist, homosexual, or any other illicit relationship formed prior to baptism. He writes, "if an alien must put away any but his first mate to enter the kingdom..." (p. 67, line 25). The author would swiftly retract his statement when applied to other sins. He would require the alien polygamist to "put away any but his first mate to enter the kingdom"! He would require the mafia "hitman" to sever his pre-con-

version relationship with the mob. It would seem that the only relationship where the author would not require a severance is with those divorced and remarried!

P. The author raises the classic quibble when he suggests that it would be more advantageous for a non-Christian to kill his wife if he wishes to have another and be accepted into the church (p. 67, line 26). Yet, it can never be "better" to commit additional sins. The author could postulate situations all day regarding what seems to him to be inequities, without altering the truth. We could suggest that it would be "better" for a person to refrain from marrying as long as he wishes to have sex privileges with many women, and marry only after he is ready to stay with only one woman, rather than marry prematurely and be "stuck" with the same woman. The author fails to realize that while sin is sin in God's sight, nevertheless some sins carry greater consequences. Thinking an evil thought is just as sinful as murder, yet the consequences of murder are more serious than thinking evil (e.g., prison or electric chair). Yet how silly to suggest to others, "you'd be in a better position if you think evil rather than commit murder"! The apostles bordered on this same type of "reasoning." They pointed out that "if this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry" (Matt. 19:10). Well, perhaps so. But such is hardly an argument against Jesus' words in vs. 9!!

David was permitted to marry Bathsheba for the simple reason that "if her husband be dead, she is free from the law of marriage" (Rom. 7:3; 1 Cor. 7:39). God said that, not I. If it follows that it would be better to kill your wife so that you can be free to marry again, you're arguing with God, not me.

It is false that David "stole another man's wife, killed the man..." (p. 68, line 4). David had no intention of taking Uriah's wife. He committed fornication with her, but then sought to cover his sin by making it appear as if Uriah was responsible for his wife's pregnancy (2 Sam. 11:4-13). It was only when it became clear that Uriah was not going to behave according to plans, that David resorted to the murder plot.

The purpose of calling attention to the fact that David was under the Old Law (p. 68, line 7) is not to point to the sinfulness of David's actions. Rather, the point is, however God may have dealt with people's sins at that time, such has no bearing upon how God will deal with sin today (Matt. 19:8; Acts 17:30).

The analogy of it being "better" for a Christian to kill his mate if he desires to marry another is a good analogy inspite of the author's quibble (p. 68, line 11). The author's response is that such a man would hardly be "concerned about the scripturalness or unscripturalness of divorce" (p. 68, line 13). But neither would a non-Christian!

In fact, a Christian would have just as much reason to be concerned about whether his marital status would be accepted by the church. He may have little concern about what God thinks, but much concern about whether he can be accepted into the church.

The analogy of divorce with horse stealing (p. 68, line 16) is not designed to show a parallel in terms of the sin of theft, but in terms of the requirements of repentance. Repentance demands the cessation of sinful practices and relationships (Matt. 3:8). If one has stolen someone else's property, he won't keep it. If a man marries a woman whom he has no scriptural right to marry (regardless of whether someone else has a prior claim), he must--to repent--cease the relationship. It's not that he must return a "stolen wife." He must cease living in a sinful relationship. A person may so sin that he will have no choice but to live a life of celibacy. He may so violate God's will that he will forfeit any further marital privilege. This celibacy is not "penance" (p. 68, line 27). It is simply compliance with God's laws. When Paul said, "she must remain unmarried" (1 Cor. 7:11), he was not enjoining "penance" or being unduly harsh or unforgiving! He was simply commanding compliance with God's laws!

Q. When the author quotes Alexander Campbell (p. 69), he does so to his own detriment. Loving God and loving neighbor, says Campbell, are not limited to Mosaic legislation, but "are of universal and immutable obligation" (p. 69, line 8). Thus loving God and fellowman are divine laws that are obligatory upon all people. Yet the Bible says that loving God means doing what God and Christ say to do (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3). Therefore, all men are subject to Christ's laws!

Campbell's words concerning how to address Jews, Christians, barbarians, etc. (p. 69, line 17ff) do not support the author's contention concerning what laws apply to each group. The same body of doctrine applies to each group mentioned. But the approach one takes in presenting that one body of teaching may differ from group to group, depending upon several variables (e.g., background, level of spirituality, receptivity). The subject matter (the requirements of the gospel) apply to each group equally. The teacher may exercise his own discretion in the methodology employed in disseminating that gospel.

The chart (p. 70) perpetuates the false assumptions previously refuted. The author holds that "an invitation is offered" to non-Christians, "but an invitation to become does not make one a citizen of the kingdom." The author implies that one cannot be obligated to obey the New Testament until he accepts the "invitation." Yet, God does not simply invite. He also commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). Thus all men are obligated to obey the New Testament, and if obligated, then held accountable for failure to do so.

Chapter III Endnotes

¹ Moses E. Lard, Commentary on Romans (Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 83.

² Lard, p. 86.

³ Lard, p. 86.

⁴ Lard, p. 89.

⁵ Lard, p. 87.

⁶ The author, apparently inadvertently, cited Gen. 20:23.

⁷ J. W. McGarvey and Philip Y. Pendleton, Commentary on Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans (Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 281.

⁸ Raymond C. Kelcy, First Corinthians (Austin, TX: Sweet Publishing Co., 1967), p. 41.

⁹ Jimmy Allen, Survey of First Corinthians (Searcy, Ark.: Jimmy Allen, 1975), p. 112.

¹⁰ David Lipscomb, Commentary on First Corinthians (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1935), p. 136.

¹¹ McGarvey, p. 94.

¹² Notice that though Ishmael was Abraham's son, in actuality, Isaac was Abraham's "only" son in God's sight (Gen. 22:2).

¹³ Abraham married a second wife after Sarah's death (Gen. 25:1).

IV. What 1 Cor. 7 Really Teaches

A. The author proceeds to set the stage for his mistaken analysis of 1 Cor. 7 by implying that Paul gave a different interpretation to Jesus' words than those who disagree with the author. He suggests that only Paul can tell us what Jesus meant in Matt. 19:9. In other words, without Paul's words in 1 Cor. 7, we'll likely misunderstand Jesus in Matt. 19:9! In reality, we can understand both Jesus and Paul quite easily. They harmonize beautifully. What the author is seeking to do is to build his case by clouding the air and making the issue ominously difficult in an effort to pad his complex meandering. In fact, Matt. 19:9 is not "a difficult passage in the gospels" (p. 72, line 11)--except, perhaps, in the author's own mind.

The author's point that "the later Scripture sheds light upon the earlier" (p. 72, line 10) is misleading. He implies that one cannot ascertain the whole truth or the true meaning from one passage simply because a later passage may relate to the same subject. Yet, there are many later passages that require clarification on the basis of earlier passages (e.g., Paul's use of the Old Testament in 1 Cor. 10 where one must be familiar with Israelite history in order to understand Paul's warnings). So later Scripture does not always shed light upon earlier Scriptures! Likewise, many passages in the gospels are clear without further "clarification" in the epistles (e.g., Jn 3:5 makes clear that baptism is the only act that ushers one into the church to the extent that no passage from an epistle will alter this one fact). It is, therefore, not a foregone conclusion that 1 Cor. 7 "interprets" Matt. 19:9! In fact, Paul in 1 Cor. 7:10 makes clear that Jesus had already spoken to one of the questions raised by the Corinthians ("not I, but the Lord"). Thus, Paul was not "interpreting" Jesus' words, but simply calling attention to the fact that Jesus had already settled the point. Jesus' previously stated teaching was clear without any further word from Paul!

The author's use of "amplifies or clarifies" (p. 72, line 15) and the examples which he sets forth are equally misleading. Acts 11:15-16 does not "amplify" or "clarify" so much as it shows the fulfillment of the previous allusions to Holy Spirit baptism. Further revelation may clarify in the sense that it makes clear what the original statement meant. But further revelation is not going to contradict, countermand, or alter the original statement. Such is also the case with Acts 8 (p. 73, line 18). Neither Acts 8 nor Acts 11 parallel the situation which the author seeks to uphold. 1 Cor. 7 is not a fulfillment passage. 1 Cor. 7 does not even "clarify" Matt. 19:9 (in the sense envisioned by the author), but speaks to an entirely different aspect of a wider

subject. The context of Matt. 19 is divorce (Matt. 19:3). But the context of 1 Cor. 7 is not divorce, but marriage, particularly as marriage relates to the question of celibacy (1 Cor. 7:1). Jesus applies God's original marriage law (Matt. 19:5) to the question of divorce and remarriage (Matt. 19:9). But Paul applies the same original marriage law (which is addressed to all men) to several different questions which relate to marriage and celibacy (e.g., to the question of sexual desire and celibacy--vs. 1-7; the status of widows and unmarried--vs. 8-9; the legitimacy of marriage between believers and unbelievers--vs. 12-15). The author's feeble attempt to "set the reader up" for the author's false conclusions on 1 Cor. 7 simply does not hold water!

The author alludes to Jn. 14 and 16 (pp. 73-74) in an effort to further support his fallacious contention that later revelation is essential to comprehending initial revelation. However, Jn. 14 and 16 do not teach that Jesus would say one thing, while the Holy Spirit would come and later alter Jesus' words. Chapters 14-16 of John teach that the Holy Spirit would repeat Jesus' teachings as well as provide additional inspired material. This is precisely what occurred on the marriage question. Jesus applied divine marriage law to divorce, while Paul applied it to other matters to which Jesus did not specifically refer. Such an understanding of the subject most definitely takes "into consideration Paul's words" (p. 74, line 3), without doing what the author seeks to do--put Paul's words in contradiction to Jesus' words, or at best, place unwarranted, biased restrictions upon Jesus' words.

B. A good sampling of the speculation and supposition that has gone into the author's document is seen in the paragraph (lines 6-17) on page 74. The author writes, "may mean...this seems...could mean...could refer...may be...this cannot be established beyond doubt"! Is the author really this uncertain about his position? Or is this his way of subtly leading the reader to accept his uncertain position?

C. The author stakes his erroneous view of 1 Cor. 7 on the meaning of the phrase "but to the rest" in 1 Cor. 7:12. He maintains that the phrase is an allusion to "mixed marriages," i.e., marriages between believers and unbelievers (p. 75, line 23 to p. 76, line 16). The author stakes his case on a supposed contrast between "Christian marriages" (i.e., a marriage where both parties are Christians) and "mixed marriages" (i.e., a marriage where only one of the parties is a Christian). He maintains that Jesus had to be referring to "Christian" marriages since Paul used the phrase "to the rest" to refer to "mixed" marriages. But the author is assuming what needs to be proved! He completely dodges the fact that Matt. 19:9 was uttered, in context, to a group of Jews

who were desiring an answer to their question for them--not Christians!! Jesus gave them an answer that could be applied to their Jewish pre-Christian marriages. Jesus gave absolutely no indication that He was stating facts that would apply only in the future and only to marriages involving Christians. He, in fact, appealed to Gen. 2 which resides in a pre-Jewish context and clearly applies to all men--the totality of humanity. Gen. 2 is a human race context! Thus "to the rest" cannot be applying to other marriage relationships since Jesus already referred to all marriages (whether Jew or non-Jew). The author's contention that "those to whom the Lord spoke were those in a covenant relationship with each other and with God. Both were Christians in other words" (p. 75, lines 26-28) is therefore completely without support!

The author is off on the wrong footing from the very beginning when he seeks to promote the notion that Paul was addressing himself to different "classes" of marriages (p. 74, line 6; p. 76, line 1). The author disregards the fact that 1 Cor. was a letter that was written in response to correspondence previously sent to Paul by the Corinthians (cf., 1:11; 5:1; 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). Thus, 1 Cor. amounts to a point by point response to matters previously raised by the Corinthians themselves. When Paul refers to the general question of sexual activity/celibacy (7:1), he is alluding to the method by which he is organizing his remarks in direct response to questions asked by the Corinthians. Thus, "to the rest" refers to the rest of the matters or questions about which the Corinthians specifically inquired (and to which Jesus did not make specific application while on earth). These matters (not marriages) are easily discernable from what follows. It is obvious that the "rest" of the questions were as follows:

(1) Should a Christian male who has a non-Christian wife sever the relationship (vs. 12)?;

(2) Should a Christian female who has a non-Christian husband sever the relationship (vs. 13)?;

(3) Are Christians somehow ceremonially defiled or rendered unclean by such a relationship (vs. 14)?;

(4) Are children born to such relationships ceremonially unclean (vs. 14)?;

(5) Is a Christian guilty of sin (i.e., divorce) if their non-Christian mate severs the relationship (vs. 15)?;

(6) What should be the sexual and/or marital status of virgins, unmarried, and widows in light of the current period of distress (vs. 25-40)?

All of these questions may be answered in light of and in harmony with Jesus' own remarks in Matt. 19. Jesus did not specifically make application to these unique instances. But it does not follow that His teaching "did not apply to every case of

marriage" (p. 76, line 12). Nor is it true that Paul said "that Jesus didn't say anything to those involved in mixed marriages" (p. 77, line 10). Jesus did say something to those involved in "mixed" marriages, i.e., sexual unfaithfulness is the only grounds for divorce and remarriage! But Jesus did not address Himself to the application of God's general marriage law to every specific situation, specifically to the legitimacy of a marriage between a Christian and a non-Christian. Paul did not say that "Jesus spoke to one class" (p. 77, line 12). He said Jesus had already dealt specifically with the question of divorce--but not with the specific situation of the spiritual status of a believer who is married to an unbeliever. The author refuses to recognize the context of Matt. 19. The Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man (i.e., any man) to divorce his wife (Matt. 19:3). This is the question (not "class") to which Jesus addressed Himself. The author further assumes his position when he states, "Here would have been a splendid place for Paul to have warned those not in the covenant" (p. 77, line 25). Paul is warning all men, though obviously he is specifically writing to Corinthian Christians. The author's whole case on 1 Cor. 7 depends upon (1) "the rest" referring to "mixed" marriages and (2) Paul giving a different regulation for those involved in such a marriage!

Yet, if Matt. 19:9 applies only to a Christian married to a Christian, then Matt. 19:9 does not apply to a Christian married to a non-Christian; in which case, if a Christian's non-Christian mate is involved in fornication (even habitually), the Christian may not divorce the non-Christian mate! According to the author, the Christian in such a situation can be free of such a situation only if the non-Christian partner deserts!! Such is the ridiculous entanglement that the author gets himself into in his effort to conjure up different and distinct marriage legislation for different "classes" of marriages!

D. The author has no point when he writes, "this is said to mean that if the unbeliever leaves, the believer is not bound to live with him" (p. 76, line 19). The author completely ignores the contextual reason why an unbeliever would wish to depart from a believer. Obviously, the unbeliever (who married the believer before the believer was converted) suddenly found himself married to a different person (in the sense that his mate underwent a total change and began to live a totally different lifestyle). It is due to this change of affairs that the unbeliever demands that his mate make a choice: "either give up Christ or I'm leaving!" It is to this situation that Paul addresses himself. To live in marriage with an unbeliever who makes continuance of the marriage relationship dependant upon the believer's capitulation (i.e., compromise

of Christian responsibility or neglect of divinely ordained duty) is to be involved in slavery (i.e., bondage). In spite of the author's aversion to recognizing the significance of the word for bondage (p. 78, line 18ff), this word cannot refer to the marriage bond. For God never intended or approved of a perception that regards marriage as bondage. Here the author has real trouble. He suggests that for Christians to remain together in the face of "irreconcilable differences" (p. 79, line 3) amounts to being slaves to each other! Where does the author get this? He further errs when he argues that believers should become slaves to unbelieving mates in hopes of converting them (p. 79, line 12) as well as perceive their marriage bond to an unbeliever to be "stronger" (p. 79, line 19) than the bond that exists between two Christians! This is strictly the author's own vain imaginings! Neither Peter nor Paul describe anybody's marriage bond as stronger than another's, nor as slavery! Christians are slaves only to God--never to men or mates (Matt. 23:10; Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:24; Phile. 16; 1 Cor. 7:15). Paul is saying that though a believer is married to an unbeliever--and continues to be so--the believer is not to compromise his/her discipleship. To do so, at the insistence of the unbelieving mate, would constitute slavery which was never God's intention for marriage. To suggest that dedoulotai refers to the marriage bond in vs. 15 is to maintain that in some sense and in some cases the marriage bond is to be viewed as a state of slavery. But God does not want us to view our marital unions as slave relationships. Thus no two marriage partners are ever under any circumstances "under bondage" to each other (such is the force of the perfect indicative passive in Greek). Yet, all marriage partners are bound (1 Cor. 7:27,39; Rom. 7:2) to each other. In vs. 15, Paul is not commenting on the status of a believer's marital relationship (i.e., whether bound or loosed). Rather, Paul is commenting on the status of a believer's spiritual relationship as a Christian in the context of marital turmoil that is generated by a non-Christian mate. Paul is answering the question "how does being married to a non-Christian affect my status as a Christian?" Paul is not answering the question, "how does being married to a non-Christian affect my status as a husband/wife when the non-Christian departs?" You see, Jesus already answered that question (Matt. 19:9) and so did Paul (1 Cor. 7:10-11). So the author's insistence that different "groups" or "classes" are being addressed with different (even contradictory) instructions being given is imaginary.

Paul "did not hasten to add that the believer must remain unmarried" (p. 78, line 16) for the simple reason that he had already stated such with the understanding that all persons were included (vs. 10-11). The same goes for the author's point that "in this case the warning is not given" (p. 79, line 22). A different point is being ad-

dressed in vs. 15--not the status of the believer's marriage bond, but the status of the believer's spiritual condition before God in light of a determined non-Christian who refused to maintain the relationship. To go beyond this point by adding that the Christian is free from the marriage bond and free to form another marriage is to add something that is simply not in the text. The only sense in which one might be "a slave of the worst sort" (p. 79, line 24) merely because the unbelieving mate departs is in the sense that the believer is still a slave to God (Rom. 6:22) and must therefore conform to God's laws of marriage. Such constitutes slavery unto righteousness (Rom. 6:18-19).

The author thinks that "bondage" must refer to the marriage bond on the grounds that the individual has to be under bondage in the first place in order for Paul to declare that when the unbeliever departs the bondage ceases: "the believer must be under that same bondage if the unbeliever does not depart" (p. 80, line 23). Here again the author bases his assumption upon a previous false assumption. He completely disregards the force of the perfect tense in this verse:

"The function of the Greek perfect tense here may be exemplified as follows: if the negative particle ou (not) were missing, Paul would be saying that the brother or sister "has been enslaved" (dedoulotai), i.e., they have in the past been enslaved (punctiliar action) and the effects of that enslavement continue into the present (continuous action). With the negative particle, however, he says just the opposite; they have not in the past been put into a state of enslavement and are not presently in a state of enslavement. The enslavement here is an enslavement they have never been in (punctiliar action) and are not presently in (continuous action); hence, it could not have reference to the marriage bond."¹

So the author has no point when he argues that the person must have been in bondage if Paul says he's not under bondage. For Paul was reminding the believer that though God's marriage law is stringent (for everybody) and though God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16), nevertheless, there are times when an unbelieving mate will actually force the believer to make a choice between Christ and the unbelieving mate. To choose the mate over Christ would be slavery (i.e., "bondage"). Yet, the believer is not now and never has been in such enslavement. Thus, the believer must let the unbeliever exit the relationship in peace. The believer must "let him depart" in the sense that the believer must not seek to prevent his departure by compromising his loyalty to Christ.

Yet the author completely misrepresents the lexical and syntactical significance of verse 15. He reveals his own uncertainty when he feebly asserts that what has already been noted about the perfect tense "does not seem to stand the test of sound principles of biblical interpretation" (p. 80b, line 4). In other words, the significance of the perfect in vs. 15 is settled and established, but it just doesn't "seem" to be in

the author's mind!

In the first place, the author refers to the "perfect, passive tense" (p. 80a, line 29). There's no such thing! "Passive" is a voice in Greek. The tense under consideration is the "perfect" tense. The mood of dedoulotai is "indicative." The author quotes a Greek grammar regarding the perfect tense but fails to realize the significance of the negative particle in the verse. He fails to realize that the verse cannot be designating "the time at which the action (freeing from bondage) was completed" (p. 80b, line 6). For the significance of the perfect passive is that there was no time in the past when bondage was occurring. Thus there can be no "freeing from bondage." The author seeks to free those who were never enslaved in the first place!

The author demonstrates a dangerous and inexcusable lack of knowledge in his inept use of Greek. He attempts to set forth "several parallel constructions" (p. 80b, line 8), but misapplies the function of the perfect passive everytime.² The force of the perfect is simply described by Moule as a "punctiliar event in the past, related in its effects to the present."³ In 1 Cor. 7:15, "bondage" is used "to denote absolute subjection or the loss of autonomy" and "expresses total binding by another."⁴ Obviously, Paul cannot have the marriage bond in mind! The author misses this meaning as well as the proper meaning in each of his "parallel constructions."

(1) In 1 Cor. 7:27, Paul employs the perfect passive to make the appropriate point to the Corinthians in light of the "present crisis" (vs. 26). That point is--"remain as you are." Thus vs. 27 is literally saying, "Were you married at some point in the past (punctiliar) and continue in the same marriage now (present)?" If Paul had wished to ask the opposite, or negate his statement (as he did back in vs. 15), he would have employed the negative particle with the perfect passive and thus written: "You were not married at some point in the past (punctiliar) and you continue in that unmarried state now (present)." In other words, "you are not now married and never have been." So it is in vs. 15. Paul is literally stating, "You were not enslaved at some point in the past (punctiliar) and you continue in that unenslaved state now (present)."

So the author simply fails to comprehend the Greek perfect. When he says, "The perfect tense does not determine the time at which one became married" (p. 80b, line 12), he fails to understand that the whole function of the perfect (and the perfect passive in particular) is to identify the action (in this case marriage) as having occurred in the past and continuing as a completed result in the present. The author is shifting to a different point that is entirely inconsequential. He's focusing on the idea of the cessation of bondage instead of dealing with the force of the negative with the perfect passive which focuses on the absolute absence of bondage both in the past and

present!

(2) The author's second "parallel construction" is drawn from Rom. 6:7 (p. 80b, line 16). Again, the author misses the linguistic import. When Paul utilizes a perfect passive and writes, "For he that is dead is freed from sin," he is literally saying, "For he that died (apothanon--2nd Aorist participle--"having died") was freed from sin at that point in the past (punctiliar) and continues free from sin now (present)." The parallel to 1 Cor. 7:15 again is: "You were not under bondage in the past, and you are not enslaved now--even though the unbeliever departs." The author is still arguing his idea that the believer was under bondage at one point (presumably while married to the unbeliever), but was brought out of bondage when the unbeliever departed (p. 80b, line 21). He, therefore, completely misses the thrust of the perfect passive which shows the believer never was in bondage in the first place!

(3) The author's final "parallel construction" is taken from Rom. 4:14 (p. 80b, line 22). Here the author makes a double blunder. He ignores Paul's use of a rhetorical, logical device introduced by "if" which is intended to signal that the antecedent is not true. Thus, if righteousness is derived on the basis of physical race (i.e., Jews who are "of the Law"), then, yes, "faith is now and has always been void" (p. 80b, line 25). Secondly, the author again misrepresents the perfect passive. Paul's use of the perfect passive conveys the following meaning: if they which are of the law be heirs (i.e., if the Jews are the legitimate heirs of the promise made to Abraham--vs. 13--simply because they are the physical descendants of Abraham), then two things are true: (1) faith (i.e., the faith that Abraham demonstrated--vs. 3,5,9-13--and the faith that Paul's readers had demonstrated when they obeyed the gospel) is voided or made of no value (i.e., it was void when it first occurred in the past and continues to be of no value now) and (2) the promise (i.e., the promise made to Abraham--Gen. 12:2-3; Gal. 3:18) is worthless (i.e., it was worthless when first given in the past and continues to be worthless now). But, in Paul's line of argumentation, neither faith nor the promise were void or of no value in the past or at the time of Paul's writing. Therefore, the physical Jew is not the logical heir. One becomes an heir by faith. So the author misses the sense of both Rom. 4:14 and the use of the perfect passive. Paul is arguing that if Jews are heirs, then faith and the promise "is now and always has been void" (p. 80b, line 30). He is arguing that faith and the promise are not now and never have been void--which in turn establishes his point that Jews are not the heirs merely because of their nationality. Thus 1 Cor. 7:15 is making the point that the Corinthian Christian who was married to a non-Christian was not and never was in bondage!

E. The author again attacks a "straw man" when he writes, "It is said that this applies only to slavery and circumcision and cannot mean that one should remain in whatever marital state he was in at the time of conversion" (p. 81, line 12ff). Paul uses the examples of slavery and circumcision in order to show that merely because a person become a Christian, he is not absolved of his pre-Christian circumstances. If he is a slave prior to baptism, he will continue to be a slave after baptism and should not think that becoming a Christian gives him a right to shirk his legal status as a slave. Such is why Paul instructed Onesimus to return to his position of servitude (Phile. 12). So Paul is encouraging the person who becomes a Christian, but whose mate does not become a Christian, to remain in that marriage rather than think that becoming a Christian somehow gives him/her the right to sever the relationship with the non-Christian mate. Being married to a non-Christian mate is not sinful in and of itself. Notice, then, that Paul is not placing his stamp of approval upon relationships, practices, and conditions that were sinful prior to baptism and encouraging Christians to remain in those relationships! He is referring to relationships and conditions that were not sinful prior to baptism and telling Christians that they still have the same obligation to conduct themselves appropriately (i.e., according to God's laws) within those situations now that they're Christians. Such instructions apply to any relationship, practice, or condition that was not sinful (i.e., in violation of Christ's laws) prior to baptism. But it does not apply to any practice or relationship that was sinful prior to baptism (i.e., adultery, homosexuality, evil business practices, etc.).

The author recognizes this principle on every relationship or practice except adultery! He attempts to leave adultery untouched by this principle by claiming that "marriage is not inherently sinful" (p. 81, line 25). In so doing, he makes two mistakes. First, he makes up a false category, i.e., those things that are "inherently" sinful--as if some things are sinful, but not inherently! A practice or relationship is either sinful or it is not! Marriage is inherently sinful if that marriage violates God's will! Herod's marriage (Mk. 6:17) was in violation of God's law and therefore "inherently" sinful. Polygamous marriages are "inherently" sinful because they are in violation of God's laws. A marriage is or is not inherently sinful, depending upon whether it is one that God recognizes as being in harmony with His will. Secondly, the author shifts the issue from adultery to marriage. The real issue regarding marriages contracted prior to baptism is whether they violate God's will. If a marriage violates God's will prior to baptism, which by definition is one that is out of harmony with Gen. 2:24 and Matt. 19:9, then adultery is being committed by the parties involved. Adultery is inherently sinful! The marriage will remain adulterous until it is ended--whether or not the parties de-

cide to be baptized (Mk. 6:18; 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 13:4).

F. The author finally gets around to stating what he's been working up to all along (but which he has failed to establish with each successive point): "aliens have no law of marriage and divorce other than that which is bound upon them by the light of conscience, and, from a civil point, those bound upon them by civil law" (p. 81, line 29--p. 82, line 2). But the author simply has not presented evidence to warrant such a conclusion. God's original marriage law was and is addressed to all people (Gen. 2:24). Christ's application to the question of divorce is addressed to all people (Matt. 19:9). Paul's application to questions of sex, celibacy, and non-Christian mates is addressed to all people (1 Cor. 7). Scripture harmonizes beautifully and need not be subjected to the fragmentations of the author.

When the author states, "unbelievers violate no law applicable to them when they divorce and remarry" (p. 82, line 3), he virtually leaves non-Christians in a situation where no matter what they do pertaining to marriage, no matter how bizarre they may conduct their lives in regards to divorcing and remarrying, they cannot be guilty of sin in God's sight--according to the author! If not guilty of sin, then their marital entanglements are approved of God! But, even the author would agree that, what God approves in marriages between non-Christians, He condemns in marriages between Christians! The author would, no doubt, show no hesitation in quickly asserting that God is no respecter of persons. But such is not evident from such an ungodly doctrine!

Where is the scripture that teaches that non-Christians are subject to civil law? The author has sought to use scripture to support his notion that non-Christians are subject to the so-called "law in the heart," but where is his support for asserting that non-Christians must comply with civil law?

The author's "distinction...between a legal relationship and an inherently sinful act" (p. 82, line 5) is purely fictitious with no shred of scriptural support whatsoever. A relationship is "legal" either to God or men or both. If legal before God, then the relationship is not "inherently sinful"--whether viewed by men as legal or not. If a relationship is illegal in God's sight, it doesn't matter whether men view it as legal or not, it is "inherently sinful"! Yet the author implies that God accepts man's definition of whether a relationship is legal! If legal in man's sight (e.g., homosexual relationships), and if the ones involved are non-Christians, then such is not "inherently sinful." Such is the inescapable conclusion of the author's "logic."

G. If "God's moral order" (p. 83, line 2) was and is "in the beginning that man

and wife become one flesh" (p. 83, line 3), and if such applies to "saint and sinner alike" (p. 83, line 4), and if "that principle may be violated" (p. 83, line 5)---then non-Christians can be guilty of sin when they divorce and remarry in violation of divine law, and the author's whole case falls! If "that principle may be violated" (p. 83, line 5--i.e., the principle of one man for one woman) by sinners as well as saints, then such a law must be addressed to sinners as well as saints (Rom. 3:19), and again, the author's whole case falls! The author wants to have it both ways. He wants to say that non-Christians do no wrong when they divorce and remarry in violation of divine marriage law, and thus need no "counseling" (p. 82, line 8), since not amenable to it. Yet, he also wants to hedge and say that non-Christians are hurting themselves when they "break" or "violate" God's intentions and will suffer the consequences (p. 82-83), and so ought to be encouraged to have only one marriage (p. 83, line 15ff). Which is it? Either the non-Christian is guilty of sin in divorcing and remarrying, or he is not!

Conclusion

Thus far, the author has spent 86 pages in an effort to substantiate his case. Yet he has failed to demonstrate non-Christian amenability to a so-called "law of conscience." He has failed in his effort to employ Rom. 2:15; 5:13 and 1 Cor. 9:21 to support his false notions. He has failed to handle God's word correctly in his attempt to set Matt. 19:9 and 1 Cor. 7:15 in opposition to each other. There simply is no biblical support for the theory that seeks to exempt non-Christians from obligation to obey Christ's will!

Chapter IV Endnotes

¹ Maurice W. Lusk, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Teachings of Jesus and Paul (Atlanta: Guild of Scribes, 1982), p. 120.

² Helpful discussions of the perfect tense in Greek include H.E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1955), pp. 200-05; C.F.D. Moule, An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 13-16; and Ray Summers, Essentials of New Testament Greek (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1950), p. 103.

³ Moule, p. 13.

⁴ Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol II (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 279.

V. Fornicators In The Church

A. The author begins his final section delineating three functions of church discipline based on 1 Cor. 5 (p. 85, line 10). As long as he stays with Scripture, he does well, for he rightly notes that divine purpose of preventing the spread of immorality and preserving the purity of the church (p. 85, lines 11-12). However, the author again resorts to his own fallible human reasoning and so contradicts these very points drawn from Scripture by stating, "We are too worried about keeping the church clean" (p. 88, line 9)! The Bible says we're to be very worried about keeping the church clean--even to the point of mourning when we fail to do so (1 Cor. 5:2,8,12; Eph. 5:27). But the author says we're too worried about keeping the church clean! We must again choose between what the Bible says vs. what the author says.

B. The author sets Matt. 13:47-50 in contrast to 1 Cor. 5:6 and proceeds to conjure up his own uninspired explanation as to why the two passages do not contradict each other. He says, in the first place, that the sin was "undisputed" in 1 Cor. 5 since "it was not what might be referred to as a case of legalized adultery" (p. 87, line 19). Notice the author's use of "might." Where in the world did the author come up with this notion? Certainly not from the Bible! The author has presumed that God makes a distinction between adultery and adultery! There's "illegal adultery" and then there's "legalized" or "technical adultery" (p. 88, line 25)--which the author thinks is okay! Nonsense! Paul used the term "porneia" (1 Cor. 5:1) which is simply "fornication," i.e., illicit sexual activity regardless of kind.¹ There's no such distinction in Scripture as the author purports. To God, adultery is adultery. Sin is sin. Paul does not bring up the Gentile's view of the sin in order to suggest that this sin was more sinful than the author's imagined "technical" adultery. Paul mentions "even the pagans" in order to stress to the Corinthians their absolute negligence in acting on the case of the fornicator. As Brother G. C. Brewer wrote:

"An inspired apostle, however, would not evaluate a deed according to the pagan sentiment and tradition. When a deed was sinful according to God's law, it was no uncommon thing for Paul to point out the egregiousness of it by showing that even the heathen reprobate it. He did that in this case, but he first condemned it as fornication."²

We have no authority to classify or pick and choose which sexual sins we're going to deal with. Any sin, unrepented of, must be confronted by faithful Christians in light of biblical teaching on church discipline. The author is "going beyond what is written" (1 Cor. 4:6) when he invents an alleged differentiation in types of adultery.

In the second place, the author suggests that the sin of the man in Corinth was ongoing and not from his past (p. 87, line 23). Obviously, if he ceased the relationship in the past, there would have been no need to deal with the situation in the present. By definition, discipline is exercised in the context of sin that is persisted in by the impenitent. The "bad" mentioned in Matt. 13:48 are bad for the very reason that they do not repent of their evil. So there is no distinction to be drawn on this point between Matt. 13 and 1 Cor. 5. The author thinks he has a real point when he maintains that the church at Corinth did not have to decide whether a legitimate divorce had taken place in the past (p. 88, line 27). Yet, how does the author know this? Such is another example of his reliance upon argument from silence! The author ignores the fact that the man in question and his father were members of the community whose background was by no means unknown. The author also ignores the fact that ascertaining the marital eligibility of persons who wish to become Christians is not nearly as difficult as he envisions. He is apparently so ready to accept anyone into the church that he's never had experience applying Matt. 19:9 to such situations. If he had, he would know that it's a relatively simple thing to merely ask: "did you put away your previous companion because of that companion's sexual unfaithfulness?" Let's face it--people out of the church who have broken previous marriage relationships KNOW why they did so! They know what was in their mind when they divorced! When unencumbered by wild, speculative theories invented by false teachers, such individuals can state point blank whether they divorced and remarried for fornication! But the author fancies it's just not that easy. He believes "all of the facts needed to render a righteous judgement" (p. 89, line 6) are gone forever--"buried" (p. 89, line 7)! In other words, people can remember everything from their grade school playmates and first grade teacher's name to their first automobile and the time and place when they were bound together in holy matrimony---but they can't remember why their marriage broke up!! Ridiculous! People know why they dissolved their marriages and they'll tell you--everything from "well, we just couldn't get along" to "we just didn't love each other, but we're still good friends"! The author might wish to minimize the simplicity with which God's truth may be applied by arguing that people may lie or misrepresent their past marital circumstances. They may, but such is hardly an argument against attempting to apply God's marriage law to all men! God will no more hold us accountable for reliance upon the word of such individuals as He will our reliance upon the word of individuals who come wishing to place membership stating that they were baptized for the remission of sins 20 years in the past. In fact, you may be fellowshiping a fornicator every Sunday without knowing that he is committing fornication. But such is

hardly a violation of 1 Cor. 5:11).

Notice that the author's own statement can be used against him. He holds that Matt. 19:9 does apply to two Christians. Suppose two Christians come to the church where the author preaches, noting that they were divorced and remarried to other Christian mates "decades before" (p. 88, line 28) while they themselves were Christians. The author would have to make a "judgement" (p. 88, line 30) even with his doctrine and take the word of the parties involved. It is simply untrue that the author's doctrine assumes people innocent while the teaching with which he disagrees assumes the opposite (p. 89, lines 1-2). "Clouded memories" (p. 89, line 8) can affect the validity of baptisms as much as marriages, but is certainly no argument against requiring both baptisms and marriages to conform to God's will.

So the author's proposed explanations for reconciling Matt. 13 and 1 Cor. 5 fall short. In reality, both his doctrine and his negative attitude toward brethren who seek to keep the church pure as God commands imply that Matt. 13 does contradict 1 Cor. 5. But, in actuality, the author completely misrepresents the teaching of the parable of the net in Matt. 13:47-50. If this parable is an allusion to church discipline, as the author believes, then the Bible flatly contradicts itself--the author's attempted explanations notwithstanding! In fact, in the parallel parable of the tares (Matt. 13:24-30), the householder absolutely forbids the servants from uprooting the weeds (13:29). So if the parable of the net is an allusion to church discipline as the author maintains (pp. 87-88), then Paul commands in 1 Cor. 5 what Jesus condemned in Matt. 13! The truth is, the author misses the teaching of Matt. 13 just as he did the teaching of Rom. 2, 1 Cor. 7, et al., in his effort to piece together his false theory on divorce and remarriage.

What is the teaching of Matt. 13? In this chapter, Jesus uses the phrase "kingdom of heaven" in its broader sense, i.e., the rule, reign, and authority of God in the world at large.³ Thus, the "seed" (i.e., word of God) in the parable of the sower (13:1-23) is sown in the world at large and not strictly in the church. In the parable of the tares (13:24-30), both good seed and weeds are sown in the world at large. In fact, Jesus states directly that the "field" in which both wheat and tares are located is not the church but "the world" (13:38). Thus the "world" (vs. 38) and the "kingdom" (vs. 41) are the same locus in the parable. But "kingdom" in vs. 38 is the church and is placed in contrast to those who have never submitted themselves to Christ's universal rule, i.e., children of the evil one. The teaching, therefore, that Jesus seeks to convey is that Christians are not to take physical measures to exterminate non-Christians. Jesus was condemning the attitudes and actions demonstrated by numerous persons,

from the apostles (cf., Lk. 9:54-55) to the Crusaders, Spanish Inquisitors, and Salem witch hunters.⁴ As Paul declared, "What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?" (1 Cor. 5:12). Contrary to the author's imaginings, Paul immediately enjoins the absolute necessity of judgement within the church (i.e., concern to keep the church clean!): "Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. 'Expel the wicked man from among you.'" (1 Cor. 5:12-13). Bro. McGarvey corroborates this understanding of the parable and declares the author's position to be inconsistent:

"The most common interpretation of this parable makes its chief significance depend on the prohibition against pulling up the tares lest the wheat should be rooted up with them, and supposes it to teach a lesson of caution in church discipline. Some understand the parable as prohibiting all exclusions from the Church, and others, with less consistency, understand it to prohibit exclusions only in doubtful cases, as the exclusion of one would lead to the exclusion of others who are more worthy, but who sympathize with the guilty party. The latter view is condemned by the very premises on which it is based: for it was not until the tares were unmistakably known as such, that the question about plucking them up was raised. If the exclusion of any from the Church is prohibited, it must be those who are known to be children of the wicked one, and the conclusion comes into direct conflict with the teaching both of Jesus and the apostles on the subject of withdrawing from the disorderly.... There are also two other insuperable objections to both of the views above stated. In the first place, Jesus makes the servants of the householder, who made the proposition to pull up the tares, and who were the reapers of the harvest, represent, not the officers of the Church, but the angels of God.... In the second place, this interpretation ignores the fundamental rule, that when Jesus himself expounds a parable, his exposition must be accepted without modification. Now, in his exposition he passes by this prohibition and gives it no part whatever in the significance of the parable. It is true, that gathering out the tares at the end of the world implies that they will be allowed to grow until that time, but it implies nothing at all as to whether such of them as can be shall be excluded from the Church."

So it is in the parable of the net. This parable is not a discussion of church discipline and has absolutely nothing to do with such. In fact, the basic point that Jesus is dealing with is the judgement day--hardly a fitting passage for the author to make use of in his attempt to exempt adulterers from church discipline! Both the parable of the tares and the parable of the net are dealing with the final separation of the wicked from the righteous and the eternal fate of the wicked, i.e., the fire of hell. Thus the action of the net being let down into the lake is not something that is going on now via Christians who fish for men with the gospel (p. 88, lines 1-10). This is more of the author's preconceived bias grasping for support of his theory! Jesus Himself said the action of the net being pulled ashore and its contents sorted "is how it will be at the end of the age" (Matt. 13:49). Whom do we believe? The author says, this is people being "encircled by the gospel net" (p. 89, line 29). But Jesus said, "this

is how it will be at the end of the age." It is Jesus' parable! Let's permit Him to interpret it! Matt. 13:47-50 is saying exactly the same thing that Jesus said in Matt. 25:31-46. He describes the judgement in both passages at which "all nations" (Matt. 25:32) will be "gathered" (vs. 32--like the net of 13:47) before Him, i.e., "the world"--not just the church. Thus the author's attempt to discourage appropriate handling of those in the church and those who seek acceptance into the church without appropriate severance of past illicit relationships has no scriptural support.

C. Next the author seeks to minimize the danger to the purity of the church posed by those who are accepted with "questionable marriages" (p. 89, lines 13-14). Notice that the author is making a tacit admission regarding the status of non-Christians. He describes "those who have complicated their lives by previous divorce and remarriage" (p. 88, line 20) as in possession of "questionable marriages"! Prior to this point, the author has argued that multiple divorce and remarriage for the non-Christian is perfectly acceptable and in no way "sinful" since Matt. 19:9 does not even apply to him. But now the author describes the divorced and remarried non-Christian's marriage status as "questionable"!

Regarding the notion that the purity of the church may be endangered by the acceptance of such, we really need give no response. God has already answered this question! The author wants to answer this question his own way by minimizing the potential threat of adulterers to the church's purity. But God said, "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough" (1 Cor. 5:6)! The author says, "No God, you're too worried about keeping the church clean. Permitting those with illicit marriage relationships into the church will not endanger her purity." Again, whom do we believe--God or the author?

The author implies that concern over the permeating effect of yeast (i.e., "questionable marriages") is unfounded and "hardly seems to be a solid footing" (p. 90, line 21). In spite of the fact that the author and God disagree over whether fornicators pose a threat to the church's purity, the author demonstrates negligence in his representation of this biblical principle. The yeast illustration given in 1 Cor. 5 is not designed to suggest that if the church did not withdraw from the fornicator, all of the members would likely run out and take their father's wives. Rather, the leavening principle spoken of here and in other passages (e.g., Gal. 5:9) refers to the laxity and softness toward sin that is engendered by such tolerance. Other members would, in effect, be encouraged in their own inclinations to yield to the flesh. They would feel less compelled to live faithful, godly lives--after all, "if he can live with his stepmoth-

er, I can lie a little; that's not as bad as what he's doing." The author totally ignores or misses this important biblical principle and virtually mocks those who take God's words seriously concerning the danger of permitting any sin to go on in the church without godly confrontation. His examples of liars (p. 90, line 6) and those involved in premarital sex (p. 90, line 11) have no merit, since Paul is saying that any sin that is persisted in, unconfessed, and unrepented of should come under the discipline enjoined in 1 Cor. 5. All sin poses a threat to the spiritual safety of the church and should not be permitted into the church unconfessed. Liars, pre-marital fornicators, petters--and adulterers--are all threats to the purity of the church unless they publically confess their sin and turn from it. The fact that sin has occurred is not what Paul says poses a threat to the church's purity. It is sin that is not stopped! Sin that is permitted to continue! Relationships that are maintained without God's authority!

When the author manifests disdain for the practice of asking questions about prior marriages (p. 90, line 10), he again paints himself into a corner. Would the author have us to believe that faithful Christians have no obligation in God's sight to make sufficient inquiries so that an active "hitman" for the Mafia is confronted with his condition before he is immersed? Surely the author sees the need for such an individual to sever his business relationship prior to becoming a Christian in harmony with biblical teaching on repentance! But the author simply cannot see the need for adulterers to sever their illicit marriage relationship either prior to immersion OR AFTER! Likewise, should two homosexuals walk down the aisle of the church building where the author preaches wishing to be baptized, would the author ask them any questions before fellowship is extended?? We don't have to interrogate people prior to baptism. But we do have to teach them to observe all things that Christ commanded (Matt. 28:20)! We do have to encourage them to "count the cost" (Lk. 14:28)! And when we live at a point in time when certain sins are more prevalent, we're only fooling ourselves, shirking our responsibility, and demonstrating tremendous spiritual cowardice when we shy away from bringing God's word to bear upon the lives of people with whom we come in contact!

But the author says "questionable marriages" can be no threat to the church's purity "when the act is totally unknown" (p. 89, line 21). Perhaps not. However, the author repeatedly poses unique situations in an effort to lead us into false generalizations. In reality, very, very few adulterous relationships are located in a vacuum with no one privy to their existence. Besides, once we do come to a knowledge of such a situation, our previous ignorance of the fact is no justification for refusing to obey God and act in accordance with His word. The author offers one of his "case history"

examples when he describes a couple who was in the church apparently for years (since the husband came to be considered for the eldership--p. 89, line 29) before they received knowledge of what the Bible teaches about the qualifications of elders and divorce and remarriage. Surely, the author is speaking of some denomination where such crucial subjects are preached on once in a "blue moon"! In any case, the author has no point. We could postulate all day similar instances where people are involved in sinful habits, practices, and relationships which are persisted in after conversion. We could arouse the sympathies and emotions of readers over heart-rending, sorrowful circumstances. But such would not change one iota what the Bible teaches about those who live in fornication (Col. 3:5-7). The author is completely dodging the question of whether God is pleased with those who form an illicit marriage relationship and continue that relationship. Instead, he's belaboring the superfluous question as to whether such is okay as long as no one knows about it!

D. The author's next "case history" which is supposed to substantiate his position concerns a couple who dissolve their marriage, each later remarry, and seek admittance into the church (pp. 91-92). Like the evolutionists who seek to foster their ungodly theory by pumping it up with eons of time, the author seeks to cloud the issue, throw dirt into the air, and evade biblical truth and its clear application to even the author's hypothetical case. People know why they put away their first mates and remarry. People also know, if unjustly put away, at what point in their own mind they made the decision to cease attempting to effect a reconciliation and to remarry--and they know why they are remarrying. Jesus' words in Matt. 19:9 are plain and can be applied to every situation. We may have to take people's word for what has transpired in their past, and they may lie to us, but they may lie about any other sin and they may misrepresent their baptism. All God expects of us is to tell people straight what His word says. When non-Christians with whom we're studying confess their marriage to be out of harmony with that word, we must act accordingly--even if such causes some to be "shut out of the kingdom" (p. 92, line 24). The author seek to arouse sympathy for the effects of sin. But such is never going to make those effects go away! The author seeks to portray the consequences of sin as so tragic that we will just want to utter a few magic words and "poof"--those consequences will all go away and non-Christians, who have lived ungodly, rebellious, and inexcusable (Rom. 1:20) lives of disobedience to God's will, will experience no ill effects but will, in fact, "live happily ever after"! The author is simply grossly ignorant of the character of God and His word! No matter how many theories are invented in an effort to permit people to

avoid the consequences of their sin, the rule of God written into the fabric of the universe remains: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows" (Gal. 6:7)! Adam and Eve could be forgiven by God—but the lasting consequence of their sin was permanent expulsion from the Garden! Moses could be forgiven of his sin—but being permanently barred from the land of promise was a lasting consequence and penalty for his sin (Deut. 32:51-52)! The complainers could be and were forgiven (Numb. 14:20)—but the effects of their sin was such that not one was ever permitted to see the promised land (Numb. 14:21-23)! A fornicator today may well be forgiven for his past indulgence of the flesh, but such does not mean that he may well suffer and die the horrible and agonizing death that comes from syphilis of the brain! And so it is with those who fly in the face of God's marriage laws; they may be forgiven, but they may also get themselves into such a fix that they will have no choice but to live single and celibate the rest of their life on earth. Such is in no way a reflection upon God's justice or mercy. Rather, such is a reflection of man's stubborn disobedience and rejection of what God designed to be for man's good.

The author is living in a fairytale world which is miles away from the biblical world, the real world where God is Sovereign Lord. He bemoans the "life of celibacy" that is imposed upon some (p. 92, line 21,24). He implies that such a condition is simply too difficult to expect! In so doing, he places himself with the majority of all people who have ever lived who feel that Jesus' teaching is simply "TOO HARD" (Jn. 6:60). But it was Jesus who described the way to life as arduous and narrow—and it was Jesus who said FEW would negotiate it (Matt. 7:14)!! But dissolving marriages and living a life of celibacy is simply not the unbearable burden which the author makes it out to be! In fact, it's quite ironic that the author thinks it's asking too much to require the very people who have broken their first godly marriage asunder to end their subsequent illicit marriage! The heart-rending concern over severing a relationship is a bit ill-placed and misdirected. The fact of the matter is, God is the kind of being who would require marriages to be broken up (Ezra 10)! It is in no way out of harmony with His character and essence to require relationships to be severed (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 6:17). Absence of physical companionship and sexual gratification are not the unbearable burdens that the author imagines. Everyone from a soldier who is separated from his wife for years to a paraplegic who has the desire but is incapacitated can live celibate lives and be pleasing to God. Let's face reality now. If the God of Heaven expects us (should the circumstances require it) to give up everything we own; or to go to prison for the rest of our lives in behalf of the truth; and even to give up the very life in our bodies by dying an excruciating, horrible death to remain faithful---surely,

SURELY, SURELY, we would not balk at the idea of foregoing a marital relationship, if circumstances required it!!!

E. But the author insists upon confusing former adulterers (who pose no threat to the purity of the church) with current, impenitent adulterers (who are unquestionably a threat to the purity of the church). He says "the church is not kept pure by refusing to admit those honest enough to confess that they have sinned" (p. 93, line 10). Mere confession of sin is hardly the biblical antidote to sin! The Corinthians of 1 Cor. 6:9-11 had ceased their sin, i.e., the homosexuals, fornicators, and adulterers had severed their illicit relationships!! They did not merely confess that they had sinned! The Bible repeatedly declares that confession alone is not sufficient in God's sight! Confession must be accompanied by repentance and a changed life (Prov. 28:13; Isa. 55:6-7; Matt. 3:8; 7:21; Lk. 6:46)!! But the author thinks it quite sufficient to merely encourage the fornicators to say "I'm sorry," and then obligate the church to accept them in the midst of their sinful relationship!

The Bible method by which "Christ will take care of the cleansing" (p. 93, line 15) is a solid, impartial, properly executed program of church discipline. Christ cleanses His body through those who are "spiritual" (Gal. 6:1). The author just can't seem to accept the church's function of "cleansing" herself. He thinks "cleansing" is something Christ will do (at the end of time), while "discipline" is something the church is to do now. Nonsense! Paul used a word that means precisely the same thing as "cleanse" in 1 Cor. 5:7--PURGE. The church discipline that is alluded to so often in the New Testament (e.g., Rom. 16:17; Gal. 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; Tit. 3:10; 2 Jn. 9-11) has as one of its divine purposes the cleansing of the church by means of the expulsion of impenitent members. God wants cleansing done now!

F. The author next poses solutions to the problem of "marital breakup" (p. 93, line 22ff). Unfortunately, the author overlooks the one solution to the problem which his theory simply will not permit him to accept: the preaching of the gospel to the whole world--Christian and non-Christian alike. The ONLY way our country is going to be turned around and the family stabilized and initial, scriptural marriages kept intact is through vigorous and widespread dissemination of the gospel of Christ (including Matt. 19:9)!! The only means of altering the course of human history and bringing people into harmony with Christ's will is through a firm, uncompromising presentation of Christ's laws to a lost and dying world. The only way the church of our Lord is going to be saved from the deadly effects of a permissive society and the false teaching of

well-meaning but misinformed preachers is through a return to the vibrant proclamation of biblical truths that once characterized our beloved brotherhood. And even then, the author fails to recognize what God has always recognized---that when it's all said and done, the majority of all people will spurn those saving truths and remain hard-hearted, impenitent, and disobedient (cf., Matt. 13:18-22). But the author's theory completely overlooks this historical truth and seeks to make it possible for both the hard-hearted and impenitent to enter the church.

We've already shown that the author misconstrues the essence of the Old Law when he labels it as "of the flesh" (p. 94, line 24). Such is a false, unbiblical analogy. Jesus condemned (not tolerated--p. 94, line 27) hearts of stone that divorced for any cause (Matt. 19:8). It is simply ludicrous to suppose that hardened, stony hearts were ever acceptable to God or can possibly be ushered into heaven.

G. The author theorizes beyond belief when he suggests that "it is not the sexual content of the act itself" (p. 96, line 29) that makes fornication and adultery sinful! He says, "the act of fornication and adultery is no different than the sanctioned act of intercourse in marriage" (p. 97, line 1)! Incredible! Where in the world did the author come up with such imaginings? Where is his biblical support for such theorizing? Such fallacious presuppositions set him up for an equally unfounded and unbiblical assertion: "fornication and adultery are not like homosexuality" (p. 97, line 2)! But the author has no ghost of a chance proving such absurd postulations from the Bible! He completely fails to comprehend the very meanings of the terms he so lightly uses. We've already shown that "homosexuality" IS "fornication"! Homosexuality is one form or type of fornication. While "there is no time or circumstance under which homosexuality can be right" (p. 97, line 3), NEITHER CAN FORNICATION AND ADULTERY EVER BE RIGHT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!! Regardless of the author's previous attempts to get us to swallow such ungodly nonsense, God has never sanctioned any sexual sin! Every sexual sin, without exception, is sinful for the simple reason that it violates God's law. Yet, the author meanders through a maze of trying to define fornication and adultery as sinful on the grounds of nebulous and invented supposition (e.g., "because these acts are no different than the sanctioned act"--p. 97, line 5; "commitment, total, life long commitment"--p. 97, line 15). When one rejects God's definition of sin, one must invent his own definitions.

Then the author slips in an allusion to "God's Word" (p. 97, line 29). Such is hardly appropriate when the author has gone to so much effort to convince us that people out in the world are not even subject to God's word!

H. I must beg to differ with the author's conclusion that "the divorce dilemma will never be solved...until more time is spent on teaching about these things than is spent on what to do about divorces that took place before one's heart was changing from stone to flesh" (p. 99, lines 25-28). The problem is not to be solved by ignoring the sin into which people have plunged their lives. The problem will be solved when people are confronted with the stipulations and conditions of Christ's law and pricked to the point that they will be willing to endure hardship in order to become and remain a disciple of Christ. The problem will be solved--not by softening the demands of the gospel--but by a loving, and firm presentation of the commandments of God--by calling upon all men everywhere to repent by changing their minds and their lives.

Chapter V Endnotes

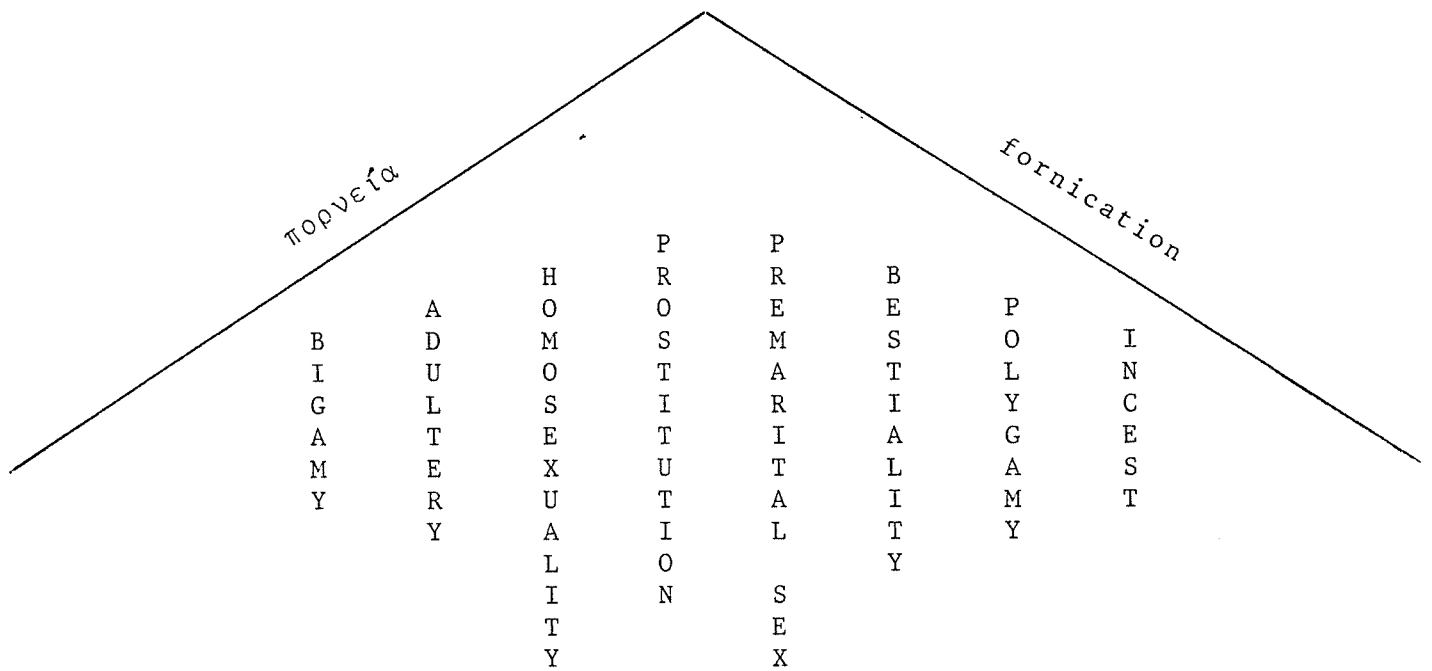
¹ Any reputable Greek tool would have saved the author alot of trouble in his effort to invent varying degrees of adultery and misconstrue the relationship between "adultery" and "fornication." "Fornication" is the broader term and simply refers to illicit sex activity. Joseph Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 532, defines porneia as "illicit sexual intercourse in general;" James H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982, Reprint), p. 529, defines porneia by noting that it "...originally meant 'prostitution,' 'fornication,' but came to be applied to unlawful sexual intercourse generally;" W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1966), p. 125, defines porneia as "illicit sexual intercourse;" and F. Wilbur Gingrich, Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 180, defines porneia as "unchastity, prostitution, fornication, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse." Thus, all adultery is fornication, but not all fornication is adultery. Study carefully the illustration which portrays the biblical picture of the relationship of "fornication" to various other words (p. 68).

² G. C. Brewer, "The Corinthian Case," Gospel Advocate (4 December 1961): 1158.

³ God's rule or authority is so stated in Matt. 28:19 and Phil. 2:9-11 and so depicted in Lk. 19 in the parable of the pounds. In the parable, God's kingdom and kingship extend over even those who are unwilling to recognize and submit to that rule.

⁴ As J. W. McGarvey wrote in The Fourfold Gospel (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Foundation, n.d.), p. 339, "This parable and its explanation are sometimes urged as an argument against church discipline, but such a use of them is clearly erroneous. The field is not the church, but the world, and the teaching of the parable is that we are not to attempt to exterminate evil men. Any who attempt to exterminate heretics in the name of Christ by physical force are condemned by this parable."

⁵ J. W. McGarvey, A Commentary on Matthew and Mark (Delight, Ark.: Gospel Light Publishing Co., 1875), pp. 123-24.



πορνεία (i.e., "fornication") is a broad term that applies to every kind of illicit sexual intercourse.

Appendix: The Biblical View of Divorce and Remarriage (and some concluding comments)

The biblical view of marriage, divorce, and remarriage is relatively simply. One need only examine the passages that speak directly to the subject--rather than go everywhere else in Scripture (e.g., Rom. 2:15). All one need do is read the following passages and God's will regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage will be crystal clear: Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:16; Matt. 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7; Heb. 13:4. While these are not all the passages that allude to the subject, these do provide the reader with God's complete will on the matter.

In short, God intends every single person upon the face of the earth to have but one mate. The only way any person is divinely permitted a second mate while the first mate is still living, is if that first mate is put away (i.e., divorced) because of his/her sexual unfaithfulness. God's will is that simply, and it took no more space to indicate such than it does to specify God's will on baptism. This is the case regardless of the attempts by false teachers to meander through scores of pages in an effort to validate their false notions regarding "faith only" or "non-Christians do not have to obey Matt. 19:9."

Conclusion

There has never been a time in the history of humanity when God permits the human heart or conscience to function as the criterion for defining sin. Neither Gentiles prior to the cross nor non-Christians living today have ever been without divine criteria for defining sin in their lives. This side of the cross, those divine criteria reside in the New Testament laws of Christ. In Matt. 19:4-6, Jesus articulated God's general marriage law which applies to Christian and non-Christian alike. In Matt. 19:9, He made application of that general marriage law to the specific situation of divorce. In 1 Cor. 7:10-11, Paul restated the same general marriage law of God which Jesus had stated in Matt. 19:6. In 1 Cor. 7:12-15, Paul made application of that general marriage law to three specific situations about which the Corinthians had asked and to which the Lord had made no specific allusion. Paul's application does not contradict Jesus' application!

God's laws apply to all people. This obligation includes the terms of entrance into the kingdom, but it also includes laws regarding worship (e.g., singing, partaking of the Lord's Supper) are laws that apply to all people. All people are obligated to par-

take of the Lord's Supper (though not eligible until immersed). If only one passage could be found that directs non-Christians to worship God, the doctrine that exempts non-Christians from New Testament laws would be destroyed. John in the Revelation (14:6-7) depicts Christian and non-Christian alike being commanded to worship God. Likewise, when Paul stood before Felix and sought to enjoin the gospel upon he and Drusilla, Paul did not dwell merely upon the plan of salvation. He also discoursed upon "self-control" and "righteousness"--items which include everything from divorce and remarriage to the Lord's Supper. So, yes, non-Christians are subject to all of God's laws, whether they choose to obey or not.

When non-Christians, who have been guilty of long lists of sins prior to baptism (Rom. 1:29-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-6; Rev. 21:8), arrive at the point where they wish to obey the law of Christ, they may become a Christian. But they must face up to the condition of their own life due to their own sin. Coming into the church will not and cannot absolve people of their former disobedient lifestyle by somehow making all of their problems, hardships, and illicit relationships magically go away. No, they will have to burn some bridges, sever some ties, give up some practices or relationships in order to follow Jesus. Jesus Himself foretold that marital relationships would be the cause of some failing to enter into His kingdom (Lk. 14:20). Yet, the doctrine being taught by some in the church today has trouble envisioning people having to go through any hardship or give up anything to become a Christian! After all, in their purview, prior to baptism nothing counts!

Yet, if non-Christians are subject only to a subjective "law on the heart," then when African society with their cultural customs or Islamic peoples with their Koran, in all good conscience, engage in polygamy, such would be acceptable to God since they are merely acting in harmony with their own heart. Likewise, pagans living in this country are acting in accordance with what their heart is urging them to do when they commit adultery and other forms of fornication. Such is precisely why God's law is so foreign to their thinking--because they follow their own hearts! Yet, in line with the theory, their polygamy and adultery are not sinful!

In other words, non-Christians do not sin when they act in harmony with their conscience--though such action violates the law of Christ. This would mean that non-Christians are in need of God's mercy and forgiveness only for actions which they commit that violate their own conscience. They are, therefore, not in need of God's mercy for doing things that are in harmony with their conscience (though such violates Christ's laws). But here we see another glaring hole in this theory. Paul said he was in need of God's mercy for deeds which he committed which were not violations of his

own conscience (Acts 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:13)! If Paul did not violate his own conscience (i.e., the supposed "law written on the heart"), nor did he violate the law of Moses (Phil. 3:6--"blameless"), yet needed God's mercy for specific sins, he could only have been guilty of violating the law of Christ!

So it is today. When non-Christians fornicate, use God's name in vain, etc., they often have no idea, no inkling of the fact that they're doing wrong. They violate neither civil law nor their own conscience when they do such things. Yet, they are guilty of sin because they are violating the law of Christ.

What a great day for the church it would be if all persons who promote false theories that are as serious as the one we've been examining would repent and turn from their misdirected path! How wonderful for the cause of Christ if we could once again "speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1:10). It is my personal plea and desire, that the author of the manuscript which has been under review would find it within his heart to return to a pure presentation of the gospel of Christ that the God of Heaven may be glorified and a lost and dying world pricked with the truth that saves.

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THE DIVORCE DILEMMA AND THE NEW COVENANT

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PREFACE

It can hardly be denied that the church and society both face a divorce dilemma of threatening proportions. Sociologist, as well as religionist, recognize the threat which the ever-increasing divorce rate poses for society. But even more so must the church recognize the threat which divorce poses for it. The church has responsibilities not to pragmatic solutions, but to truth. She cannot loose where God has not loosed. But then neither must she bind where He has not bound.

Divorce and what to do about it were a problem in the days of Christ's personal ministry. They remain so today. The position held by some of the best know preachers and writers in the churches of Christ, the position most widely received in the past, is that all people, aliens and citizens of the kingdom alike, are amenable to the law as stated by Christ during His personal ministry. Consequently, any person desiring baptism must put away any mate except the first unless the first is either dead, or had been put away because of an act of fornication committed after the marriage was contracted. This is the position with which I grew up. It is the position which I inherited. It was the position which I advocated for the first several years of my ministry. I assumed that I could substantiate it by God's word. But, as John Stuart Mill has said, "There is the greatest difference between presuming an opinion to be true because, with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation." My own personal search for the truth has led me to the conclusion that the position which I inherited is not in harmony with God's word. I did not arrive at this position over night. It came gradually as the result of many hours of study and meditation, lost sleep, and prayer. I do not expect, nor desire, that anyone accept my conclusions after one reading. I desire simply that the views set forth in this work not be assumed false nor the opposite assumed true to avoid having that position refuted. Every Christian owes it to himself to examine the

arguments on both sides and keep the wheat and throw away the chaff.

My search is for the truth. If I have missed it, I will consider anyone who will point out the error as a friend. I would pray that they would do it in the spirit of love and not judgement, not questioning my love for the Lord, my love for the truth, nor my motives for writing. It is not infrequently that those who challenge an entrenched position such as the one I am challenging is accused of having some ulterior motive in writing such as popularity, the desire to justify a friend or family member, the need to be different, or a host of other things. While unable to speak for others, I know that not one of these motives has any place in my heart. First, the position I take may make me popular with a few who have experienced divorce, but it will alienate me from many of my preaching brethren --brethren who carry far more influence, obviously, than the divorcees among us. Secondly, I have no family members or friends to whom the position which I take in this work would apply. Quite to the contrary, many of my friends and many of my family members disagree with me. It is a desire to preach the truth, whatever the cost, that motivates me to send this work forth. The more I have studied the subject, the more I have become convinced that the generally accepted position is wrong and shuts men out of the kingdom. I therefore have a responsibility to challenge it, not only for the good of those being denied entrance into the kingdom, but for the good of those who are denying them that entrance.

I could wish that the best minds of the brotherhood would read this in manuscript form for possible refutation. A published work becomes so permanent. Such, of course, is not possible. I send it forth, therefore, knowing that it is less than perfect in style, logic, organization, and thinking. I do not expect it to become a definitive work on the subject of marriage and divorce. I do pray that it will be an impetus for a deeper search for the truth.

Don Campbell

SIN WAS IN THE WORLD

"For until the Law sin was in the world"
Romans 5:13a

Those who take the Scriptures seriously have no difficulty in accepting the universality of sin. The apostle Paul wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). A universal means of salvation posits a universal need for that means. John the Baptist testified of Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). What was this sin of the world? Was it the guilt of Adam's sin which was inherited by his offspring? Was it some kind of nebulous, collective irresponsibility such as that imputed to all Americans because of the nation's treatment of blacks and Indians? Or, was this guilt personal, the result of transgressions committed upon the part of each individual of accountable age? Bonhoeffer has pointed out that the Bible speaks of the universality of sin¹ but says nothing of original sin. Carl Barth argued for the solidarity of all men in sin, but found no biblical support for teaching the biological² transmission of Adam's sin and guilt to his posterity via procreation. Men, either unknown or less well known to the modern theological scene have argued just as effectively for this truth without succumbing to the temptation to reduce the story of Adam to a saga which points to the experience of every man with sin. We shall take note of some of them as we progress. For the moment let us return to the fountainhead of truth, the Scriptures, for our search for the truth.

"Through one man," Paul writes, "sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned --for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's offense, who is a type of Him who was to come"

(Rom 5:12-14). Care must be taken here not to impute any more or any less blame to Adam than the Scriptures impute to him.

Some commentators hold that the death here spoken of is spiritual death and that the phrase "because all sinned" means that after Adam's transgression each person born into the world sinned upon reaching the age of accountability and in consequence died or was separated from God. Although true, that is not the teaching of this passage. The context simply will not permit such a theory. In verse fourteen, it is clearly stated that the death which entered the world and spread to all reigned from Adam until Moses even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam. Spiritual death did not reign over all the descendants of Adam. This is not to say that any one of them was free from personal sin; but they, like sons of God today, could live in spite of that sin. Spiritual death did not reign over them. Four examples are here offered from God's word:

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of

promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow-heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundation whose architect and builder is God (Heb 11:4-10).

None of these men is said to have been justified because of freedom from personal sin, but each one is declared righteous before God upon the basis of faith. Paul instructs us, "The righteous man shall live by faith," or as the footnote of the New American Standard Bible reads, "But he who is righteous by faith shall live" (Rom 1:17). It was as true of Abel, Enoch, Moses, and Abraham that they lived through their faith as it is of us.

Secondly, the text will not allow the death to be spiritual death unless one wishes to pronounce all dead spiritually as a result of Adam's transgression, for verse fifteen says, "For if by the transgression of the one the many died." To make the death of verses twelve and fourteen spiritual and that of verse fifteen physical betrays either a dishonesty or ignorance akin to that of the Jehovah's Witnesses who make the word "God" in John 1:1 "a god," that is a lesser deity, and the word "God" in John 1:2 "The God," or "Jehovah." The death which spread to all the world and reigned from Adam until Moses is the one that resulted from one man's transgression. Paul, speaking of Christ who had never been dead spiritually, writes, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive" (I Cor 15:20-22). The only death that we are ever to suffer because of Adam's sin is physical death.

Thirdly, not only did this death come as a result of Adam's transgression, but it is emphasized that it was a single transgression, the first one he ever committed. "The judgement arose," says Paul, "from one transgression resulting in condemnation" (Rom 5:16). Whatever sins Adam may have committed after his expulsion from the Garden, it was that one sin which he committed in the garden which brought about the death of the many.

The statement "and so death spread to all men, because all sinned," then cannot mean that all men die spiritually because all men, following the example of Adam, sin. This is not the death under consideration, nor is it the sin under discussion. "All sinned" means all sinned in Adam. It is no more difficult to see how all could sin in Adam than it is to comprehend that "through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him" (Heb 7:9-10). Moses Lard makes this comment on the passage in question: ["In farther confirmation of what is here insisted on, I call attention to the verb 'dielthen.' It is aorist; and as such, signifies momentary action in the past. The 'dia' denotes the thoroughness of the action. 'Death spread' --the whole thing was done at once. 'To all' --the spreading was thorough, not one escaped. But how could all this occur, unless, as already said, in and by Adam? When he sinned all sinned in him. With that sin death entered, entered at once and for all time, and entered for the whole human race. All this seems to be couched in the verb." ³]

Many find this interpretation objectionable for fear that it might lend credence to the doctrinal error of hereditary, total depravity. The truth, however, need not be distorted or avoided for fear of abuse. The possibility of abuse is inherent in every blessing and every truth. Because the biblical truth of the security of the believer is perverted into the false doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is no justification for the equally false doctrine of the probability of apostasy. Likewise, in reacting to the twisting of this passage to teach the doctrine of hereditary, total depravity one should not twist it in the other direction because of a fear of the first error. Lard continues

["But here it is proper to make a distinction. Sin by representation does not imply guilt, as actual personal sin does. It may both justify and demand the appointment of a penalty as in the case in hand, but no more. Hence no one of his posterity will ever, after death, be held responsible for Adam's sin. As to them, his sin will never, after death, be

brought into account. No notice will be taken of it. In their case, therefore, death is not the consequence of personal guilt, but of connection with a guilty parent. Accordingly, though we all die for Adam's sin, no one of us will ever be judged for it. For our own sins only, will we be judged." To this the Scriptures bear testimony. "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10).

Each individual's death, both physical and spiritual, is related to Adam's transgression, but Paul does not say that all become totally depraved and eternally separated from God as punishment for Adam's sin. What meaning, then, is to be attached to Paul's statement: "For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:19)? First, it is important to note carefully what the text does not say. It does not say that through the one man's disobedience the many were sinners. No personal guilt upon their part is implied. Nor does the text say that Adam's sin made them sinners. The text does say, however, that they were made or constituted sinners. The verb translated "made" is passive, and they therefore could not have made themselves sinners. Who constituted them sinners? The same one who constituted them righteous through the obedience of the One -- God. If one keeps in mind Paul's argument, he will not be led astray here. He has argued that as the result of one man's sin, all die a physical death. This is the extent of the condemnation which passed to all men. The justification to life (verse 18), then, is not referring to justification to eternal life, for that justification is by faith, but the fact that precisely what was lost in Adam is restored in Christ. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive...for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgement" (I Cor 15:22; John 5:28-29).

Adam's sin is the reason for my physical death, not because his nature was changed, but because the tree of life was withdrawn. One may illustrate this truth by the following analogy: If I transgress the laws of the land and am stripped of my citizenship and deported, children born to me after that time will suffer the consequence, but not the guilt of my transgression. The reason for ~~my death~~ then is "the one man's disobedience" which deprived him and me of the tree of life. The direct medical cause, on the other hand, may be cancer.

Adam's sin is the reason for my spiritual death --we are not in any position to discuss what would have been the case had Adam not sinned. We must deal with the reality that he did. Sin entered through him and I, like all of the rest of his posterity, have done no better than did he. So although Adam's sin may be said to be the reason for my spiritual death, my sins are the direct, moral cause. Paul wrote in Romans 4:25, "He was delivered up because of our transgression. That included Adam's transgression, but it is not limited to it. He says again, "And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgement arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification" (Rom 5:16). The many are ours --mine and yours. This explains the meaning of verse fifteen which says, "much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ, abound to the many." Christ's obedience unconditionally accomplishes for all the resurrection from the dead which will release them from the penalty imposed because of Adam's sin. But what about the many transgressions? Paul says, "much more did grace abound." ~~Christ's~~ ~~accomplishments go far beyond restoring what was lost through Adam's sin; Jesus'~~ ~~work also makes it possible for us to overcome the effect of our own sins which~~ ~~is spiritual death.~~ "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ...For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:1,5,8). That sentence which was passed upon us because of

our being in Adam is carried out when we die physically. The life lost in Adam is unconditionally restored in Christ. But personal sins demand personal faith. "But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith" (Rom 3:21-25a).

Having noticed the entrance of sin into the world, its penalty, and its spread, ~~we are now ready to consider the passage which forms the title for this~~

~~chapter: "For until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed~~
when there is no law" (Romans 5:13). It is imperative that we understand the basis upon which the charges of universal, soul-damning sin are based. We have proved that Adam's sin does not doom the soul of any one of his posterity. Now we read that sin is not imputed where there is no law. Since the Law of Moses came thousands of years after Adam, upon what basis were those living between Adam and Moses judged sinners? Or were they judged sinners?

This passage cannot mean that there was no sin or that it was not dealt with before the Law. The whole world was destroyed by the flood because God saw that every intent of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually. Sometime later, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were reduced to ashes because ten righteous people could not be found in the city. Paul says that the people living during the period had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's offense, but he did not say that they had not sinned. R. L. Whiteside, in commenting on the verse in question says: "R. St. John Parry, in his explanatory notes to the Cambridge Greek New Testament for Schools and Colleges, says the phrase in question 'equals just so far as there was law, there was sin...So I take "archi nomou" equals, up to the degree, just to that extent to which law was present.'"

To what extent was there law before Sinai? God spoke directly to certain individuals upon different occasions revealing His will to them, but this was not the full extent of law. Paul speaks of those who do not have the Law as doing "instinctively the things of the Law, these not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Romans 2:14-16). Paul does not say that all men will be judged by the gospel as the standard of judgement. But according to the gospel, all men will be judged. He has already said in verse twelve that some will be judged by the Law and some without the Law. God's moral order was established in the beginning, milleniums before the Law was given at Sinai. Certain moral principles were evident from the beginning:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather

than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God have them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them (Romans 1:18-32).

Paul has marked those guilty of these sins as worthy of death. If there were no law or rule to which they were accountable, this condemnation would be unjust as well as a contradiction of Paul's own statement that "where there is no law, neither is there violation" (Romans 4:15). Paul's point here is that ~~although the Gentile world did not have the Law, there was a very high moral standard evident to them from the beginning~~ It should not be surprising that they perverted this standard which depended upon uninspired, verbal transmission, for the Jews corrupted the Law given through Moses and engraved upon stone. The truth is still being perverted today. But, as J. B. Phillips has written, "However far from the ideal our own practice may be, we have an automatic respect for such things as honesty, sincerity, faithfulness, incorruptibility, kindness, justice, and respect

for other people." ⁶ Even the champions of the new morality recognize that there must be a moral code. Denying that a standard set of answers can be supplied for any moral question, proponents of the new morality do supply some standards. A responsible approach to all decisions and the rating of persons above things are two absolutes laid down by those who claim that there are no absolutes. ⁷ Although many people, in attempting to free themselves from the concepts of sin, righteousness, and judgement to come, have changed the word "sin" to something which is less offensive to the guilty, the existence of moral evil in the universe is seldom questioned. No one can be heard saying, "This is a perfect world, let's accept things as they are." There is much disagreement as to what needs to be changed and what is the best way to change it, but there is little disagreement that there need to be some changes.

Some, of course, wish to trace this moral consciousness to superstition and fear or, more recently, to the Judeo-Christian ethic. However, history and observation bear testimony to the fact that societies which have had no contact with the Bible have some very highly developed moral codes. As a matter of fact, no people, no matter how primitive, have ever been found who did not have a moral sense, a concept of right and wrong. We do not expect these codes to measure up to the high standard of morality laid down in the New Testament, but they do reveal that ~~all do have the work of the Law~~ ~~engraved upon their hearts to some extent~~. There are always deviant individuals in these societies, but no society is totally libertine or promiscuous. Long before God gave the Law at Sinai, many of the principles found in it had been codified for the rule of man. Many suggest that the Law then is not from God, but the adaptation by Moses of the various codes extant at the time. However, God in no way indicates that the Law given through Moses was new or unique except in the fact that it formed a covenant with the fleshly descendants of Abraham, a covenant of privileges and responsibilities. Paul tells us in his

Galatian letter that the Law was added --to the promise given to Abraham-- because of transgressions (Gal 3:19). In the Roman letter he teaches that the Law served the purpose of clearly defining sin. "Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good (the Law), that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful" (Rom 7:13). ~~The~~

~~Law made nothing morally wrong or right. Rather it clearly defined what was~~

~~morally right or wrong up to the extent intended by God.~~ Because of hardness

or heart and the fact that those to whom the Law was given were incapable of receiving the full revelation of God's will, the Law permitted some things which later would be disallowed. ~~But the Law did not make anything morally right~~

~~or wrong. That was morally right or wrong determined the nature of the~~

~~covenant.~~ Paul was not just theorizing when he said that man knew better than

to live the way he was doing and that there were some who had ~~the Law written upon their heart~~ --not perfectly, but then neither do we today even with the revelation of the Word. It should be noted also, that one may have the word written upon his heart to the extent that he is condemned, but not saved.

The Code of Hammurabi which was probably in existence at about the time Abraham lived or shortly thereafter affords us a highly developed example of the ability of man to discern right and wrong, while at the same time giving us an example of his tendency to stray without a written Law from God. We include some extracts from that code. One may compare them with the Law given at Sinai for similarities as well as differences. The numbers refer to the paragraphs of the Code.

8

1. If a citizen has accused a citizen and has indicted him for murder and has not substantiated the charge, his accuser shall be put to death. (Compare Deuteronomy 19:16-21)
2. If a citizen in a case has borne false witness, and does not substantiate the statement which he has made, [and] if that case is one warranting the death-penalty, that citizen shall be put to death.

14. If a citizen steals the child of a citizen, he shall die.

(Compare Deuteronomy 24:7)

22. If a citizen has committed a robbery and is caught, that man shall die. (Compare Exodus 22:1-4)

117. If a debt renders a citizen distrainable, and he has sold for money his wife, or son, or daughter, or if anyone is sold for service in lieu of debt, they shall work for three years in the house of the purchaser or their distrainer.

In the fourth year they shall attain their freedom.

(Compare Deuteronomy 15:12-15)

129. If the wife of a citizen is taken cohabiting with another male, they shall both be bound and cast into the water; if the husband of the wife reprieves his wife, then the king may reprieve his servant. (Compare Deuteronomy 22:22)

130. If a citizen has forced a citizen's wife, who has not known a man, and has lain in her bosom, and they seize him, that man shall be put to death; that wife shall go free.

(Compare Deuteronomy 22:23-27)

131. If the wife of a citizen is accused by her husband, but she has not been caught lying with another male, she shall take an oath of the god and return to her house. (Compare Numbers 5:11-31)

132a. If a citizen has been carried away captive, and there is sustenance in his house, his wife...shall guard her property and shall not enter the household of another.

133b. If that wife does not guard her property but enters into the household of another, they shall convict this wife and cast her into the water.

134. If a citizen has been carried away captive, and there is no sustenance in his house, his wife may enter into another household, and no crime may be imputed to this woman.

135. If a citizen is carried away captive, and there is no sustenance in his house, (and) before his re-appearance his wife has entered the household of another, and borne children, (and if) subsequently her husband returns and comes to his city, that woman shall return to her former husband, but the children shall follow their (natural) father. (Compare Deuteronomy 24:1-4)
136. If a citizen has known his daughter, they shall cause that citizen to leave the city. (Compare Leviticus 18:6-18)
155. If a citizen has chosen a bride for his son, and his son has known her, and he himself (the father) lies in her bosom, they shall seize that citizen and bind him and cast him into the water.
157. If a citizen after (the death of) his father lies in the bosom of his foster-mother who has borne children, that man shall be turned out of his father's house. (Compare Leviticus 18:8 and I Corinthians 5:1)
196. If a citizen has destroyed the eye of one of citizen status, they shall destroy his eye. (Compare Leviticus 24:19-20)
209. If a citizen has struck the daughter of a citizen, and she miscarries, he shall pay ten shekels of silver for her miscarriage.
210. If that woman dies as a result, they shall put his daughter to death. (Compare Exodus 21:22-25)

The Commanche Indians, for another example, had a well defined moral code which recognized at least nine offenses, some punishable by death. A few of these may have been peculiar to their own society, but many of them are universally recognized evils such as murder, adultery, theft, and failure to fulfill a contract.

In the area of sexual morality, no society has ever been found that was

totally promiscuous in its behavior. In most cases the norms are quite liberal when viewed from a biblical perspective, but in others they very closely adhere to the biblical norm, although there is no evidence to suggest that the people involved were ever in contact with Christianity. One very interesting example is that of the Tasadays, a Stone Age people of the Phillipine Islands. These recently discovered people are a far-cry from the storybook image of primitive savages who will kill and eat their unwary visitors. Until they made contact with a hunter from the outside world they didn't even kill the forest animals. What is more remarkable and to the point in question, however, is that in spite of the fact that the men outnumber the women by two to one, they do not share women. To the question of whether or not they practiced this custom came a reply that the so-called civilized societies need to ponder. "No. A man and woman stay together until their hair is all white." ¹⁰

Men often abuse the truth. For this reason, Paul wrote, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh" (Galatian 5:13). Perhaps this is what had happened at Corinth which prompted Paul to write, "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone should have his father's wife" (I Corinthians 5:1).

But here in this primitive tribe of the Phillipines is found a code of sexual morality that not only exceeds that of the civilized world at large, but, to our shame, that of much of the church.

Another example is worth considering here because it demonstrates that although societies may deviate greatly from what God intended, they still have a very rigidly enforced moral code. In the Eskimo society, a man would readily lend his wife to another for sexual purposes. This did not mean that adultery was not recognized. In fact, if the same man who had been granted this privilege on one occasion assumed these same privileges without the express consent of the husband on another occasion, it was adultery. ¹¹

To return to the question "To what extent was there law before Sinai?" we might answer, ~~to the extent that all who committed any of the sins listed in Romans One were without excuse for doing so.~~ Before the Law came there was enough evidence against the world to convict it of deliberate disobedience to God and to condemn it to total destruction.

~~The next question, then, is: What was the purpose of the Law?~~ Because of man's refusal to have God in his knowledge, he continued to sink deeper and deeper into sin. God purged the world of sin through the flood, but the first thing Noah did after beginning his new life in this renewed environment was get drunk. God had promised never again to destroy the world by water, but ~~in an attempt to preserve righteousness on the earth,~~ he called one man, the son of an idol worshiper, and instructed him to leave his country and kindred and go into a strange land which God would show him. This man, Abraham, acted upon faith and was blessed by God. It was through one of this man's descendants that God promised to bring about salvation for those who would follow Abraham's example of faith.

This promise was actually a covenant made by God with Abraham. Paul says of it: [4:13-14] "Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as referring to many, but rather to one, 'and to your seed,' that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of promise. Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator, is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law

had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus might be given to those who believe" (Galatians 3:15-22).]

Paul has told us that sin was in the world before the Law, but sin is not imputed where there is no law. ~~We found this to mean that men are charged with~~

~~sin only up to the extent of applicable revelation.~~ We may better understand this by looking at a specific prohibition under the Law and its new covenant counterpart. The Law said, "You shall not commit adultery." At the same time, it permitted polygamy and divorce, two evils proscribed by Christ. Jesus teaches that to put away one's mate and marry another except for the cause of post-nuptial unchastity is a violation of God's moral order established in the beginning. Yet, not even those in whose hearing He spoke were reckoned adulterers if they had put away their first mate and married another. ~~Jesus' words did not go into~~

~~effect until after His death,~~ ^{But you just said that there was effect from the beginning} for "a covenant is valid only when men are dead"

(Heb 9:17). The Jews living under the Law could be guilty of adultery, but only up to the extent of its prohibition under the covenant which they lived. Likewise, those not under the Law of Moses could be guilty of adultery, but only up to the extent that such was recognizable without special revelation. Various evidences point to the fact that outside the Law of Moses, adultery is recognized as having sexual intercourse with a woman whom another is living with or

claiming as his wife. An incident in the life of Abraham, the father of the faithful illustrates this point.

When Abraham sojourned in Gerar, he passed his wife off as his sister and Abimelech, King of Gerar took Sarah as his wife. But God came to Abimelech in a dream and informed him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married" (Genesis 20:1-18).

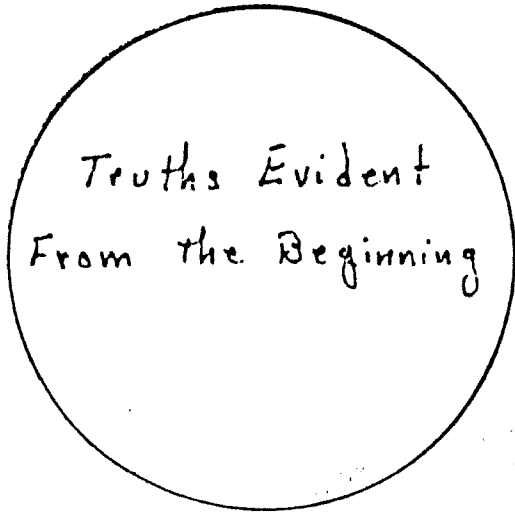
The injunction "You shall not commit adultery" did not make adultery a moral evil. It already existed. Paul says, "The Law was added because of transgressions" (Galatians 3:19). Every moral precept laid down by Moses was already being

violated. The Law was added to the promise for that reason. So Paul writes, "Sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful" (Romans 7:13). The Law served the purpose of defining sin in clear terms, a definition at which one could not arrive instructed only by that which is manifested to the mind unaided by special revelation. Paul writes, "And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Romans 5:20). How did the Law increase sin? Lard writes, "Human nature was just as sinful before the law entered as after; and men committed fully as much wrong. But thousands of acts, which before the law, were simply unknown as wrongs within themselves, were, by the law, determined to be sins."¹²

But as holy and righteous as the Law was, it did not reveal the full extent of the transgressions against God's moral order. Those to whom the Law was given were children, unsuited for the full burden of spiritual manhood. Paul speaks of this: "But the Scripture has shut all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the Law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:22-24). Jesus, speaking on another subject once said, "The earth produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature head" (Mark 4:28). This aptly describes the progressive nature of revelation. The revelation of God's perfect will came gradually, as God, in His wisdom ordained.

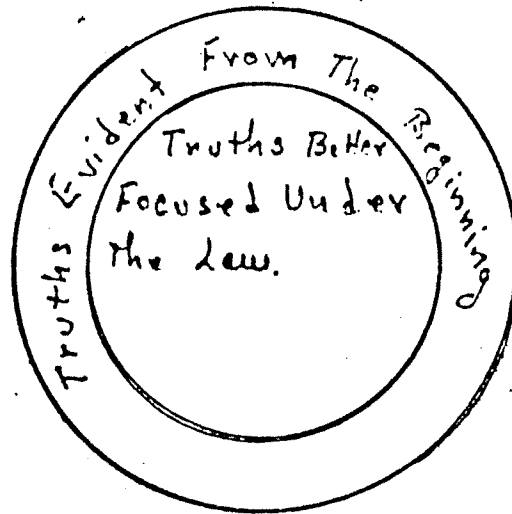
Perhaps it is only coincidental that there have been three great revelations from God --the blade, the head, the mature grain. Paul speaks of these three revelations in the first few chapters of Romans. First, he speaks of certain "evident" truths. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the

truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:18-32). Certain things were and are evident as being wrong. For example, ~~although there was, to our knowledge, no specific legislation against murder, Cain knew without any doubt that what he was doing was wrong.~~ Unrighteousness suppressed the truth; and men, refusing to have God in their knowledge, became futile in their speculations and darkened in their hearts. As a result, God allowed them to go their way, filling up their iniquity (Genesis 15:16). * There was made available then a body of truth which man did not follow, but suppressed because he refused to have God in his knowledge.

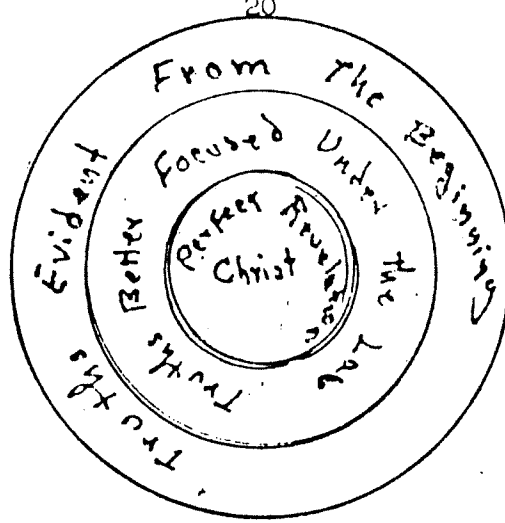


Truths Evident
From the Beginning

The second revelation of which Paul speaks is the Law. "And the Law came in that sin might increase" (Rom 5:20). The Law came in and showed many things to be sin that had not been previously recognized as such, or the truth concerning them had been suppressed. The Law given at Sinai was more definite, more restrictive, than the law that had previously existed. Our next circle then is smaller.



Finally, Paul speaks of the revelation of grace. "But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20b-21). John also writes, "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). In Jesus Christ is revealed God's perfect moral and spiritual order, completely in focus; "For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9). Our next circle is the smallest.



To sin is literally to miss the mark. Those who trade the morality of the Law for that which is revealed in Christ with the hope of earning salvation by complying with the higher code are really dooming themselves. If man could not unerringly hit the larger target, how can he unerringly hit the smaller? Clearly then men do not become lost when they hear the gospel although they do compound their guilt when they reject it. ~~Had there never been a~~

~~revelation from Christ, man would have been judged guilty of missing the~~

~~mark. The mark is the cross of Christ.~~

~~mark~~ Had there never been a law given at Sinai, man still would have been lost. His guilt would not have been so aggravated, but he still would have been without hope. Paul writes, "Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hands --remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11-12).

A distinction must be made between judgement and justification. Paul does not say that those justified before the Law was given at Sinai were justified by living up to the truths which God had made evident to them. Nor does he say that those justified under the Law were justified by perfectly keeping it, ~~although they would have been justified had they perfectly kept~~

~~it (Romans 10:1-4)~~. Paul's argument throughout the Roman Epistle is that

"all have sinned," and "all who have sinned without the Law will also perish

No
K. 17:0

without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law" (Romans 3:23; 2:12). He offers two examples of justification, ~~one before~~
~~the Law and one under the Law.~~ *WHAT ABOUT CURING MOSES' LAW BUT NOT JESUS?* Abraham was justified by faith before the Law and David was justified by faith under the Law (Romans 4:1-8). ~~The self-evident~~
~~truth known from the beginning~~ were sufficient to condemn man. A law could not be given that could bring righteousness --not even the Law of God from Sinai. Rather it only increased the guilt of those to whom it was given. The fact that man denied or ignored either revelation did not invalidate them. Paul charges the Gentiles with walking "in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness." And again, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Ephesians 4:17-19; Romans 1:18-20).

In Christ and His teachings there is revealed God's perfect glory and holiness. For that glory and holiness His children are to strive, but Christ did not come that sin might increase. That was the purpose of the Law. God had already "shut up all in disobedience." The coming of Christ was to enable Him to show mercy to all (Romans 11:32).

No man was made a sinner by the coming of Christ. This had already been taken care of long ago. Sin entered the world through Adam. With the flood gates opened, sin picked up speed like a mighty torrent rushing to the sea. Faster and faster it plunged down the valleys of time. The check dam of Law was placed in its roaring path, but sin increased the more. "But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, that, as sin reigned in death,

even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 5:20-6:2).

The following chart illustrates the history of sin from the beginning of time to Sinai as it relates to the subject under discussion.

BEGINNING

Adultery was imputed only up to the extent that law was present. It was present to the extent that to have sexual intercourse with a woman who was married to another man was recognized as adultery. (Genesis 20:3). Divorce, polygamy, and concubinage existed and were ~~unregulated by~~

Sin Was In The World But Sin Is Not Imputed When There Is No Law

SINAI

~~specific recorded revelation from God~~

Gen. 1:27 + 2:24
are specific regulations
that condemn polygamy,
divorce, & concubinage

Footnotes

1. Makers of the Modern Theological Mind: Doetrich Bonhoeffer, Dallas M. Roark; Bob E. Patterson, Editor, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1972, p. 32.
2. Makers of the Modern Theological Mind: Karl Barth, David L. Mueller; Bob E. Patterson, Editor, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1972, p. 127.
3. A Commentary on Romans, Moses E. Lard, Gospel Light Publishing Co. Delight Arkansas, p. 168.
4. Ibid, p. 169
5. A New Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Saints at Rome, Robertson L. Whiteside, Privately Published, 1945, p. 104.
6. Your God Is Too Small, J.B. Phillips, The MacMillian Co., N.Y., N.Y., 1965, p. 70.
7. You and the New Morality, James A. Pike, Harper and Row Publishers, N.Y., N.Y., 1967, p. 140.
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WHATEVER THE LAW SAYS

"Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law"

Romans 3:19

God's moral nature has not changed from the beginning. That which falls short of the glory of God today fell short of the glory of God in every age.

~~What God intends for man today, He intended for man from the beginning.~~ When

the Pharisees tried to corner Jesus by pointing out that the Law permitted divorce, Jesus instructed them, "but from the beginning it has not been this way" (Matt 19:8). God intended for Adam to have one wife and Eve to have one husband as seen in the words, "The two shall become one." God created but one wife for Adam and one husband for Eve. Monogamy was the prevailing practice for several generations, with Lamech, in the fifth generation from Cain, being the first recorded polygamists. ~~God also intended~~ for Abraham to have one wife, Moses to have one wife, David to have one wife, Peter to have one wife, and every other man who wanted a wife to have one and only one.

~~But it is clear that God's intentions have not been carried out always,~~

~~nor have those who violated those intentions been reckoned sinners~~

~~in all cases.~~ Even those in whose hearing Jesus spoke were not reckoned adulterers although they may have put away their mate for causes other than fornication. They could indeed be guilty of adultery, but only up to the extent of the covenant under which they lived. This precept which Jesus revealed is clearly placed in contrast to the Law of Moses which permitted divorce.

Consequently, the words of Jesus did not become binding until that covenant was ratified. "A covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives" (Heb 9:17). James D. Willeford has

written: ["But others explain away the teaching of Christ in Matthew 19:9 by suggesting that since it was spoken before the death of Christ, it is not binding upon us. If this teaching of Jesus is not binding now, it never has

been binding on anybody and never will be binding on anybody. Jesus did not make laws contrary to the law of Moses and demand that people obey them while the law of Moses was ^{still} in force. The law of Moses was in force, and Jesus taught people to obey that law, in the very last week of His life. (Matthew 23:1-3). ~~We conclude, therefore, that the teaching of Christ in Matthew 19:9~~

~~was not binding on anybody before the death of Christ.~~ Suppose it is not binding now. We ask, When will that teaching be binding on people? It will not be binding in the next age; for in that age they neither marry nor are given in marriage. (Mark 12:25.) So, if the teaching of Jesus in this verse is not binding now, it never was and never will be binding on anybody, and Jesus is found guilty of making an idle statement." ¹

Not only did Jesus live and die under the Law, but His personal ministry took place during a preparatory period of the kingdom just as did John's. Both John and Jesus came preaching "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2; Mark 1:14-15). Campbell urged in the Campbell-Maccalla debate: "Observe, the law and the prophets contained all the old religion, and continued to teach the Jews until John preached repentance and reformation. But since John came, the new religion or kingdom of God is preached; something this, assuredly, different from the law and the prophets; else this saying was deceptive and pernicious." ² Wallace writes, "The whole of the Sermon On The Mount was therefore prospective and contemplative of the new covenant, the new dispensation and the new kingdom, from Pentecost to the end of time." ³

In the same manner, ~~there were violations of the law prior to the law of Moses that were not charged against the violators.~~ "For until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13). As previously shown, this means that only to the extent that law was present, sin was reckoned. This may be seen in the fact that ~~previous to that, there was no recorded law expressing God's will in this matter.~~ Moses did not, as some suggest, relax God's law. No law had been given. ~~that which~~

Although there

How do we know

26

God's Law?

was no recorded law concerning divorce. There was a law against adultery which was recognized as having sexual relations with a woman with whom another was living or married to at the time. The incident previously referred to in the life of Abraham illustrates this point.

When the Law entered in, God's moral order was not lowered. Quite to the contrary, sin and punishment were more clearly defined; and for those to whom it was given, many things were prohibited which had theretofore been passed over. Abraham's marriage itself would have been forbidden under the Law, for Sarah was his half-sister, the daughter of his father, but not of his mother (Gen 20:12). The Law strictly forbade such a union, saying, "The nakedness of your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born at home or outside, their nakedness you shall not uncover" (Leviticus 18:9).

Two truths are now obvious: God's laws are binding only upon those to whom they are given. And, God's laws are not retroactive, imputing something as sin which was not so reckoned at the time it was committed. The first truth is both stated and implied. First, we note some New Testament passages which teach that the Gentiles have never been held accountable for the Law given at Sinai. Paul writes, "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God" (Romans 3:19). Again, "For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their consciences bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Romans 2:12-16)

A careful consideration of apostolic preaching will illustrate the truth that "whatsoever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law." In Acts 14:15-17, Paul exhorts the men of Lystra, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, 'who made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them. And in generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.'" Paul made no appeal to the Law, charging them with violating the first or second commandments of the decalogue. He appeals to the very thing which he mentions in the Roman Epistle --that which God made evident in the creation.

In Athens, Paul was greatly distressed over the city's abundance of idols and, in addition to reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles, he reasoned with whomsoever he might find in the market place. The subject of discussion was Jesus and the resurrection. A door of opportunity was opened unto him as the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers invited him to the Areopagus to speak. Paul charged them with no sin with which they could not have been charged before either the Law or the gospel was inaugurated. He addresses them: ["Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respect. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.'" What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served with human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives life to all and breath and all things; and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for

for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through the man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:22-31).] Not one word was uttered about any acts which they had committed that were not in keeping with the Law of Moses. Again, he

appeals to those truths which are evident from the natural order of things.

Let God save to people (without His word) prior to Moses

It may be asked here "Why the Law then, if only a few people were subject to it and they were never able to find life through it?" Robert Milligan lists four purposes of the Law: The Law was given to the Jews for all the purposes of a civil government. Second, the Law was added to convince and to convict of sin. Third, the Law was given to prevent the universal spread of idolatry, by preserving among men both the knowledge and the practice of true religion, till Christ should come. Fourth, the Law was to give a pictorial outline of the scheme of redemption by means of types, symbols, rites, and ceremonies which were addressed to their senses. The Jews demonstrated a fundamental truth as they pursued a law of righteousness through works: "By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). Suppose that God had not given the Law and on the day of judgement someone should stand and argue before God that judgement was unfair. Had God only defined sin more precisely, spelling out its nature, consequences, and punishment, surely man would have kept that law. But Paul says, "The Law speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God" (Romans 3:19).

This was only one purpose served by the Jewish nation. Paul said that the Law was added to the promise given to Abraham until the seed should come to whom

the promise was made. That remnant which the Law, as a schoolmaster, was able to bring was that pregnant woman which gave birth to that male child, the seed of Abraham (Romans 11:5; Revelations 12:1ff). While Israel was laboring to bring this one into the world and demonstrating the weakness of the Law, the Gentiles were also serving a purpose.

Milligan says that their purpose was in "ascertaining whether or not Natural Religion is adequate to the wants of our fallen race." ⁵ Quite clearly they demonstrated that it was not. Rejecting God from their knowledge and professing themselves to be wise they became fools. First, they lapsed into idolatry by exchanging the glory of God for that of man. Milligan holds that their first step was the deification and worship of their ancestors. He refers to an article by Sir William Jones who argued "that all the principal gods of Europe, Asia, and Africa were identical, being nothing more or less than Noah and his three sons deified. As Noah begat Shem, Ham and Japheth, so Saturn was said to have begotten Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, and Brahm to have triplicated himself in Brahm, Vishnu and Siva." ⁶ The Old Testament indicates that ancestor worship was one of the errors into which Israel lapsed as a result of their association with the heathen peoples of Canaan. "They joined themselves also to Baal-peor, and ate sacrifices offered to the dead," says the Book of Psalms (Psalms 106:28).

Whether Jones and Milligan's theory is correct in all detail or not, the Scriptures do support the idea that the first step in idolatry was the deification of man. It was only a short step from this to deifying "birds and fourfooted animals and crawling creatures" (Romans 1:23). Man's objects of worship multiplied until the Hindoos have 333,000,000 gods, for they hold that every thing that has life has something of deity in it. This Pantheism is found in America today among the more extreme of the nature lovers. Other societies did not progress quite so far in their error, but stopped with Polytheism, as seen in the Athenians. The human mind often rebelled against such absurdities, but instead of seeking the one true God, it turned to

1] Skepticism. Milligan writes, ["This was the manifest tendency of philosophy among all the Gentiles who were not restrained by the traditions of their ancestors. Plato saw and felt this; and hence his earnest and repeated efforts to cultivate in the minds and hearts of the people a reverence for these traditions. 'We ought,' he says, 'always to believe the ancient and sacred words.' But notwithstanding his earnest appeals to antiquity, and his great zeal for the traditions of his ancestors, the fact is potent in all Greek and Roman history that from the death of Plato to the coming of Christ Skepticism was generally on the increase. Religion was tolerated by the state as a means of controlling and governing the passions of the multitude; but when Pilate contemptuously said to Christ, 'What is truth?' he expressed the common sentiment of most of the politicians and public men of the empire. How true it is, as well remarked by Mr. Locke, 'that in the time of Christ Philosophy had spent its strength and done its utmost.'" ⁷]

Guy N. Woods, in answer to the question "Are individuals and nations, who have only 'the light of nature' to guide them, disposed to move toward, or away from God?" has given us an excellent demonstration of the truth that we are contending for in this chapter.

Methuselah, at Adam's death, was approximately two hundred years old. When Methuselah died, Shem was nearly a hundred years old. At Shem's death Abraham was one hundred fifty years old. Thus through two persons only was it necessary for tradition to pass from Adam to Abraham, yet within this period the world generally lapsed into idolatry, and the idea of one true God was almost extinguished. We have here a demonstration, often repeated in the subsequent history of man, of the ease with which people lapse into idolatry and forgetfulness of Jehovah, the only true God, in the absence of a written revelation.

A review of man without the Bible reveals two remarkable facts: First, man's very worship makes him more wicked. One has only to delve into the history of Greece and Rome to find unmistakable evidence of this fact. The worship of heathen deities often was attended by the most enormous crimes, and consisted of the vilest and most shameful rites. Purity, chastity, and morality in general are unknown. Hence, the very worship men engaged in contributed to his further degeneration. The more a man honored the gods, the worse he was himself; the oftener he served them, the more wicked he became. This moral corruption reached its zenith in the sacrifice of human beings. Diodorus Siculus, and ancient historian, gives an account of two hundred children of the best families of Carthage being burnt to death in sacrifice to Saturn (the Moloch of the Old Testament). From a warning given by Moses to the Israelites (Deut. 12:31) we learn that this practice was common among the nations of the land of Canaan. *But Israel had a Bible & they did this too*

Secondly, civilization, in the absence of true religion, has offered no check to idolatry, thus demonstrating the truth of *Israel had true relig, yet was continually idolatrous*

Paul's observation: "The world by wisdom knew not God."

(I Cor. 1:21) A careful study of the history of nations reveals that in the earlier stages of their development religion is less degenerate than in the more advanced stages. From Plutarch we learn that Numa, an elderly Roman ruler, forbade the Romans to represent God under the form of a man or beast, and that for one hundred sixty years her temples were without images. But in afterstages, and during the period of her greater "refinement," Rome adopted the gods of almost every nation she conquered, and opened her temples to the grossest superstitions of the most barbarous people, persecuting

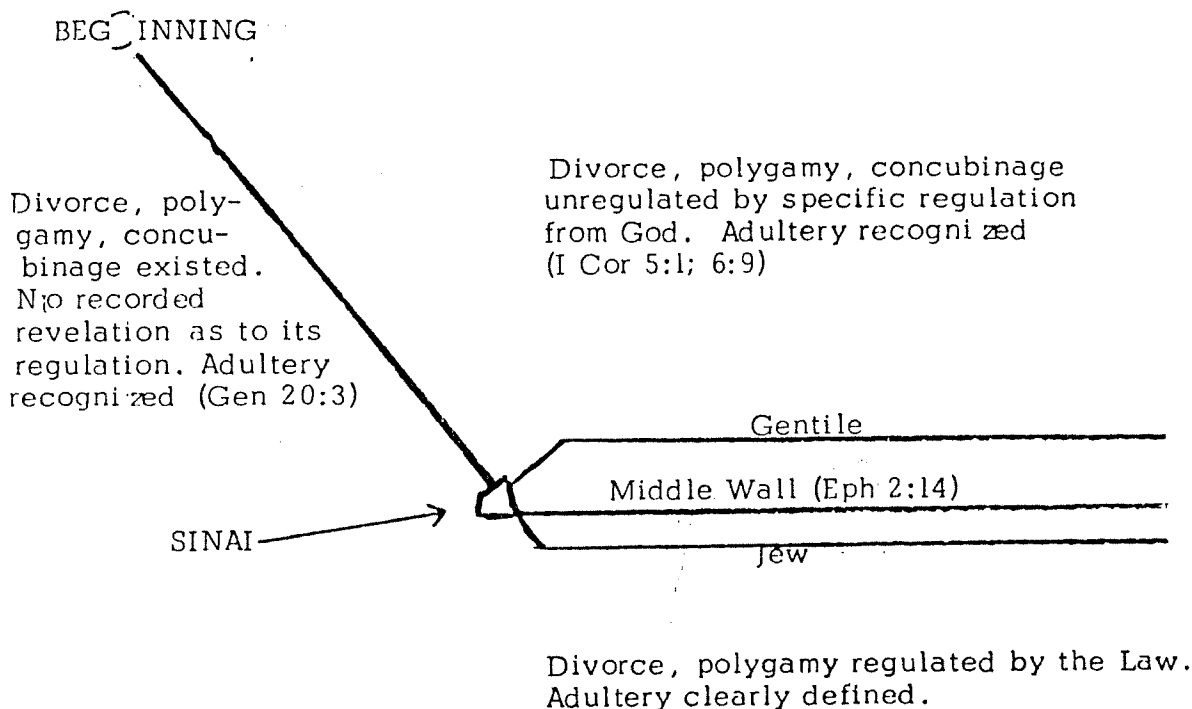
none but the Jews and Christians, who alone possessed the light of truth.

The first chapter of Paul's letter to the Romans accurately describes man's views of God, and what their own character is when they have lost the knowledge of divine revelation. He describes them as "vain in their imaginations," having their "foolish heart darkened," "professing to be wise, they became fools," "who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." (Let the reader turn to Rom. 1 and read especially verses 18-32.)

Those who are without the knowledge offered through divine revelation are without information on two vital and fundamental matters; first, they are ignorant of the one true God; secondly, they are ignorant of themselves. The Scriptures not only reveal to us God --his love, justice, and holiness; they also reveal man to himself. Were it not for the information vouchsafed to mankind upon its sacred pages, we would not know where we came from, why we are here, or where we are going when we pass from the scenes of this existence. Hence, the Bible unfolds to man his origin, purpose, and destiny. It lifts the origin of man from the accumulated dust of the ages and offers him the only sensible, plausible account of his beginning; it unfolds a system of ethics superior to that offered by earth's wisest philosophers; and it permits him to peer into the future and see outlined his destiny when he shall have shuffled off his present mortal coil. Whenever, in the long history of the past, man has ordered his life thereby, it has been on an exalted plane; in its absence he has quickly descended into the most corrupt paganism. Facts everywhere illustrate

the truth that in proportion to man's ignorance of its sacred teaching they become "vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts are darkened." Yet, so far from being aware of their folly, they "profess themselves wise," although they "are without understanding," glorying only "in their shame."

The apostle Paul wrote that God had shut both Jew and Gentile up in disobedience that He might have mercy upon all. The Jews would be judged by the Law and the Gentiles would perish without the Law. A dividing wall had been erected between the two. The Gentiles were called "those far away" and the Jews "those who are near," but they were all in sin. The Gentiles were "separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12). Paul also wrote, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now is working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too (we Jews) all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (Ephesians 2:1-3).



After the dividing wall was established, divorce, polygamy, incest, and adultery were clearly defined for the Jew. The Gentile condition was unchanged. He was bound by the same moral principles which bound him from the beginning. Adultery was recognized as having sexual intercourse with a woman married to another man. This is borne out by biblical and extra-biblical evidence. In The Corinthian Letter, Paul wrote, "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife" (I Corinthians 5:1). It has already been shown in chapter one that all societies past and present have placed restrictions upon extra-marital activities.

It may be judicious here to explore a specific case which, in spite of what Paul has said about the Law being binding only upon those to whom it is given, is sometimes set forth in an effort to prove that the Law of Moses concerning divorce was applicable to Jew and Gentile alike. It is argued that the case of Herod proves that Gentiles were amenable to the Law, for John the Baptist had told Herod, in reference to his brother Philip's wife, "It is not lawful for you to have her" (Matthew 14:3-4). It is argued that Herod didn't have a drop of Jewish blood in him and that John would have had no authority to make this charge if the Law had not been binding upon Jew and Gentile alike. First, it needs to be pointed out that divorce is not the sin in question. The Law permitted divorce. But the Law prohibited having sexual relations with a woman who had not been divorced from her husband. Secondly, it prohibited one from marrying his brother's wife even if he were dead, except in the case in which the man died childless. Philip was still alive and Herodias had borne him a daughter. Herod had literally stolen his half-brother Philip's wife with her consent. To take another man's wife was recognized as adultery over four hundred years before the Law was given. Be this as it may, the fact that Herod had not a drop of Jewish blood in his veins begs the question. Herod was an Idumaean by race. "Idumaea" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Edom." Herod then descended from Isaac through Esau. Although the

Israelites were commanded "you shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother," the fact remains that they were not members of the old covenant by birth. The Jewish historian, Josephus, says that John Hyrcanus (125 B.C.) "subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time thereafter this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews."⁹ McClintock and Strong state that "from the time of their conversion they remained constant to their new religion, looking upon Jerusalem as their mother city, and claiming for themselves the name of Jews."¹⁰ The Law had provided:

["But if a stranger sojourns with you, and celebrates the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land" (Exodus 12:48). It is important to note that there are two distinct words in the Hebrew for stranger. "The Hebrew verb gūr means 'to sojourn'; gēr accordingly means a stranger who has come to settle in the land, as distinguished on the one hand from ezrah, 'a homeborn' or native, and on the other from nokhrī or ben-nēkhār, which means a stranger who is only passing through the country...In Talmudical literature gēr always stands for proselyte in the New Testament sense."¹¹] The Jews, by the time of Christ, had come to consider themselves as guides to the blind and a light to those in darkness (Romans 2:19). The extent of their proselyting efforts is indicated by Jesus when He charged, "You travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matt 23:15). There were different classes of proselytes in the New Testament times. There were many who attended the Synagogue worship and kept some of the laws and customs. To distinguish them from full proselytes, they were called "men who feared God." The evidence gives a clear indication that Cornelius, the centurion, was one of these. He is designated

by the term applied to such Gentiles. He gave alms to the Jews, and seems to have been observing Jewish hours of prayer. In addition, when Peter was preaching to him and his household, he made reference to the testimony of the prophets, something which Paul did not do in later sermons to Gentiles who had no connection with Judaism. The Herodian family certainly did not manifest the devout nature of Cornelius, but then neither did many of the full-blooded Jews. They had, however, accepted Judaism in full, including circumcision and were to be treated as Jews just as if they had descended from Jacob instead of Esau.

Sin then was in the world before the Law of Moses was given, for Paul says, "It was added because of transgressions" (Galatians 3:19). When the Law was added to the promise made to Abraham, it did not effect those not of Abraham in any way, for whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law. Left to themselves, the Gentiles became more and more corrupt, but they are not charged with any of the sins that were peculiar to the Old Testament. Rather, they were held accountable for abandoning the knowledge of God and sinking deeper and deeper into sin.

Those to whom the Law was given were not reckoned sinners for having previously committed acts which became illegal under the Law. For example, the Law of Moses forbade foreign wives, but Moses had married one. God upheld him in his choice (Deuteronomy 7:1-5; Numbers 12). If one is disposed to argue that the Law did not specify that the Jews could not marry Ethiopian (or Cushite) peoples, this bit of legalism is demolished when it is observed that the seven prohibited nations listed in Deuteronomy Seven do not include the Egyptians nor the Moabites, nations from which Ezra commanded that wives be put away (Ezra 9:1-4). Jacob married sisters, something later prohibited by the Law. Would Jacob have been reckoned a violator had he survived until the Law was inaugurated? No, for the simple reason that this practice had not been legislated against at the time he did it.

The Law of Moses was given to the fleshly descendants of Abraham and to

them only. While others were accepted into the covenant by receiving the Law and circumcision, they were not evangelized in the New Testament manner; nor, in the beginning, were they even proselyted as in the time of Christ.

"Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God...For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law"

(Romans 3:19; 2:12).

Footnotes

1. "Divorce and Remarriage," James D. Willeford, Quality Printing Co., Abilene, Texas p. 10.
2. The Campbell-MacCalla Debate, Reproduced and Issued by The Old Paths Book Club, Kansas City, Mo. p. 173.
3. The Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., Foy E. Wallace Publications, Nashville, Tennessee, 1967, p. 11.
4. The Scheme of Redemption, Robert Milligan, The Bethany Press, St. Louis, Missouri, pp. 83-85.
5. Ibid, p. 201.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid, p. 207-208.
8. Questions and Answers OPEN FORUM, Freed-Hardeman College Lectures, Guy N. Woods, Published by Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee. pp. 303-304.
9. Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Xiii, 9, 1.
10. Cyclopedia of Biblical and Ecclesiastical Literature, McClintock and Strong, Vol 4, p. 211.
11. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol 4, p. 2467.

BUT I SAY TO YOU

"And it was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of dismissal'; but I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery"

Matthew 5:31-32

When Jesus uttered these words, He was setting His own teachings ~~in~~ ~~opposition to~~ the Law of Moses and not simply correcting rabbinical interpretations. Only one of Jesus' quotations -- "You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy" -- was a scribal interpretation and not the Law itself. This is made clear by the later actions of the Pharisees. Knowing His teachings, they came to Him testing Him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?" When He reiterated His teachings, they responded, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her?" (Matthew 19:3-8). ~~These new~~ ~~precepts~~ which went forth from the second mountain could not take effect as long as those which went forth from the first mountain, Sinai, were in effect. Roy Lanier, Sr. points out that if these precepts are not binding today, there never was or ever will be a time when they were binding. "This statement of Jesus is not part of the law of Moses, so not binding on anybody while the law was in force. It will not be binding in heaven, since there will be no marriage there. When is (was) the teaching of the verse binding?"¹

As Thomas B. Warren has written, "in the New Covenant, the strictness of the original law would be restored."² The question "Who is in the new covenant?" must be answered. The old covenant spoke only to those who were members of the nation created by that covenant. Does the new covenant address itself to any part of the nation created by its inauguration? Paul writes concerning the two sons of Abraham, "This contains an allegory: for these women are two covenants, the one proceeding from Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above

is free; she is our mother" (Galatians 4:24-26). One covenant was with the fleshly seed, one covenant is with the spiritual seed. The first covenant spoke to those under it, and the second speaks to those under it.

Some consideration must be given here to the covenant concept. The word "covenant" is "berith" in the Hebrew and "diatheke" in the Greek. The Old Testament records covenants between men as well as between man and God. However, there is a very distinct difference in the two. This is borne out in part by the word which the apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, chose to describe the arrangement between God and man. They could have used the word "suntheke" which would have meant a joint compact, one in which the terms had been negotiated. However, the word which they used carries the idea of a disposition or arrangement by one party with absolute power which the other party may accept or reject, but cannot alter or negotiate.

An analysis of Exodus chapters nineteen through twenty-four reveals that when God established the first covenant, the following order was followed: God set before them an offer --a proposal to be a husband to them. "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be my own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priest and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6). Israel accepted the offer with these words: "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" (Exodus 19:5). Moses brought their answer back to God who then gave the conditions and stipulations of the covenant which are summed up in the Ten Commandments. "So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments" (Exodus 34:28). After Moses received the Ten Commandments and all of the accompanying ordinances, they were presented to the people who again affirmed their willingness to accept them. "Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances;

and all the people answered with one voice, and said, 'All the words of which the Lord has spoken we will do!' (Exodus 24:3). The covenant was then ratified by the application of blood to both the people and the book. "For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.'" (Hebrews 9:19-20; Exodus 24:1-8).

But Israel did not keep their covenant and God declared, "Behold, days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them" (Jeremiah 31:31-32). This new covenant was not to embrace all of Abraham's fleshly descendants, but would include some of them as well as some of the Gentiles. The basis of this new relationship would be faith, not carnal descent or perfect obedience. Paul says, "But he who is righteous by faith shall live" (Romans 1:17, New American Standard Version, marginal reading). Those who walk in the faith of Abraham then are the new covenant people of God. Peter speaks of them as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people for God's own possession; and says, "For you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God" (I Peter 2:9-10).

Into the first covenant one was born by natural birth without faith on his part. He then had to be taught to know God and His will. Some of those born into this covenant came to have the Law which was written on stone engraved upon their hearts, but such was not essential to the covenant relationship. Milligan writes, "The ten fundamental precepts of the Old Covenant were written on two tables of stone, and the other laws and ordinances, most likely on skins prepared for the purpose. Many of the pious Hebrews no doubt, like

David, treasured up these laws in their minds and in their hearts; and, like Abraham they were justified by faith through the covenant concerning Christ. But multitudes of those who lived under the Old Covenant never received the impress of God's law upon their hearts. And hence it was always to them but as a letter inscribed on stone, and not as an indwelling and life-giving power inscribed on their hearts."

Into the second covenant and kingdom one is "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). The word must first be planted in the heart. When received in faith a spiritual conception takes place, followed by a coming forth from the water. This is essential to one's entrance into the covenant relationship. Milligan continues, "But not so under the New Covenant. For unless a man is begotten by the Spirit, through the word of truth, the good seed of the kingdom, he can not become a member of it, nor can he be a partaker of its benefits."

The book which we call the New Testament or New Covenant is not, in the strictist sense, the covenant document. The new covenant existed long before the document which we commonly refer to as the New Testament was written. Most scholars date the writing of the first epistle at about 50 A.D., almost twenty years after the new covenant began to be preached. The date of Matthew's gospel is placed all the way from 42 A.D. to shortly before 70 A.D. Mark was probably written in the fifties, but is dated from 40 A.D. to 75 A.D. Luke, John, and Acts were all written after Matthew and Mark. The new covenant is inscribed not upon tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. It is written not with the finger of God, but with the Spirit of God. This is not inspiration or memorization. God does not inspire every citizen of the kingdom. The writing upon the heart took place for several years as inspired men preached the gospel and willing men received it (See 2 Corinthians 3:1-11). Then this treasure was in earthen vessels. Now it is in an inspired Book. The writing takes place no less by the Spirit of God through the Book than it did through the verbal utterances of inspired men. The Book is an absolute

necessity, for without it, the will of God cannot be accurately inscribed on the heart --this was manifested by the Gentiles who, without a written revelation, departed entirely from God's way. But it is clear that the contrast between the old covenant document and the new covenant document is not between stone and "thin-o-pague India paper, bound in the finest French Morocco leather," but between tablets of stone and tablets of the human heart.

The same basic steps are followed when God establishes His covenant with individuals as was followed when He established it with Israel: There is a proposal by God (I will remember their sins no more), the stipulations are given (the gospel preached), the terms are accepted (one believes in Christ), the covenant is ratified by blood (one is washed, sanctified, justified in the name of Christ). Jesus first preached the principles and precepts of the new covenant during His life, but they did not come into force until after His death. After God raised Him from the grave and exalted Him to His own right hand, the ambassadors of Christ went forth preaching the terms of the covenant. The gospel is summed up in the words of Jesus: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). In other words, the terms are presented and we either receive them into our heart or reject them. We cannot negotiate with God or alter the terms of the covenant.

As the first covenant was inaugurated with blood, so is the second.

["Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.' And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. And according to the Law, one may almost say, all

things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment; so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, not to bear sin, to those who eagerly await Him, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:18-28).] In contrast to the old covenant, the blood is applied to each individual under the new as he accepts God's proposal. The sprinkling of blood occurs when we obey the gospel. Peter writes that Christians are "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood" (I Peter 1:1-2). The sanctifying work of the Spirit must have a limited application here because it comes before obedience and the sprinkling of blood. The work of the Spirit is that of setting apart the individual as Israel was set apart to be God's people. When the gospel is preached and believed a division always takes place. Believers are separated from unbelievers and receive the right to become children of God (John 1:12). When the gospel is obeyed, the individual is then sprinkled with the blood of Christ. ~~He is then~~ sanctified in conscience and ~~separated from past sins~~. "For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13-14).

Peter also associates baptism with the cleansing of the conscience. He writes, "And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you --not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience-- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21). Clearly, there must be some connection between the blood and baptism. The life, according to God's word, is in the blood. The expression "shedding of blood" means the same as giving one's life. A comparison of two passages will show this. The writer of Hebrews says, "A death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions" (Hebrews 9:15). In Ephesians, Paul writes, "In Him we have redemption through His blood" (Ephesians 1:7). Redemption is through His death and redemption is through His blood. To be sprinkled with the blood of Christ and to become united with His death are the same.

Paul teaches that we enter His death in baptism. "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3). Baptism then is the uniting of a penitent believer with the death of Christ, making him a party to the covenant. The gospel contains God's proposal to all mankind for entering into His covenant. When one accepts the proposal or gospel, he then becomes a citizen of the kingdom, amenable to the stipulations of the covenant. One who rejects the proposal or never hears the proposal remains in exactly the same state the Gentile world was in before the blood of the covenant was shed. He is separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Eph 2:12). One need not be under any covenant to be lost, but he must be in the new covenant to be saved.

Campbell argued, "For Christ did never command nations, indiscriminately, to observe his ordinances; but only his disciples. He commanded all nations to repent and believe the gospel, and then, as his disciples, he commanded them to keep his commandments." ⁵ Again, he said: ["Believers in Christ are the ONLY SONS of Abraham in this sense. His natural descendants are his sons in the common sense of all mankind. This is a plain matter-of-fact argument;

and it is all that is necessary to demolish the visionary fabric of my opponent. None but the sons of Abraham were ever interested in any covenant made with him or promise given to him. He has but two sorts of sons or children, his natural or literal descendants, of whom we are not. Now as we are not his natural descendants, we are not concerned personally in any promise belonging unto them, as such; and as we cannot be ranked among his faithful children until we are Christ's brethren, we are not interested in any promise made to his spiritual seed, until we are manifested to be such, by an avowal of that same kind of faith which he had." ⁶]

It is sometimes taught that the Gentile world became amenable to the new covenant when the gospel was preached to Cornelius. This is based upon the idea that the Gentiles were amenable to a law of patriarchy down to the time when the gospel was first preached to Cornelius. There are several errors in this theory. Much that is taught about the patriarchal period is pure supposition, for very little is revealed about God's dealings with man under this system. Patriarchy was not a law nor a religion. Patriarchy was a system of government. It encompassed man's religious, social, and moral existence, but was never called a law. Paul wrote, "For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Rom 2:12-16). Lard, following the Greek more precisely, omits the article before the word "law" and comments: ["Law is will, whether it respects accountable beings or mere inanimate things. But in the case of the former, to be binding it must be made known to them in

some intelligible form; and in the case of the latter, it is impressed on them. Accordingly, God's law respecting man is his will revealed to him. In this sense the word law is used in the passage before us. ~~It means any direct~~

~~revelation of God's will, and not exclusively the law of Moses. Hence to~~

~~sin without law is to sin without an immediate revelation. It is not to~~

~~sin without the law of Moses merely, but to sin without any direct expression of the divine will."~~

See Urd

Paul teaches that the Gentile world was without law. Uninspired men say that they lived under the law of patriarchy. As previously shown, the passage in Romans cannot mean that those before the Law of Moses or those after it to whom it was not given had no moral responsibility, but they had no direct revelation of God's will other than that which He chose to give to selected individuals. There was, in other words, no universal revelation other than the revelation made manifest in the creation (cf. Rom 1:19-20) MacKnight has paraphrased this passage thusly:

As many, therefore, as have sinned without revelation, shall also perish without being judged by revelation; their punishment will be less on account of their want of revelation. And as many as have sinned under revelation shall be judged by revelation, their guilt being aggravated by the advantages which they enjoy. They shall be punished in proportion to their guilt. For not those who have enjoyed revelation are esteemed just in the sight of God, but those only who do (vs.10) the things enjoined in revelation shall be justified at the judgement. When, therefore, the Gentiles who have not revelation, do, by the guidance of their reason and conscience, the things enjoined by revelation, these persons, though they have no external revelation to direct them, furnish a revelation to themselves, by obeying that by which they may be
8
justified through Christ, equally with the Jews.

If Cornelius or any other Gentile was worshiping God acceptably under patriarchy, then the gospel caused them to be lost. James D. Willeford has correctly stated; [Some say that men are lost who refuse to come into the body of Christ. But let us think for a moment. God did not set up the body of Christ to make men sinners, and yet seemingly, some would have the Lord say, 'You become lost because you stay out of this spiritual body over which I am the head.' No, He set up the body of Christ because men were already lost, and they transgressed the will of God. The gospel of Christ with all its provisions of mercy was given, not to make men sinners, but because they were already sinners and lost. The gospel was given to save them. But if they had never been under God's law they could not have been transgressors, and would have no need of salvation." ⁹] The question of course is: What law of God were they under? It clearly was not the Law of Moses, for Gentiles were never under it. It was not the Law of Christ, for, "He set up the body of Christ because men were already lost." It had to be the law spoken of in Romans One.

R. L. Whiteside has dealt quite effectively with the theory that Cornelius was worshiping God under patriarchy. We quote extensively from him.

The Jews had been intrusted with the oracles of God, but had made such poor use of their great blessings, that Paul makes this observation concerning them and Gentiles: "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge of both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." (Rom. 3:1-9.) And to see the degrading sins into which Gentiles had fallen read Rom. 1:18-32. And the Jews were no better -- "all under sin." Jesus came to save sinners, not to make sinners; the gospel is God's power to save sinners, not to make sinners of those who hear it.

How came Cornelius to need salvation? One writer said "that Cornelius was doubtlessly serving the God of his fathers under

patriarchy." But patriarchy was not a religion, nor a form of worship, but a form of government. Webster defines Patriarchy to be "a state of social development characterized by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family." The father was the ruler. He was also the priest and prophet for the family or clan, whether they worshipped God or idols. Again the writer said: "The patriarchal dispensation did not end at Sinai except to the descendants of Abraham...While the offspring of Abraham was amenable to God under the law of Moses, Gentiles, to whom Moses' law was never given, could serve him under the law that had been in effect since Eden was lost to Adam and Eve." But many of Abraham's descendants were not included in the covenant made at Sinai. The word "dispensation" occurs a few times in the New Testament, but never in the sense we attach to it when we speak of the three dispensations.

So far as we know Abel was the first one to offer a God-appointed sacrifice, and it does not appear that he was the head of a family or clan. He was therefore not a patriarch, and it is certain that he did not pass on to Cain or any other what God had revealed to him. I do not think any one will contend that the commands to Cain and Abel were recorded for the guidance of following generations.

~~It seems that the head of a family or clan, if he worshipped God, received revelation direct from God, just as did Abel.~~ Joshua

said to Israel, "Your fathers dwelt of old time beyond the River, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and they served other gods." (Joshua 24:2; see also verses 14, 15.)

So Abraham came from idol-worshipping patriarchs. "Fathers" would include at least his father and grand-father, and perhaps farther back: and so he did not learn true worship from them. God spoke to him as he did to others before his time. You will

search in vain for any line of true worshippers from creation to Abraham, and on down to Cornelius. And I have seen no indication that any directions for patriarchal government or worship was ever written for their guidance.

I have never been dogmatic as to the patriarchal dispensation among the Gentiles during the reign of the law of Moses. From Paul's language in Romans 1:18-32 ~~it seems that the whole Gentile~~

~~world had ceased to recognize God at all, and that God therefore had completely given them over to their own folly.~~ Paul says

also at that time they were "strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

(Eph. 2:12.) Notice Romans 2:14. When Paul spoke of the law of Moses he used "the" before "law"--"the law." When other laws were spoken of, he did not usually use "the" before law, especially when a contrast was made, as in Rom. 2:14. Our translators did not follow Paul's use and non-use of "the."

Following the American Version, but observing Paul's use and non-use of "the" we have: "For when the Gentiles that have not law do by nature the things of the law, these not having law are law unto themselves." ~~It seems to me that this means that they~~

~~had no revealed law, and therefore had to depend on such law~~

~~as they themselves made for their own guidance.~~ Possibly here

and there some families held to the idea of one true God. It seems that Balaam was at one time a true prophet, but where does any one read about a patriarchal covenant? And where does one read that Cornelius was a member of any covenant? There is no proof that any revelation made to the early patriarchs was reduced to writing for the benefit of succeeding generations of the Gentiles. That Cornelius was ruler, prophet, and priest for his family or clan is a mere guess, with no hint on which

Many Gentiles by contact with the Jews learned of the one true God. Most likely Cornelius learned of God in that way. At least he observed the Jewish hour of prayer and gave much alms to the Jewish people. But the fact that God heard his prayers is no proof that he was in any covenant that God ever made.

Here is a strange statement from our writer: "We firmly believe that Cornelius was not a sinner until the appearance of the angel with instructions that brought him and the entire Gentile world in covenant relations with Christ. Inspiration records, without correction, the statement of the man that had been healed of his blindness by the Lord (John 9:31.), "now we know that God heareth not sinners." God, then, will not hear a sinner, but he did hear and answer the prayers of the Roman centurion.

Therefore the man was not a sinner at the time his prayers were ascending unto the throne of God." Strange notion --did the angel cause Cornelius to be lost so that Peter could tell him how to be saved? What next? Perhaps some one will tell us that the Jews became lost when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles at Pentecost! That would round out the picture. The Jewish authorities said Jesus was a sinner, but they knew he was not an alien --they knew he was in the covenant. The man born blind knew Jesus was not an alien; and to make his language apply to an alien is inexcusable. Saul of Tarsus prayed before he became a Christian --prayed while he was still an alien, and the Lord was pleased that he did pray. Nor was Cornelius sinning when he was praying for more light. If you will notice the answer he got you will know what he was praying for. The angel told Cornelius that his prayer was heard; "Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter, who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy

I do not think I ever read a more startling notion by any brother than that the visit of the angel to Cornelius made Cornelius a sinner and brought the entire Gentile world in covenant relations with Christ. He was righteous till the angel spoke to him and that turned him into a sinner! How come? Did not Cornelius immediately set about doing what the angel told him to do? What sin did he commit? The visit of an angel turned a righteous man into a sinner, and also the entire Gentile world became sinners! Another strange thing -- a righteous man prayed and was heard, but the prayer was answered after he became a sinner. Cornelius the righteous man prayed, but Cornelius the sinner received the answer. And just how did the angel's visit to Cornelius bring the "entire Gentile world in covenant relations with Christ?"

What is the nature of that covenant that the entire Gentile world is in? I cannot see wherein the state of the Gentiles is different now from what it was before the angel appeared to Cornelius, nor in what sense it could be different.

10

Cornelius was not worshiping God under patriarchy. He was a God-fearing associate of Judaism. He was not a true proselyte, but an individual, who through contact with those who had in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and the truth, had come to have the work of the Law written on his heart.

If the whole Gentile world was brought into covenant relations with God by the angel's visit, Cornelius must have been the head of the Gentile people. Brethren who have a hard time understanding how "through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Rom 5:19) have no difficulty propounding a theory that "through the hearing of one the many were made sinners." And if, as some hold, Gentiles were worshiping God acceptably under patriarchy until Cornelius heard the gospel and brought them under the law of Christ, then this is exactly what happened

Patriarchy was not a covenant and therefore did not need to be formally annulled. It was the most natural form of organization for the ancients. The world began with one pair. They soon became a family. That family soon grew into families or clans. The changes which Jacob's family underwent in Egypt as they grew from twelve patriarchs into a nation were experienced by all other families of the earth. In fact, by the time of Abraham, the father-rule form of organization had given way to a national organization for the most part. Several passages imply that when God promised to make Abraham's descendants a great nation, He also began or had already begun to deal with the remainder of mankind on a national basis, not a family basis.

2.] In revealing to Abraham what lay in store for his descendants, He said: ["Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete. And it came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.]" These are nations, not families or clans.

Egypt had apparently been a strong nation while Abraham was still a wandering pilgrim. It is said of the hail which came upon Egypt that "such had not been seen in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation" (Ex 9:24). When God wished to assure Abraham of the well being of Ishamel, He said, "I will bless him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will

make him a great nation" (Gen 17:20). God instructs Israel, "You shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for ~~men~~ ~~and all these things, and therefore, I have said unto you~~" (Gen 20:23). The altar, whether to the true God or to a god of man's own making was no longer a family altar, but a national altar. When Israel was carried into captivity by the Assyrians and peoples from other nations were settled in Samaria, these people brought their national gods with them. The record says of them: "They also feared the Lord and appointed from among themselves priests of the high places, who acted for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the Lord and served their own gods according to the custom of the nations from among whom they had been carried away into exile" (2 Kgs 17:32-33). Clearly in these passages the religion of these nations was an organized one with priests being appointed from among themselves. No longer did the father act as priest, king, and prophet.

The New Testament evidence also indicates that the clan gave way to the nation and the family altar to an organized priesthood and community site of worship. Paul faced a highly organized priesthood and fully developed religion at Lystra. In preaching to them he said: "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them. And in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:15-17). Two things are important here. Paul indicates that God was dealing with mankind primarily on a national basis. Secondly, He permitted them to go their own ways, except for the testimony of the blessings of nature which He gave to them. God did not deal with them through the heads of households. He let them go their own way. Every passage mentioning

the condition of the Gentiles affirms their alienation from God (See Rom 1:18-31; 3:9; 11:32; Eph 2:1-2; 4:17-19, etc.).

The argument is made frequently that if men outside the covenant are not amenable to the covenant, then they cannot sin. Men outside the old covenant could and did sin. By the same principle under which they were judged sinners, men may be judged sinners today. But certain "ungetoverable" arguments have been made to prove that all men are amenable to the New Testament law of divorce. The argument is made in the form of a syllogism:

Major Premise: All men who violate the laws of Christ are men who are subject to the law of Christ.

Minor Premise: Men in the world are men who have violated the law of Christ.

Conclusion: Men in the world are men who are subject to the law of Christ.

No argument can be made with the major premise. However, the minor premise actually assumes what needs to be proved. To support the minor premise, Acts 17:23-31 and Acts 2:38-41 as well as other similar passages are given. A careful analysis of these passages reveals nothing that will support the minor premise. As stated in chapter two, Paul charges the Athenians with no sin peculiar either to the Law of Moses or the new covenant. He charges them with worshipping God in ignorance and quotes from their own poets to demonstrate that they should have known better than to worship a god made with hands. He says, "as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.' Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man" (Acts 17:28-29). Paul charges them with violating that which God made evident to them saying, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what

has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Rom 1:20).

A little sound reasoning will show that those in Acts Two could not possibly be charged with violating the new covenant. As one has written, "When one law supersedes another, the effects of the superseded law carry over to the point where the newer law becomes effective."¹¹ The kingdom of Christ and hence the new covenant was not inaugurated until the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus. How could those standing there violate any covenant which was in the process of being introduced in their hearing? Peter does charge them with crucifying the One to whom the Law and the prophets had pointed. He begins by quoting Joel's prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Spirit, moves to the testimony which God had given them about Jesus through the miracles He performed, quotes David's prophecy, and appeals to the resurrection as proof that the One whom they had rejected was the promised Messiah. Convicted, they repented and were baptized. He charged them with no violations of the new covenant, and how could he? Previous to that morning it had not been in force.

In Peter's second sermon the same basic procedure is followed. An appeal is made to the prophets proving that Jesus was the Christ. Although most of them might not have been able to claim blamelessness under the Law as did Paul, Peter doesn't even try to convict them of any moral transgressions under it other than that of crucifying Christ. In Stephen's sermon in Acts Seven he also appeals to the Law and the Prophets, but makes no charges against them of having violated the new covenant. In Antioch of Pisidia, Paul preached to the Jews. He traced out the history of the nation, God's promise to David, John's ministry, the rejection of Jesus by the Jewish leaders, the crucifixion and the resurrection. He then appealed to the prophets as proof of Jesus' identity and urges them to accept forgiveness (Acts 13:16-41). Not once does he charge them with a violation of the moral precepts of the

the new covenant. In Lystra, Paul appeals to the heathen priests and people to turn from the vanities of idolatry, but no charges are made of guilt under the covenant.

It is sometimes argued that Paul could not have charged the Corinthians with having been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous persons, drunkards, revilers, nor swindlers unless they were amenable to the new covenant. ~~If that were true, then they were not lost until the new covenant was inaugurated.~~ Yet the Scriptures plainly declare: "God has shut up all in disobedience that He might have mercy upon all." But the idea that the Gentiles could not have been guilty as charged unless under the new covenant is pure nonsense. Paul gives the following catalog of sins of which the Gentile world was guilty without law: idolatry, impurity, homosexuality, unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, gossip, slander, hatefulness to God, insolence, arrogance, boastfulness, invention of evil, disobedience to parents, untrustworthiness, lack of love, and unmercifulness (Rom 1:18-32). ~~Every sin -- and then some -- that was charged to the Corinthians in their alien state is charged to the Gentile world apart from any covenant.~~ *X Check*

Again it is argued that if men outside the kingdom are not amenable to the law of Christ then it is no sin to enter a denomination, use instrumental music, or engage in any other practice foreign to the New Testament. Men outside the kingdom are lost no matter what they do or don't do. Outside of Christ their worship and service is unacceptable ~~even if it should happen to coincide with the New Testament pattern in every detail.~~ Furthermore their worship is vain, for it is the doctrine of men. Those claiming to be citizens of the kingdom, but who are not, are like the Jews of our Lord's day who claimed to be God's people but were not. He said, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matt 15:7-9). Paul also charged the Athenians with vain worship not because they had violated any covenant made with them,

but because they were worshiping according to the "art and thought of man" (Acts 17:29).

It is argued that all of the passages which speak of the Gentiles' not having law refer to their not having the Law of Moses previous to the new covenant. But now that the new covenant has been inaugurated, they are under law to Christ concerning marriage and divorce. It might be possible that such a position could be maintained in reference to Paul's statement concerning Gentiles in Romans 2:12-16, but the position collapses under the weight of I Cor. 9:20-21. "And to the Jews I became a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ. that I might win those who are without law." Paul says that he became a slave to all men in order to win them to Christ. He divides them into two --perhaps three groups. To the Jews he became as a Jew. To those under the Law, ^{he became as one} ~~as~~ under the Law. To those without law, ^{he became as one} ~~as~~ without law. Paul may have meant the expression "those under the law" to refer to full proselytes in contrast to Jews. When Peter addressed the crowd on Pentecost, he addressed them as "both Jews and proselytes" (Acts 2:10). Or, Paul may have been referring to the same class. If this is the case, he divides those to whom he enslaves himself into two groups: those having law and those not having law. By no stretch of the imagination can this refer to a time anterior to the gospel. First, Paul was not a disciple nor did he try to make others disciples of Christ until several years after the gospel was first preached. Secondly, the time that they were with and without law was the same time that Paul was under the law of Christ. So at exactly the same time that Paul was under the law of Christ, the Gentile was without law and the Jew and proselyte were under law, but not the same law under which Paul found himself.

he became

In verse 20 Paul says, "to those who are under the Law (simply "law" in the original), as under the Law, **THOUGH NOT BEING MYSELF UNDER THE LAW.**" Then Paul affirms that he was "not without the law of God but under the law of Christ." In verse 20 he was not under the Law which this class of men whom he was trying to reach was under. In verse 21 he is under the law of Christ. Therefore, the two cannot be the same. To state this briefly we have: Paul was under the law of Christ. Those whom he was trying to win were under a law which he was not under. The law which they were under cannot be the law of Christ.

The question naturally arises: How could anyone be under the Law after the cross? Was it not nailed to the cross? There are at least three explanations. First, there are the practical realities which all should recognize. Paul's statement that the certificate of debt was nailed to the cross is sometimes quoted as if that truth were clearly manifested at the time of His crucifixion. But in reality, much of the New Testament was written to prove the truth that the Law was no longer binding. The moment Christ was crucified, the worship and service in the temple ceased to be efficacious. The prayers and incense rose no higher than the ceiling, but man did not know it. Not even the apostles were fully aware of it. It was as if the final gun had sounded, but the game continued because it could not be heard over the roar of the crowd. It continued to be played pretty much according to the rules for another thirty-seven years, but no score entered the record book. Various passages point to the destruction of Jerusalem as the end of Judaism and can best be understood by the above truth. Jesus himself connects the end with the fall of Jerusalem. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come." Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; let him who is on the

housetop not go down to get the things out that are in his house; and let him who is in the field not turn back to get his cloak" (Matt. 24:14-18). Clearly, this is not a description of the second coming. One should disregard the chapter and verse divisions and go back to chapter twenty-three for the context. Jesus pronounces a series of woes and says, "Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!" (Matt. 23:36-38). When Jesus breathed His last, Judaism had its last gasp too, but the body would not be buried until the destruction of Jerusalem. It was as if it were hooked up to a life-support system with a machine forcing its organs to function, but there were not brain waves.

Daniel prophesied, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the

one who makes desolate" (Dan. 9:24-27). Entire books have been written on these verses alone, and it is impossible within the scope of this argument to explore all of its truths. Be this as it may, it is clear that as a far mountain range appears to be juxtaposed against a near and lower one, Daniel has juxtaposed the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem together without mentioning the almost 40 years in between. Prophetically the two are viewed as a whole. In the midst of the 69th week the Messiah is cut off. Regardless of when the 70th week terminates the end doesn't come until "on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until A COMPLETE DESTRUCTION, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (v. 27). From this standpoint then the Jews could still be considered to be under the Law.

There is a second sense in which the Jews could be --can be-- considered as being under the Law even after the crucifixion of Christ. Paul writes, "Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole law" (Gal. 5:2-3). Paul goes on to say that circumcision or uncircumcision means nothing. The simple fact of circumcision does not obligate one to the whole Law, but when one submits to circumcision for the purpose of salvation, he is subjecting himself to a law or principle of works for justification. If one seeks justification by works of law, he cannot pick and choose, "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse, for it is written, 'cursed is every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them'" (Gal. 3:10). What Paul has said is as applicable to Gentile as to Jew. When a man seeks to be justified by law, which is a system of meritorious works, then he is obligated to keep that system. One who rejects Christ or receives Christ and then returns to the weak and beggarly elements, obligates himself to the law and places himself under a curse. In this sense then Paul could have considered Jews and proselytes to still be under the Law.

There is a third possibility. Actually, the theory does not stand alone but is closely connected with Paul's affirmation that those who seek justification by the Law are obligated to the whole Law. The proposition may be stated in the form of a question: WAS AN INDIVIDUAL AMENABLE TO THE LAW OF MOSES RELEASED FROM IT WITHOUT FAITH IN CHRIST? Various passages are quoted to prove that all Jews were released from the Law of Moses and made amenable to the Law of Christ by the death of Christ on the cross: "We are not under law but under grace" (Rom 6:15). "But now that faith has come we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal 3:25). "Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14).

When one examines these verses, he discovers that not one of them was written or spoken to an unbelieving Jew in an attempt to convert him. They were spoken to those already baptized into Him. Every Jew has the offer by God that He will remember ^{his} their sins no more and that the certificate of debt will be canceled. But is it in fact canceled before one believes? A similar situation is seen in Paul's statement "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died" (2 Cor 5:14). Although the death of Christ was a once-for-all act, Paul teaches that our death with Him becomes a reality only when we, in faith, become united with Him. "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin" (Rom 6:3-7). Here Paul says that "he that is dead (died with Christ) is free from sin." Notice how closely this parallels his statement

concerning the Law: "Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another" (Rom 7:4).

Observe that it was not the Law that died, but the individual that died to the Law through the body of Christ. Again he says, "But now we have been released from from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound" (Rom 7:6).

Lard argues this same point in his work ^{on} ~~of~~ Paul's epistle to the Romans:

Once satisfy the Jew that in becoming a christian he dies to the law (emphasis mine, D.C.), and thereby becomes as effectually released from it, as is a wife from her husband by his death, and you remove his greatest obstacle in accepting the gospel. You do more. Pious Jewish christians, long after they became such, were troubled with scruples about forsaking the law. These you remove by establishing their release from it. This is the Apostle's work here. In order to effect it, two things are necessary: 1. To show that the law rules over a man so long only as he lives. This has now been done. 2. To convince the Jew that in obeying Christ he died to the law (emphasis mine, D.C.). This is now to be done. Hence the next verse. 4. And so, my brethren, you also died to the law by the body of Christ. In the preceding chapter, the Apostle has spoken of being dead to sin, and not being under law. But dead to the law is a new expression, conveying a new and most important idea. For if the disciples had died to the law, intuitively they were released from it; and if released from it, then they had committed no sin in abandoning it for Christ. This is the conclusion to which the Apostle wishes to bring them. But they died to the law by the body of Christ. How are we to understand this? That to die by the body of Christ is the same as to be crucified with him (ch. vi, v.6) can hardly admit of a

doubt; and if so, then the body of Christ is here used for Christ himself. In so far only, of course, as Christ died to the law, could the disciples die to it, since they died by him. But he died to it completely and finally. So then did they. But how could they die by Christ? In no way that we can conceive of, except representatively. In believing and being immersed, (eis) into Christ, the whole discipleship became, in life, somehow indented with his life. Hence whatever he died to, they died to. Thus
 12
 both died to the law.

Also in the Colossian passage Paul connects freedom from the Law with union with Christ. "And in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. If the certificate of debt was canceled across the board for every Jew, why was not every Jew's transgression forgiven? Paul said, "having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt..." The two cannot be separated. The debt is in fact canceled when one is baptized into Christ just as sins are forgiven when baptized into Christ. Although the debt had been fully paid by Christ on the cross, the individual is not automatically released. Of course, when Paul says Christ redeemed the Jew from the Law, the same principle applies. Redemption is in Christ Jesus (Rom 3:24) and requires faith in Him.

In Ephesians two the dividing wall is abolished. Both Jew and Gentile have access to God through Christ. But if a Jew rejects Christ and clings to the Law, the very wall which once kept the Gentile out now keeps him out. As Paul said, "But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Cor 3:15-16). In God's sight the Law is no longer a barrier between Jew and Gentile, but it has become a barrier between unbelieving Jews and Christ.

Since this proposition has not been tested, it would be foolish to use it as a foundation for any doctrine. However, since the New Testament clearly speaks of Jews being, in some sense, under the Law after Golgotha and two sound propositions have been advanced as to how this might be so, the strength or weakness of the overall argument is not affected by the acceptance or rejection of this third proposition.

Still it is argued that the alien must be amenable to the new covenant law of marriage and divorce because Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery" (Matt 5:32 KJV). "Whosoever" must mean all men everywhere, regardless of their status in the kingdom, so it is argued. But the word "whosoever" may have a limited or unlimited application. Proper textual exegesis must decide the issue. Surely no one who knows anything about the Bible would affirm that "whosoever" in verse 31 means all men everywhere. The passage reads, "It has been said, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.'" Here the "whosoever" clearly has a limited application, for Paul says, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law" (Rom 3:19, KJV). Without doing any damage to the passage one could paraphrase it: "Whatever the Law says, it says to ^{whosoever} whosoever is under it." This puts the "whosoever" question in better focus. If the "whosoever" of verse 31 is limited to members of the old covenant, why can't the "whosoever" of verse 32 be limited to members of the new covenant? God made the new covenant with the seed of Abraham through Christ, not with the world at large (see pages 45 and 46 of this chapter).

Another passage in which "whosoever" is limited in application is found in First Corinthians. Paul says that Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, saying, "This cup is the new testament (or covenant) in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me." For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (I Cor 11:25-29, KJV). The Lord's supper is tied to the covenant, the cup being the symbol of his blood --the blood of the covenant. We enter the covenant in baptism and commemorate it in the the Lord's supper. The "whosoever" clearly applies to those in the covenant. For aliens would have no cause to celebrate it. Remember, when Paul wrote, the apostasy had not taken place; so the question of whether or not an unimmersed believer or an unscripturally immersed believer drinks damnation to himself has no point. Within the textual and historical context, "whosoever" was clearly limited to those who had been sanctified by the blood of the covenant (see Heb 10:29). When Jesus said "whosoever" in Matthew 5:32, He may have meant whosoever has a part in the covenant or He may have meant whosoever, alien or citizen alike. Inspiration will tell us for sure, but the answer shall be delayed until chapter four.

It seems remarkable that if entrance into the covenant demands the dissolution of any marriage not complying with the new covenant law concerning marriage and divorce, that we find not a single example of such in the New Testament nor a single passage even remotely suggesting it. The argument is advanced, "Of course there is none, because repentance was placed before baptism, and its meaning was so clear that all sinners knew they had to quit unlawful relationships and practices." But what if the practice or relationship had been permitted by law for 1500 years? How could one automatically know from the command to repent that what had been lawful was

now unlawful? By law the Jews had been permitted to divorce for 1500 years. If one or more of the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost was living with a second wife or husband, which is highly likely, how did they know that the situation had to be corrected before baptism? Remember, ~~all who had been married when they did it.~~ ^{people had been} Where did they learn the truth about marriage and divorce? One fellow argued that it is found in the "many other words" with which Peter testified! The Pedo-baptist could just as easily argue that he finds infant baptism in the same words. The ~~Gentile world had no revealed law concerning marriage and divorce.~~ Surely it is safe to say that the Law of Moses was more definite than ~~the law of conscience~~ the moral law. Recent graspings at straws which hold that the law stated by Christ in Matthew Five and Nineteen was binding upon Gentiles from Adam on down shows the weakness of the whole position. ~~This would make Abraham an adulterer, along with every other Bible great who lived before Sinai and had more than one wife. The Jew-Gentile distinction did not come about until the middle wall, the Law, was erected at Sinai. All the precepts of Genesis 2:24, as claimed by Christ, were binding on Gentiles from Eden to Pentecost, they must have been binding upon all mankind and on the Sinai.~~ Are brethren ready to call him whom God received by faith ^{are willing} an adulterer? Probably not, but many ^{are} very well --yea eager-- to call those whom God receives by faith today adulterers and adulteresses because their marriages do not square with those same brethren's preconceived ideas of truth. If the Gentiles had to put away legally married second or third partners and the Jews did not, then the terms of the gospel are not equal. How could one ~~living without law in reference to marriage and divorce~~ know from the word "repent" that this relationship was sinful?

If an alien must put away any but his first mate to enter into the kingdom, he would be in a better position if he would commit two sins instead of one. It was once a common practice for an Eskimo man to kill his neighbor and take his neighbor's wife. There were no temporal laws which would punish him for doing so. The law of revenge was the only law his society observed. If he was not killed by one of the man's relatives, he was home free as far as any earthly consequences

were concerned. Now, had this Eskimo done this and later learned the truth and became a Christian, he would be accepted into the church. On the other hand, had he married some woman who had been ^{abandoned} ~~bandoned~~ by her husband, he would not even be accepted for baptism. Farfetched? Not at all, for David stole another man's wife, killed the man, and then when faced with the sin, repented, was forgiven, and kept the woman! And David was in a covenant relationship with God throughout the whole affair. A retreat to "But he was under the Law" is useless. The Law did not allow adultery and murder. If it did then David had nothing for which he needed forgiveness. Is it easier to get forgiveness under the Law than under the gospel? Someone might suggest that if such is the case, then it would be better for a Christian man -- to whom Jesus' words clearly apply -- to kill his wife than to divorce her if he wants to get rid of her. One can hardly imagine ^{an} ~~and~~ individual who could premeditatedly kill his wife being concerned about the scripturalness or unscripturalness of divorce. David did not kill Uriah in an attempt to avoid God's wrath for what he had done. He did it to attempt to avoid Uriah's wrath.

The analogy is often made between horse stealing and divorce. If one steals a horse, the argument goes, and then becomes a Christian he surely can't keep the horse. With ^{no} ~~an~~ apologies for the pun, the analogy is lame. In many cases in question the marriage was already dissolved before the two in question ever met. No one stole anyone in any sense of the word. In fact in many cases they were driven away. But even in the case of David when he did steal another man's wife, when the damage was done and could not be undone, he was not required to do further damage by putting away Bathsheba. The Law of Moses demanded restitution in the case of a stolen horse. It forbade the restitution of a wife to her first husband after she had cohabited with a second, calling such an abomination (Ex 22:1-5; Deut 24:1-4).

When restitution cannot be made it is argued that those involved must separate and live a life of celibacy as ^{penance} ~~penitence~~. Such was not required of David. How meaningful become his own words, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account" (Rom 4:7-8).

Alexander Campbell wrote: ["There are two principles, commandments, or laws, that are never included in our observations respecting the law of Moses, nor are they ever in holy writ called the law of Moses: --These are, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.' These, our Great Prophet teaches us, are the basis of the law of Moses and of the Prophets. 'On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Indeed the Sinai law, and all Jewish law, is but a modification of them. These are of ~~universal~~ and immutable obligation. Angels and men, good and bad, are for ever under them. God, as our Creator, can not require less; nor can we, as creatures and fellow-creatures, propose or expect less, as the standard of duty and perfection. These are coeval with angels and men. They are engraven with more or less clearness on every human heart. These are the ground work or basis of the law, written in the heart of heathens, which constitute their conscience, or knowledge of right and wrong. By these their thoughts mutually accuse or else excuse one another. By these they shall be judged, or at least all who have never seen or heard a written law, or revelation. But for these principles there had never been either law or gospel." ¹³] In concluding his address, Campbell said, "Do we address Jews? Let us address them as the Apostles did. Persuade them out of their own law that Jesus is the Messiah. Do we address professed Christians? Let us imitate the apostolic addresses in the epistles. Do we preach to Barbarians? Let us address them as Paul preached to the Lycaonians. Speak to their conscience. Do we preach to polished infidels or idolators? Let us speak to them as Paul spoke ¹⁴ to the Athenians. Speak to their conscience."

The chart below illustrates the condition of believers and unbelievers in relationship to covenant duties.

The approach one takes with an individ. does not alter the subject matter or requirements of the gospel

Divorce, polygamy, concubinage all existed. No recorded revelation as to its regulation. Adultery recognized (Gen 20:3).

Divorce, polygamy, concubinage unregulated by specific revelation from God. Adultery recognized (I Cor 5:1; 6:9)

Believers all one in Christ (Gal 3:22-29)

Gentile

Gentile

MIDDLE WALL (Eph 2:14)

Wall becomes a veil

Jew

Jew

SINAI

Divorce, polygamy regulated by the Law. Adultery clearly defined.

Unbelievers all one outside of Christ (Rom 11:32)

After the cross, unbelieving Jews and unbelieving Gentiles are on the same footing. The Law is no longer a barrier to the Gentile to keep him from God; but it, ironically, does keep the Jew from Christ. This is not by God's design or will, but because, as Paul says, "But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day when Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Cor 3:14-16).

The covenant at Sinai was made with the fleshly descendants of Abraham and effected no one else. Likewise, the covenant made through the cross is with the spiritual descendants of Abraham and effects no one else. An invitation is offered through Christ to become a descendant of Abraham, but an invitation to become does not make one a citizen of the kingdom. He remains an alien until he accepts that invitation. If he never accepts, he remains alienated and lost.

Handwritten notes:
 The Law is no longer a barrier to the Gentile to keep him from God; but it, ironically, does keep the Jew from Christ.
 The Law is no longer a barrier to the Gentile to keep him from God; but it, ironically, does keep the Jew from Christ.
 The Law is no longer a barrier to the Gentile to keep him from God; but it, ironically, does keep the Jew from Christ.

Footnotes

1. "Is Teaching Before Acts Two Binding?" Roy Lanier, Sr. Firm Foundation, April 30, 1968, p. 281.
2. "A General Look At Divorce and Remarriage," Thomas B. Warren, Spiritual Sword, January 1975, cover.
3. Milligan, opt. cit., pp. 233-234.
4. Ibid.
5. The Campbell-MacCalla Debate, opt. cit., p. 97.
6. Ibid, p. 162.
7. Commentary on Paul's Letter to Romans; Moses E. Lard, Gospel Light Publishing Company, Delight, Arkansas, p. 82.
8. Macknight on the Epistles, One-Vol Edition, James Macknight, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 65
9. "Divorce and Remarriage," James D. Willeford, Quality Printing Co., Inc., Abilene, Texas, p.
10. Doctrinal Discourses, R.L. Whiteside, privately published, pp. 256-259.
11. Questions and Answers, Guy N. Woods, Published by Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee, p. 64.
12. Lard, opt. cit., pp. 222-223.
13. "Sermon on the Law," Alexander Campbell, Millennial Harbinger, Vol I (abridged edition), p. 416.
14. Ibid., p. 434.

TO THE REST I SAY

"But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with here, let her not send her husband away...Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace" (I Cor 7:12-13,15).

No small amount of circular reasoning has been done in attempting to harmonize the words of Jesus and those of Paul. An interpretation is given to Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce which says that aliens are amenable to those teachings because Jesus said "whosoever." Then it is stated, "Paul could not have meant that the deserted one is free to remarry because that would contradict Jesus." It would be far better to let the inspired man, Paul, explain what Jesus meant instead of uninspired men trying to tell him what Jesus meant and then insisting upon his agreeing with them.

Before examining the text, consideration needs to be given to certain basic principles of interpretation. Scripture explains Scripture, and the later Scripture sheds light upon the earlier. In other words, a difficult passage in the gospels should not be explained without regard to what the epistles say upon the subject and then the epistles be forced to conform to the prior interpretation. Revelation is like the kingdom itself -- "first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head" (Mark 4:28). For example, Acts 11:15-16 ~~unlike Acts 1:5 and Matthew 3:11~~ Acts 1:5 and Matthew 3:11. John predicted a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught in Acts 1:5 that the promise had not yet been fulfilled when He spoke, but that it would shortly be realized. Peter's words show that this baptism was not a universal blessing on all believers, for when it happened to Cornelius, Peter did not say that the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius as He had upon all believers since Pentecost, but "as He did upon us at the beginning" (Acts 11:14-15). The us refers to the apostles and the beginning to Pentecost.

Another passage in Luke's history ^{explains} explains a difficult passage in Mark's gospel. Shortly before Jesus ascended, He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he

who has disbelieved shall be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mark 16:15-18)

Without any further word from God, this passage would teach that the power to speak in tongues and perform miracles was as extensive as salvation. Those who believe and are baptized are saved and the signs accompany them. But there is another word

from God. Luke records that Philip had gone down to Samaria to preach the good news about the kingdom and when they believed they were baptized. Did the signs follow? Could those baptized speak in tongues? No, for something was lacking, something not even mentioned in Jesus' statement. Luke records, "Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give this authority to me as well...' (Acts 8:14-19a). So the reception of the Holy Spirit also requires the laying on of an apostle's hands. Nothing less than belief and baptism was required to receive this power, but something more was required.

Jesus Himself taught that His words did not fully reveal all the Father's will, but that this would be the role of the Holy Spirit. He said, "These things have I spoken to you, while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (John 14:25-26). The Holy Spirit is given a twofold work in this passage: bring to their remembrance what ^{Jesus} He had said and teach them things He had not spoken. He said, "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative,

but whatsoever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come (John 16:12-14). It would, in light of this, be as big a mistake to interpret Jesus' teachings on marriage and divorce without ~~taking into consideration Paul's words~~ as it would be to interpret Jesus' words on spiritual gifts without taking into consideration Luke's record.

By looking at the various classes addressed by Paul, we can discover what Jesus meant and answer the question as to whom Jesus' "whosoever" in Matthew 5:32 refers. Paul addresses himself to the unmarried and widows saying, "But I say to the unmarried and widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn" (I Cor 7:7-8). "Unmarried" ~~may mean~~ those never married. ~~This seems~~ doubtful in light of the fact that he addresses himself to this class in verses 25-28. Or, "unmarried" ~~could mean~~ those previously married but ^{now} not divorced. In verse 11, the word "unmarried" is used and refers to one so separated from a mate that a second marriage was a distinct possibility. Of course, "unmarried" ~~could refer~~ to widowers. Since "unmarried" is listed with widows, Paul ~~may be~~ speaking of widowers, but ~~this cannot be established beyond doubt~~.

The second group addressed are those who are married: "But to the married I give instruction, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away" (vv. 10-11). The Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary states, "Since Paul says this is the teaching of the Lord and the only recorded teaching of Jesus is Matt 5:31,32; 19:3-12, and related passages, we should view these passages in light of Paul's statement and not reach any conclusions contrary to what is said here." ¹

Now the argument is being put forth in some circles that Paul is not speaking of these passages, but of some unrecorded saying of Jesus. What this is supposed to prove, who knows! What difference does it make whether Paul has in mind that which is recorded or unrecorded. He says that Jesus spoke on the subject and then tells what He spoke. Jesus didn't speak ^{on} ~~en~~ thing for the record and one thing off the record. Paul then says that Jesus did not speak to the next class which he himself will address. Whether Paul had the recorded passages or some imagined unrecorded incident in mind is meaningless. If Jesus didn't speak, He didn't speak, whether the speaking which Paul has in mind is recorded or unrecorded. So if Paul is referring to something other than the recorded incidents, there is positive proof that Jesus didn't speak anywhere on the subject. Now, were there nothing in the gospels about the subject, and Paul were to say, "The Lord said," then we could say that Paul was talking about a statement of Jesus which was not recorded. But when we have recorded statements of Jesus on the subject and Paul says, "Jesus didn't speak," those recorded statements must be included. As stated in the Annual Lesson Commentary, "we must not reach any conclusions contrary to what is said here" --that is, what is said by the apostle. Just what did Paul say that Jesus said? To reduce this to its simplest form, he said: "Do not divorce. If you do, remain unmarried or be reconciled to your mate." To whom does this apply? When this question is answered, the question of how broad is the "whosoever" in Matthew 5:32 is answered. If "whosoever" means citizen and alien alike, then "whosoever" encompasses every married person in the world. If "whosoever" encompasses, as many claim, all mankind, ~~who are "the rest" of verse 12~~ If all of one's money is in his left pocket, he has none in his right pocket. If all of mankind are covered in Matthew 5:32, who are the rest that are not covered? Paul could not have been any clearer. Those to whom the Lord spoke were those in a covenant relationship with each other and with God. Both were Christians in other words.

The third class composes "the rest." Paul says, "But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away" (vv. 12-13). Paul is not disclaiming inspiration, but saying that Jesus said nothing about this specific situation while he was on earth. As Guy N. Woods has written, "He is not contrasting the Lord's authority with his own; he is distinguishing between an express declaration of the Lord while he was on earth, touching the matter; and another aspect of the subject on which Paul ruled, but on which the Lord did not directly speak. With reference to 1 Cor 7:12, Paul issued an inspired dictum on an aspect of marriage not dealt with by the Lord." ² This inspired statement clearly shows that ~~the Lord's teachings during His personal ministry did not apply~~

~~to every case of marriage. If Jesus' teachings were universal then He did say something to those involved in mixed marriages.~~ Paul calls those involved in mixed marriages "the rest," and says that the Lord said nothing personally about their situation.

What did Paul say to those involved in mixed marriages? The believer should not send the unbeliever away. If the unbeliever departs, let him leave, for the believer is not under bondage. Now, this is said to mean that if the unbeliever leaves, the believer is not bound to live with him. That would be hard to do --live with someone who wanted to leave unless one forceably restrained him from leaving; but then Paul said, "let him go." The believer, it is said, is not obligated to the unbeliever, but the believer cannot remarry even if the deserter later remarries. Is this not what Paul said that Jesus had taught believers? Paul says that Jesus taught that a divorce could take place between two Christians without incurring ^{guilt} ~~guilt~~, but remarriage was forbidden. By placing the teachings of Jesus and the supposed teachings of Paul side by side, the error of this interpretation can be easily seen.

JESUS

1. Do not dissolve the union
2. If you do, remain unmarried or be reconciled

PAUL

1. Same
2. Same

If those involved in mixed marriages can live separated from their mate, but cannot remarry, then Jesus did speak to the "rest"; for that is exactly what Paul said that Jesus meant when He spoke on the subject during His personal ministry. So, according to the usual interpretation, we have Paul saying to those involved in mixed marriages that they ^{are} were bound by the exact same code as are married believers, to whom Jesus said that except for the cause of fornication, they cannot divorce and remarry. On the other hand, Paul says, "The Lord didn't say anything to you." If the law of marriage for the unbeliever is exactly like or the same law as that for the believer, then Paul was talking nonsense when he said that Jesus didn't say anything to those involved in mixed marriages.

Note that Paul says that Jesus spoke to one class. These are the "whosoever" of Matthew 9:32. Clearly, according to I Cor 7:10-11, both individuals are Christians. Paul spoke to the "rest." If, as previously shown, "whosoever" means everybody whether saint or sinner, there can be no "rest." So Paul spoke to the rest, and to whom did he speak? He said nothing to unbelievers. He addressed only the believing partner. If Jesus spoke to one group and Paul spoke to the rest, then there can be none outside those two classifications to whom the teachings of Jesus or Paul on marriage and divorce apply. Again, a diagram will simplify the argument.

TO THE MARRIED (both believers) THE LORD SAYS

TO THE REST (mixed marriages) I (Paul) SAY

TO UNBELIEVERS WHO ARE NEITHER THE "WHOSOEVER" OR "THE REST"
NEITHER CHRIST NOR PAUL SAID ANYTHING

Here would have been a splendid place for Paul to have warned those not in the covenant that they must not violate the laws of the covenant concerning marriage or they would never be admitted to a covenant relationship unless they sever

their unscriptural relationships. But Paul could not address them because he had already addressed "the rest." In addressing "the rest" he gave instructions to the believing partner only.

When Paul explained the teachings of Christ he said that in a case in which both partners were Christians, no separation should take place, but if it did, remarriage was not allowed. The word "leave" or "depart" in I Corinthians 7:11 is "chorizo." It is clear from the context that Paul was not speaking of a temporary separation such as is commonly witnessed when one or the other moves out, differences are then solved, and reconciliation takes place without a divorce ever being sought. Nor is he speaking of what we would call "legal separation" in which remarriage is prohibited by law. The dissolution is complete, so complete in fact that remarriage was a distinct possibility, which prompted Paul to quickly add, "let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband." Paul uses the same word, "chorizo" in verse 15 when he says, "Yet, if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave." "Chorizo" must embrace as much in verse 15 as in verse 11. Yet, Paul did not hasten to add that the believer must remain unmarried. What does he say? "The brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases."

Much has been said about the fact that Paul uses a different word for bondage in verse 15 than that used in verse 39 and elsewhere when speaking of the marriage bond. The word bondage in verse 15 is "dedoulotai," and has the lexical form "douloo." The word "bound" in verse 39 is "dedetai," and has the lexical form "deo." It is argued that Paul purposely avoided the word "deo" so as to preclude their thinking that remarriage could take place. That Paul deliberately chose a different Greek word seems clear, but why? Vincent says that "dedoulotai" (v. 15) is stronger than "dedetai" (v. 39). According to Thayer, "dedetai" is from "deo" and means "to bind, tie, fasten." The old expression for getting married, "tie the knot," was quite appropriate. Thayer defines "douloo" as meaning "to make a slave of, reduce to bondage." This is the word Paul used when he said, "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more" (I Cor 9:19). Had the Holy Spirit guided Paul in selecting "douloo" in

verse 39 and elsewhere, the marriage relationship could have been construed to mean virtual slavery for the woman. Paul has shown that in the case of seemingly irreconcilable differences between Christians, neither partner is a slave to the other. An untying of the knot may take place, but it must remain untied or be retied. However, in a case in which one of the parties is an unbeliever, Paul did not grant the believer the right to initiate the divorce. In essence, he said, "If the unbeliever is willing to continue the marriage, it must be continued. What if the unbeliever continues the marriage but causes friction in the home? Can the believer send the unbeliever away? Paul said that he could not. Why? "For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?" Is Paul suggesting that the believers should, as he did, willing to reduce themselves to bondage for the sake of winning their mate? With this Peter would seem to agree. "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chastity and respectful behavior" (I Pet 3:1-2).

But if things are hopeless, the unbeliever is determined to leave, Paul says, "let him leave; the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases." The believing partner in a mixed marriage is under a stronger bond than are the parties when both are Christians. When the unbeliever does the leaving, the believer is released from that bondage. The dissolution is as complete as that in verse 11, in which Paul felt the need to warn, "let her remain unmarried." But in this case the warning is not given. The deserted believer is free, not under bondage. If after the unbeliever departs, the believer is still bound, then they are a slave of the worst sort. The one to whom they are enslaved fulfills no marital duty, gives no support, may remarry and begin a new life, but the deserted believer is still bound, with no hope of reconciliation. This would be slavery without a purpose. When the divorce is between two Christians, the pressure of the church and the chastisement of God can be brought to bear to effect a reconciliation. Such is not

the case when one is an unbeliever. Yes, Paul chose a different word in verse 15 than elsewhere to describe the marriage bond, because elsewhere he did not wish to leave the impression that marriage between believers was a state of slavery. When he wished to declare believers free from greater bondage under which they had been placed, he naturally used the stronger word. Paul surely would not use a stronger word to describe a lesser freedom.

Foy E. Wallace writes, "In the case of the abandonment of the believer by the unbeliever, whereby the believer is 'not under bondage' and is therefore set free. If the bondage here does not refer to the marriage bond, then the believer is still in the bondage of it. To advocate, as some do, that the passage means the believer is not bound to live or remain with the departing unbeliever would be a truism, for it is set forth as a case of abandonment and the abandoned one obviously could not abide with the one who had departed. It appears evident that when the unbeliever so departs it presupposes a state of adultery which exists in the principle previously discussed, and here the apostle's inspired teaching is again projected by the Lord's own strictures and declares the believer 'not under bondage.' If that does not mean the believer in these circumstances is free to marry, then it cannot mean anything, for if the one involved is not altogether free the bondage would still exist."

If the believer is not free to remarry, ~~what bondage are they freed from~~, from which they are not free even if the unbeliever remains? If the believer is free from bondage (whatever it may mean) when the unbeliever departs, then the believer must be under that same bondage if the unbeliever does not depart. The believer cannot be under one kind of bondage and free from another kind. This is most important, for many contend that Paul means that the believer is not under bondage to give up Christ in order to maintain the union. If that is the case, then the believer must be under bondage to give up Christ if the unbeliever chooses not to depart! If not, why not?

Here many good brethren meet themselves coming back. First they argue that Paul is not speaking of the marriage bond at all, then they argue that when Paul said, "Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases," that he meant that the brother or sister is not obligated to give up Christ in order to preserve the marriage bond. For example, one writer states on one page, "Since the phrase 'under bondage' does not refer to the marriage bond, this verse cannot be used to prove that the deserted believer is free from the marriage bond. that binds him to the unbeliever." However, on the preceding page he had said, "Paul teaches that if the unbeliever demands the believer to give up Christ to maintain the marriage, the believer is to let the unbeliever depart in peace."¹ (Emphasis mine, D.C.)

In the same publication, another writer contended that the phrase under question means that the believer has never been in bondage.² The Greek scholar, A.T. Robertson comments on the statement, saying, "has been enslaved, does not remain a slave."³ Paul clearly states a condition of the believer's freedom: "IF THE UNBELIEVER DEPART." This would teach that if the unbeliever insisted on staying and maintaining the marriage, then the believer would be in bondage to give up Christ. But the believer has never been in bondage --one would be more correct to say, "at liberty"-- to give up Christ for the unbeliever whether he goes or stays. The simple statement "Let him depart" is sufficient to teach the believer that he is not at liberty to give up Christ to preserve the marriage bond. When the unbeliever departs the bond is broken. Paul mentions nothing about a possible reconciliation as he did in verse eleven. "Let him go" is the same as saying, "Don't go with him." *Don't try to prevent his departure by compromise* In other words, Paul is saying,

~~"If your unbelieving mate leaves, you are not at liberty to leave Christ and go with him."~~ It is a little ridiculous to follow this statement with "You are not in bondage to go with him."

Much of this argument is based upon the fact that the construction "not under bondage" is in the perfect, passive tense in the Greek. Greek scholars may have something to add, but the beginner in Greek is taught: "The perfect

presents the action of the verb in a completed state or condition. When the action was completed the perfect tense does not tell. It is still complete at the time of the use of the tense by the speaker or writer." ⁴ The argument that the phrase means, "the believer has never been and is not now under bondage," ~~does not seem~~ to stand the test of sound principles of biblical interpretation. The conditional phrase, "If the unbeliever departs," gives the time at which the action (freeing from bondage) was completed.

There are several parallel constructions --some in this chapter-- which show that the idea that the perfect tense, as used by Paul, does not mean that the condition of bondage never existed. Paul asks, "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released" (v. 27). Is Paul asking, "Are you married?" Or is asking, "Have you always been married?" The perfect tense does not determine the time at which one became married, just as it does not determine the time at which one became free from bondage in verse fifteen. That must be determined --if it can be determined-- by something else in the text. Again, Paul writes, "For he who has died is freed from sin" (Rom 6:7). "Is freed" (or justified) is in the perfect, passive, indicative of "dikaioo." The construction cannot mean that one is free and has always been free from sin. The time at which one becomes free is determined by Paul's statement, "For he who has died." The point at which one dies with Christ is the point at which he is freed from sin. The point at which the believer is freed from bondage is the point at which the unbeliever departs. One other passage: "For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified" (Rom 4:14). "Faith is made void" and "the promise is nullified" are in the perfect, passive tense. Is Paul saying that faith is now and has always been void? Quite to the contrary, he is arguing for the very opposite of this. But what is the condition upon which faith is made void? Paul says that "if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified." If the perfect, passive in First Corinthians means, when used with the negative, "Is not now and never has been under bondage," why doesn't it mean "Is now and always has been void"

Paul went on to say, "Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches. Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God. Let each man remain in that condition in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called" (I Cor 7:17-24).

It is said that this applies only to slavery and circumcision and cannot mean 12 that one should remain in whatever marital state he was in at the time of conversion because that would contradict Jesus. No, it would not contradict Jesus, for Paul has already said that Jesus spoke only to believers. Although Paul uses circumcision and slavery as examples here, it seems strange that he would switch from a discussion of marriage which he had been following in verse 1-16 to circumcision and slavery and then back to marriage in verses 25-40 unless he was putting these prior conditions into the same category, or using circumcision and slavery to illustrate the point that one is not obligated to undo relationships which were legally entered into before becoming a Christian. Of course, it is argued that one would not have to give up homosexuality, drunkenness, and so forth if one does not have to dissolve prior marriages. Anything that is inherently sinful must be given up -- "shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" ~~but marriage is not inherently sinful~~

Paul shows that the words of Jesus spoken during His personal ministry concerning divorce apply to a situation in which both parties are believers. Paul, himself, spoke to the believers involved in a mixed marriage. Neither spoke to aliens. In light of this, aliens have no law of marriage and divorce

and, from a civil point, those bound upon them by civil law. Since "where there is no law, neither is their violation," unbelievers violate no law applicable to them when they divorce and remarry. ~~Having entered this state prior to entering the covenant, they may remain in it after entering the covenant.~~ A distinction must be made between a legal relationship and an inherently sinful act.

Upon what basis then could one speak out against divorce in the general populace or counsel an alien to strive at developing a healthy marriage relationship if they are not amenable to the new covenant on marriage and divorce and can keep whatever mate they have upon entering the covenant? The legalist never tries to look beyond the jot and tittle for the reason behind a specific revelation. For them if they believe there is no specific law forbidding them to commit an act, they are ready to do it no matter who gets hurt. Suppose that the only revelation on the subject of marriage were "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church." Many who would not now dream of divorcing the wife of their youth because the law of Matthew 5:32 forbids it would have no hesitancy about violating the law of love and putting her away when he found one that appealed to him more. Why didn't Jesus just give us the injunction "Husbands and wives love one another"? There are babes in Christ and legalistic Christians who need the specific injunctions until Christ is formed in them.

The mature Christian, however, looks behind the injunction to the reason for it. Why did God intend that one man be bound to one woman for life? For many it is simply another yoke that He has placed upon our necks. They will abide by it, but reluctantly. God has restored the original ideal of marriage under the new covenant and enforces that which He originally intended because He created man and knows man better than man knows himself. He cannot violate the moral and spiritual order of the universe with impunity any more than he can violate the physical order with impunity. Man can ignore the law of gravity and jump from the Empire State Building, but he can't break that law. It breaks him when he hits the ground. As long as he is in the air he escapes its consequences and may

think that he has broken it. He hasn't, and it will demand payment in full when he hits the ground. There are consequences for violating God's moral order other than hell. God said in the beginning that man and wife become one flesh. That principle is true of saint and sinner alike. Two unbelievers or a believer and an unbeliever become as much one flesh as two believers. That principle may be violated and the person who violated it may not be reckoned a sinner or he may be forgiven of the sin, but that does not mean that all the consequences are removed. Dr. James H. Jauncey has written, "The doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage is commonly misunderstood. It is viewed as a law which can be broken or obeyed, something like a traffic law or one of the Ten Commandments. But it is not that kind of law at all. It is a natural law, like gravitation. You don't get a ticket for breaking the law of gravity --you are a part of it. You can ignore it by jumping out of a tenth floor window, but it breaks you instead of you breaking it."

Aliens then certainly should be encouraged, as the opportunity arises, to enter into marriage with the intent of making it work; and if they are involved in a stormy marriage, they should be encouraged to work out the problems because divorce seldom solves their problems. A second marriage, says Dr. Jauncey, "quite regardless of the question of its validity, cannot have the potential of a first marriage. It might turn out to be happier for many reasons, but it cannot be what the first could have been if its full possibility had been realized."

For the good of both parties, the children, and society, aliens may be encouraged to make their marriages work. This urging is quite independent of the legal aspects of whether or not they will have to dissolve a second marriage if they ever become Christians.

Footnotes

1. Teacher's Annual Lesson Commentary, Gospel Advocate Co., 1956, p.31. (Roy Lanier, Sr. Author)
2. Questions and Answers, opt. cit., p. 87.
3. The Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Foy E. Wallace Publications, Nashville, Tennessee, 1967, p. 45.
4. Magic in Marriage, Dr. James H. Jauncey, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 29.
5. Ibid., p. 30.

Footnotes for pages 80a & 80b

1. "Review of the So-Called 'Pauline Privilege,'" Roy Lanier, Sr., Spiritual Sword, Vol 6, No. 2, January 1975, pp. 34, 35.
2. "More in Review of the So-Called 'Pauline Privilege,'" Harvy Floyd, Spiritual Sword, Vol 6, No. 2, January 1975, p. 37.
3. Word Pictures In The New Testament, A. T. Robertson, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn. Vol IV, p. 128.
4. Beginner's Grammar of the Greek New Testament, William Hersey Davis, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1923, p. 152.

IT IS REPORTED THAT THERE IS IMMORALITY AMONG YOU

"It is reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind ^{as} does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone⁴⁴ his father's wife."

I Corinthians 5:1

Jesus teaches, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgement" (John 7:24). The body of Christ has the responsibility to purge itself of any leaven of wickedness which threatens to corrupt the body. Paul rebukes the Corinthians: "I wrote you in my letter not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler --not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves" (I Cor 5:9-13).

There was a threefold purpose for carrying out discipline in this matter: to save the one guilty of the transgression, to prevent the spread of immorality, and to preserve the purity of the church. The first purpose for discipline is clearly stated. Paul wrote, "I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor 5:5). If the church is to judge righteous judgement, its own motives must be righteous. When judgement is rendered and discipline carried out with an unloving, self-righteous attitude, it is not righteous judgement. Jesus' handling of such a case is very instructive. The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus and set her in the middle of the group and said, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, the very act. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do you say?" The woman's guilt was not questioned, nor was the Law of Moses disputed. But Jesus knew their motive was not a proper concern for the Law or the woman, and He refused to answer their questions. When they persisted, He said, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." When none dared to pick up the first stone, Jesus and the woman were left alone; and He asked, "Woman where are they?

Did no one condemn you? She replied, "No one, Lord." With love and compassion, Jesus responded, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way; from now on sin no more" (John 8:1-11). Jesus certainly was not teaching us that adultery cannot be condemned and the guilty disciplined if they refuse to repent. However, He does make it clear that our motives must be right. When sin is exposed for the purpose of throwing rocks, judgement ceases to be righteous. The supreme motive in all such cases must be love.

But a second truth underscored by Jesus' handling of this case is that we must be free from guilt ourselves before we set in judgement upon others. Because sin is universal, it would be impossible to assemble a jury of one's peers in any civil or religious case that was not in some way guilty itself of transgressions. Yet, if justice is to be carried out, imperfect men must pass judgement upon imperfect men. There should be no reason why a truly penitent adulterer could not take part in judging and disciplining an impenitent one. If he cannot, then there is not a soul living who is qualified to judge in such cases, for there is not a living soul of accountable age who has not sinned. But Paul writes, "Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgement, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (Rom 2:1). When those passing judgement are practicing, or have practiced and have not repented of, sins just as grievous as those they judge, the judgement is not righteous. What right does one guilty of racial prejudice and hatred --which is murder in the heart-- have to pass judgement on one taken in adultery? James wrote, "But if you show partiality, (in reference to the faith, v. 1), you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For he who keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not commit murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:9-11).

John wrote, "Every one who hates his brother is a murderer" (I John 3:15). Is the church judging righteous judgement when sentence is passed upon sexual sins by those guilty of murder? When sexual sins are discovered in the church, action must be taken, but those who take that action must be sure that they are free from guilt themselves.

The second purpose for discipline is also clearly stated by Paul. "Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?" (I Cor 5:6). If immorality of any kind is allowed to exist in the church, it can spread through the entire body. Jesus once said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it is filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it shall be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" ~~(Matt 13:47-50)~~. Is there a contradiction between Paul's injunction to "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves" and Jesus' teaching that the unrighteous ones would be removed by the angels at the end of the age? There are certain things which make the two classes different. In the case with which Paul deals, the sin is undisputed. It was not what might be referred to as a case of legalized adultery. The church did not have to decide whether or not a scriptural divorce had taken place years before. The sin was so base that not even the unconverted heathens practiced it. Secondly, the sin was not something from the man's past, but an active thing. Thirdly, because it was in the active stage, it was very much in danger of spreading. Fourthly, all of the necessary facts for rendering a righteous judgement were known, for the union was being maintained with the full knowledge of the church.

In Jesus' parable the emphasis is not upon the church's responsibility to discipline those who violate the new covenant, but upon the character and final destiny of those encircled by the gospel net: ["When we do spread the net, we

will encircle some who never go beyond the first principles. Others will jump the net and swim back out to sea. Some will die before they get to shore. Some will be discarded when the net does reach the shore. But it is not the fisherman's task to try to determine which fish will finally go into the Lord's container and then try to catch only those. The fisherman is to cast the net into the sea and leave the sorting to the Lord. Sometimes it seems that we want to preach only to the Corneliuses among us and never to the Simons. If any individual could meet the requirements^{repentance!} which some lay down before preaching to him or baptizing him, he wouldn't need to be baptized. ~~We are too worried about keeping the church clean.~~

~~I Cor. 5:12; Eph. 5:27~~

Let's let the Lord take care of the cleaning. Let's take care of the fishing (Eph 5:25-27). This does not subvert discipline, for discipline is a quarantine to prevent the spread of spiritual disease and hopefully to aid in curing the one sick. Furthermore, discipline is based upon whether or not one has an active disease and not whether or not he has some scars from one that he contacted previous to his becoming a Christian. We may have doubts about one's past relationships; but unless his present actions are such that they will adversely effect the body, we had better not ascend to God's throne of judgement and try to decide for Him who can and cannot be gathered into His net."]

Two questions surface: Will receiving into the fellowship of the church those who have complicated their lives by previous divorce and remarriage pose a threat to the purity of the church? And, does the church have the ability to render righteous judgements in such cases?

In dealing with ~~the first question~~, the differences between such a case and the case with which Paul deals at Corinth must be kept in mind. At Corinth the sin ~~did not involve a question of technical adultery~~. It was a transgression even of the moral code of the Gentiles. Secondly, it did not involve the church in deciding whether or not a legitimate divorce had taken place years or perhaps even decades before. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that aliens are amenable to the new covenant law of marriage and divorce, such a determination would have to be made before a judgement could be made as to whether or not the present union

would be classed as holy or adulterious. Rather than being assumed innocent unless guilt can be established, it appears that in many cases the reverse is true. One is assumed to be living in an adulterious union if a previous mate is ^{still} ~~till~~ living unless ironclad proof can be presented to the opposite. This points up a third contrast which will be dealt with when consideration is given to the second question: At Corinth all of the facts needed to render a righteous judgement were before the church. In many divorce cases the facts are buried under years of time, clouded memories, and perhaps some wishful thinking. To uncover all of the facts involved would tax the investigative ability of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, and a Select Senate Subcommittee on the question. Yet churches often feel that they can, in two thirty minute business meetings gather all the facts and render righteous judgement.

Now to the question of ~~whether or not accepting into the church those with questionable marriages will endanger the purity of the church.~~ First, it should be noted that such would not lead to a rush to the divorce courts by married Christians. The Scriptures are clear on that subject: LET THEM REMAIN UNMARRIED OR BE RECONCILED. If what the Scriptures plainly teach is plainly taught and unhesitantly applied, no one will get the idea that the church approves or will countenance transgressions of the covenant. There is no danger that a supposed wrong committed years previous is going to encourage another to sin in the present. This is especially true when the act is totally unknown until someone calls for a confession of past mistakes. Consider, for example, the true case history of a couple who were converted to Christ and received for baptism without any questions being asked about their marital relationship. Unfamiliar with the inferences drawn by many brethren on the subject, they felt no need to reveal any of their past sins or relationships to anyone. They made rapid progress in zeal and knowledge. In a short while, they were both teaching, doing personal work, and the husband was even doing a little preaching. Time went on and the man's name began to be mentioned as a possible selection for the eldership. In light of the New Testament's teaching on the marital status of elders, they

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why no preaching done?

raised the question as to whether or not he would qualify in light of the fact that the wife had been previously married and divorced. When they revealed that the divorce had taken place for reasons other than adultery on the part of her first husband, they then learned that they were living in adultery, their children were illegitimate, and the whole family posed a threat to the purity of the church. Had they been liars and failed to reveal the past, the purity of the church would have been secure. If such a family is a threat to the church, every man or woman who has engaged in premarital sexual relations --or even petting,^{or} committed adultery; and been forgiven of it by their mate poses just as much threat to the purity of

10 the church. If questions are going to be asked about prior marriages, questions ought to be asked about petting, premarital sex, and adultery before baptizing the individual. ~~It seems~~ strange that a man and woman who were chaste before marriage, completely faithful to their spouse while married to them, but divorced because of other differences, should be considered a threat to the purity of the church and refused admittance to the church when a man who may have seduced half of the girls in his graduating class, spent more nights in houses of prostitution than he spent at home, and has been the cause of three of his secretaries leaving town should not be considered a threat simply because he never had the decency to marry one of them. Whatever grounds upon which one might argue the church's

20 right or responsibility to set in judgement upon previous marriages before admitting one into fellowship, maintaining the purity of the church hardly seems to be a solid footing.

The second question pertained to whether or not the church has the ability to judge righteous judgement in cases where a divorce has taken place years previous to one's desire to obey; and, not infrequently, on the opposite side of the country. Did the Lord intend for the church to get into the investigative business even if it possessed the tools to do so? A hypothetical case shall be used to illustrate the quandry in which the church finds itself when it attempts to dig back five, ten, twenty years or more and decide guilt of innocence in such

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cases. Although hypothetical, for those who have done much counseling in marriage and divorce cases, the case will not seem at all beyond reason.

Supposing that aliens are amenable to the new covenant on marriage and divorce how would the church judge righteous judgement in the following case? A couple marries and lives together for a time. The wife is extremely jealous and repeatedly accuses her husband of unfaithfulness, which he repeatedly denies. Although she cannot prove that he has committed adultery, her suspicions become so strong and life is made so miserable for her husband that when she demands a divorce he offers no protest. His failure to contest the divorce is taken as an admission of guilt. The man, being now legally free, begins to date his secretary. His ex-wife is now totally convinced that he was having an affair with his secretary before the divorce. Time goes on and she begins to date, and soon they have both remarried. Twenty years later, the woman and her second husband hear the gospel and wish to obey it. When questioned about their former marital status, the wife freely tells her story, making a very good circumstantial case against her first husband. Remember, if the church is duty bound in such cases, it cannot bring back a no verdict. The couple's souls and the church's purity are at stake.

Having become well acquainted with the woman and her second husband and knowing them to be likeable and honest people, the church weighs what is purely a twenty-one-year-old circumstantial evidence and finds in favor of the woman. Her divorce was on scriptural grounds, therefore the present union is holy and she and her husband are accepted for baptism. A righteous judgement has been rendered, the purity of the church has been preserved, and wisdom has prevailed. Or has it? Was the first husband guilty as charged or was he the victim of a jealous wife? To thicken the plot, let two previously unrevealed facts now be made known. After the divorce, but before her husband had remarried, the woman now seeking membership in the body of Christ began dating the man to whom she is presently married. On three or four occasions they had, in moments of weakness, engaged in sexual intercourse. During questioning the fact came to light, but it was decided by

those sitting in judgement that since her first husband was put away for unfaithfulness this sin did not nullify the second union. It was a sin, to be sure, but it would be forgiven at baptism just as any other sin. The second piece of evidence, which only God and the man involved know for sure, is that the man was not guilty of unfaithfulness to any degree before the divorce. As a matter of fact, he and his second wife abstained from sexual intercourse until after they were married.

While the man's ex-wife and her husband are seeking membership in the body of Christ in one state, he and his second wife also learn the truth and seek membership in the body of Christ in another state. The same type of tribunal is assembled to judge righteous judgement. The circumstances of the divorce are laid bare. The man, unaware, of course, that his first wife had committed adultery with the man to whom she is now married, could only state that he had been unjustly accused and put away. He had entered a second union before his first wife remarried, so even if the tribunal were inclined to judge that the first party to remarry became guilty of adultery, freeing the other to remarry, he would be no better off. In fact, that made him the guilty party. It is tragic, he is told, that he was unjustly accused and put away. However, in light of the fact that he had not put away his wife for adultery, he was now living in an unholy union and his precious children are illegitimate. In order to be accepted into Christ, his family must be broken up, and he and his wife must live a life of celibacy. *Ezra 10*

When all of the righteous judgements have been rendered, a woman guilty of jealousy, false accusations, putting away an innocent husband, and of adultery is admitted to the church. Her victim is shut out of the kingdom. Since the church is not omniscient, it could not, of course, know the true facts. And that is precisely why it should stick to fishing in such cases and leave the sorting to God's appointed angels. For a church to refuse to pass judgement in such cases is a far cry from its refusing to pass judgement upon clear cases of immorality in its midst as Corinth was doing. Even if God should ultimately

bar both couples from heaven, the church would not be guilty of complicity even if it admitted both couples. It simply does not have the means to judge righteous judgement in such cases. And that inability poses no threat to the purity of the church.

Contrary to the idea that such people are a blot upon the church, they are a beautiful example of the gospel's power to change men. Paul says that some at Corinth were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and ^{swindlers} ~~swinders~~; but then he says, "you were washed, but you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (I Cor 6:9-11). The church is not kept pure by refusing to admit those honest enough to ^{confess} ~~admit~~ that they have sinned. "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her; that he might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless" (Eph 5:25-27).

Christ will take care of the cleansing, but the church is responsible for discipline. It is unfortunate that this word has come to be associated only with administering punishment after the commission of sin. True discipline involves preventive teaching and instruction. It is my firm conviction that the divorce dilemma will not get better in the church until we spend as much or more time in trying to help people save their marriages as we spend in trying to fix blame and administer punishment after the divorce. The ^{remainder} ~~remainder~~ of this book will deal with what I believe to be the three greatest causes of marital breakup. These thoughts first appeared in The Christian Family Magazine. They are included here with only minor changes.

For every two new marriages in the United States there is one divorce. Desertions which are often called "the poor man's divorce" are said to equal the number of legal divorces, making the total number of marriages terminated each year equal to the total number of new marriages contracted. But is divorce really the problem? One has described divorce as society's means of burying dead marriages. Just as we cannot have a funeral without a body, we can't have a divorce dilemma

until we first have a marriage dilemma. As long as the church concentrates only on the divorce dilemma and gives little if any attention to the marriage dilemma, we will be faced with the problem of rendering righteous judgement in some very hard cases --but cases for which we have a very clear responsibility. If we do nothing about the marriage dilemma, how righteous is our judgement going to be when we do render it in the divorce cases that come before us? There are, I believe, three things more than anything else that massacre our marriages: a faulty view of persons, a faulty view of sex, and a faulty view of the marriage laws of God. It is the church's responsibility to give guidance in all of these areas. In far too many cases, the church's instruction in the area of sex has been a simple "Don't! Cause if you do, God'll getch-ya." There was, sometimes, the added warning of possible pregnancy and reproach upon the church. The church can practice preventive discipline which will help couples save marriages, thus removing the necessity of so much judgement in after-the-fact cases. Proper views upon the three points mentioned above can be instilled within the hearts of believers. *[But even then, hard hearts will disobey God!!]*

When God gave the Law through Moses, He did not see fit to correct all of the abuses of marriage that had accumulated through the years in the absence of a written revelation. While divorce was not His will, He permitted it because of the hardness of men's hearts. This permission was tacit for the Gentiles and legislated for the Jews. The divorce laws found in the Law were very much like those found in society at large at the time. Due to the fact that divorce was so firmly entrenched in society, God did not try to abolish it, only control it. It must be remembered that ~~the old covenant was one of the flesh and not of the heart.~~ To impose the principles laid down by Christ on the mount upon those who stood at the foot of Sinai would have been virtually impossible. ~~These hearts were of stone,~~ and the power to transform those had not yet come. Not only was divorce tolerated, but a dual standard in reference to it was also tolerated. The man could put away his wife, but she did not have this power. A man could have any number of wives

or concubines, but the woman was allowed only one husband. Malachi upbraids his brethren for dealing treacherously with the wives of their youth, their companies and wives by covenant. So while God hated divorce, the law was vague enough that some had come to hold to the teaching that a man could put away his wife for the most trivial of causes, including burning his bread. Women then had come to be treated pretty much as things instead of persons.

Today, both men and women seem to view the opposite sex as an object to be used rather than a person to love and fulfill. People have become disposable, like paper towels, automobiles, and houses. When we have received all that we desire from them, we cast them aside for a new model. Vows of "until death do we part" have become just idle words for all too many people. I am familiar with a case in which a young lady married a young man, quit college, and went to work to put him through school. She was willing to sacrifice her own education for his because, after all, what would benefit one would benefit both. The young man completed his college work, went into the business field, and quickly rose to the top echelons of his company. He then informed his wife that he was not sure that he could live with her anymore. She was an embarrassment to him because of her lack of education. She was not a person to him. She was a possession to be used.

Young people, when dating, ought to take a careful look at those whom they date. Not infrequently does one observe young women who keep young men dangling on the string just to make sure that they have a date for all of the important functions. They don't really care for the young men and will not date them if others more suitable are available, but they want to know that the standbys are there and waiting to answer their call should they not receive one from Mr. Right. Young men are not above playing this game either. If they will use one another while dating, think how much more they will use one another after the marriage. When persons are viewed as objects of gratification, things to be used, rather than persons made in God's image --persons with the power to love deeply and therefore be hurt deeply-- marriages are going to continue to be murdered at an alarming rate.

When one has a faulty view of persons, it should not be surprising that he also has a faulty view of sex. There was a time when sex was pretty much viewed as an evil appetite to be tolerated in marriage. Today sex is viewed by many people simply as an appetite, no different than a craving for peanuts which has no moral, spiritual, or emotional ramifications. If one craves peanuts, he buys a package, eats the nuts, crumples up the package, and throws it away. When one craves sexual intercourse, he finds someone willing to satisfy his craving, takes what they have to give, crumples them up, and throws them away. People are only packages --things-- and sex is only an appetite. Who can condemn one for satisfying an appetite? But sex is neither evil nor a simple biological appetite. It touches us at the very roots of our being. We are sexual beings, not beings with sexual organs attached as an embellishment. Sex isn't something we do, really; it is something we are. Jesus reminds us that in the beginning God made male and female. We are one or the other, and as such we are sexual beings. We relate to all other persons in the world as sexual beings. This doesn't mean that we engage in sexual intercourse with everyone, or even desire to. But we are male and female and we relate to other males and females as such. If we do not relate to our mothers and fathers as sexual beings, our own sexual identities will probably be blurred. We might even struggle with or succumb to homosexuality. God designed us as sexual beings, and the ultimate interaction with other sexual beings is sexual intercourse. This is not to say that one cannot be fulfilled without sexual intercourse. Jesus was totally fulfilled in the life that He lived. Many others lead rich, full lives without ever engaging in sexual intercourse; but if one is engaging in sexual intercourse, it should be touching him at the very deepest level of his being. Maybe you are thinking as you read this, "Well, it certainly doesn't do that to me!" Maybe not, but if it doesn't, you are neither giving nor receiving what God intended.

A second area of misunderstanding in the area of sex has to do with what makes fornication and adultery sinful. It is not the sexual content of the act itself.

The act of fornication or adultery is no different than the sanctioned act of intercourse in marriage. ~~Fornication and adultery are not like marriage.~~

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act itself is an abomination to God. Fornication and adultery are wrong precisely because these acts are no different than the sanctioned act. Jesus asked the Pharisees, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" (Matt 19:4-5). But Paul writes, "Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For He says, 'The two will become one flesh'" (I Cor 6:16). So the act of fornication makes two people one body just the same as the sanctioned act of intercourse. What is the difference then? Jesus pointed out that marriage involved "leaving and cleaving." One leaves the closest people on earth to him and cleaves unto this one with whom he is to be one body. This is commitment, total, life long commitment, to the person with whom one seeks sexual union. And because the act of intercourse is no different in fornication and adultery than in marriage, no two people should ever be united in body unless both of them have this total, life-long commitment to the happiness of the other. C.S. Lewis puts these very true words into the mouth of the senior tempter, Screwtape: "The truth is that wherever a man lies with a woman, there whether they like it or not, a transcendental relation is set up between them which must be eternally enjoyed or eternally endured."

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If two people can walk away from marriage or an affair, for that matter, without ripping out some of the roots of their being, it is because they are already dead sexually. They are not functioning as sexual beings, but --at best-- animals, and --at the worst-- copulating machines. The faulty view of persons made in God's image, as well as this faulty view of sex, as led people to believe that they can come together as casually as a bee upon a flower and go their way without consequences. The facts and ~~the Bible~~ prove them wrong. Again, if they can come together this casually, they are missing one of God's greatest blessings;

and we must feel sorry for them. Elmer H. Duncan comments on Kierkegaard's observation that the search for pleasure after pleasure doesn't produce lasting happiness: "The fact seems to be that the Seducer and many of the young (and sad to say, also their elders) of our day think of sex as one thinks of engaging in some sport, such as football. We practice to become proficient in sports, and gain greater enjoyment from playing the sport well. But the end of this routine is boredom, not the happiness we seek. We want more than that. We want ultimately to belong to someone, who also belongs to us, and only marriage can achieve this result. A life of endless seduction cannot; a person who gives himself or herself sexually to everyone ⁴ never really belongs to anyone."

Add to our faulty view of persons and sex a faulty view of God's marriage law and we have the makings for one of the greatest ^{dilemmas} ~~threats~~ that marriage has ever faced. Marriage is viewed by many simply as a means of procreation and the release of sexual tensions. But marriage is more than mating, even if the mating is for life. Many animals mate for life, some not remating even if their mate is killed. Yet, none of these animals experience what God intended for man to experience. God uses the marriage relationship to describe Christ and the church, and He says that this relationship is permanent. But the doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage is not the same as the doctrine, let's say, of the indissolubility of the Union. A little over a hundred years ago, some of the Southern states declared themselves divorced from the rest of the Union and attempted to establish a new marriage involving only themselves. This divorce was challenged by the North, who declared that the union of the states was indissoluble. The Northern victory secured this doctrine, else we might be a bunch of little countries today. But had the South won, the doctrine of the right of secession would have been as firmly established, for there is no natural law which supports the doctrine of the indissolubility of the Union. Such is not the case with the indissolubility of marriage. Our nature as sexual beings is part of that law. We are male and female and by nature --by the way God created us-- when a male and female are joined sexually, they become one flesh. This is

not like the law against breaking the speed limit. As far as the law of the land is concerned, if one drives down the highway at 75 miles per hour and a policeman doesn't catch him, he got away with it. ~~We cannot violate God's marriage law and~~

~~get away with it.~~ The law of the land may permit it, the church may ignore it, but it will break us. The law of the indissolubility of marriage is like the law that rules water, causing it to freeze at zero degrees centigrade and boil at 100 degrees centigrade. This law needs no outside enforcement. It enforces itself.

Once two people have ^{become} ~~come~~ one in marriage only death or adultery can legally free them, but this freedom is only legal, for there is much more involved than the nullification of a legal contract. Should I be unfaithful to my wife and she choose to divorce me, she would be free to marry; but she would not be free of me. When two people have what God intended in marriage, neither can walk away from that marriage without tearing ^{loose} ~~a~~ part of their ^{partner} ~~partner-loose~~ and carrying it with them. They also will leave a part behind. Marriage can be dissolved just as a person can be separated body from soul, but it cannot take place without the death of something intended by God to be so good. Only God can give life, but man can destroy it. Man can also destroy what God has joined in marriage, but he can't do it without murder -- the murder of a marriage. When it is dead, we bury it with what is called divorce.

The divorce dilemma will never be solved until the marriage dilemma is solved. The marriage dilemma will never be solved in the world until the world is converted to Christ. ~~The world's heart is no softer than was the heart of the Jews.~~ If ~~God's original intention~~ could not be successfully imposed upon the Jews, what makes one think that it can be ~~anyone~~ successfully imposed upon the world today. The divorce dilemma will never be solved in the church until we comprehend the truth about persons, sex, and marriage itself. That will not be comprehended until more time is spent on teaching about these things than is spent on what to do about divorces that took place before one's heart was changing from stone to flesh and the power was received to live as God intended.

Footnotes

1. "Fishing in the Lost Sea of Humanity," Don Campbell, World Evangelist, January 1976, p.
2. "The Divorce Dilemma," Don Campbell, The Christian Family Magazine, May, 1978, p.10.
3. The Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis, Christianity Today, Inc. 1969, p.76.
4. Soren Kierkegaard, Elmer H. Duncan, Makers of the Modern Theological Mind, Bob E. Patterson, Editor, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1966, p. 60.