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J. A. Dennis

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"HERE AM I...SEND ME!"

GIVE ME MEN!
By Dayton A. Manker
Miltonvale, Kansas

"Who will go?" the Master calleth,
Who, O who now, shall I send?
Give me men who have no holding,
But are willing all to spend.

I have work not meant for angels,
Work that someone has to do;
Heaven has no one to do it,
So I'm counting, man, on you!

Men alone to man the message,
Men, men only understand;
Men with purpose, men unbending,
Pure in heart and quick of hand.

"Here am I, Lord" comes the answer,
Send me, minding not the cost;
For mine eyes have seen Thy glory,
And a Vision of the lost.

Give me patience, power to labor,
'Till the cities wasted be:
'Till no ripened fields are bending,
'Till there's none to turn to Thee.

Holy Seraph, coal of fire,
Shine with everlasting glow:
Spreading empires, visions, eras,
Call me, crowd me — I will go!

— The Wesleyan Methodist

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom
shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here
am I; send me."

—Isaiah 6: 8
Alvin and Houston

Wednesday morning, March 30th, 1983, Mrs. Dennis and I drove to San Antonio, Texas, parked our car at the airport, and flew by Southwest Airlines to Houston Hobby Airport, arriving there at 12:35 noon. Mr. & Mrs. F. E. Ward met the plane and drove us to the Gateway Inn in Pasadena, Texas.

That evening Kenneth W. Ferguson drove us and Brother Ward to The Living Stones Church, at Alvin, Texas, where I gave my Testimony, “My Elder Brother”, at the invitation of Pastor Al Jandl. It was a blessed service in this fast-growing congregation. After the church service, Brother Ferguson drove us back to our Motel in Pasadena.

Thursday forenoon, March 31st, Mr. & Mrs F. E. Ward drove me and Mrs. Dennis across Houston to the Adam’s Mark Hotel, where we Registered in for The Regional Convention of Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International.

Thursday afternoon at 4:30, the Directors of Words of Life, Inc. accompanied by some of the Director’s wives, held our annual Business meeting and election of officers, in one of the Director’s Hotel Suite.

Thursday evening and all day Friday and Saturday, we enjoyed the F. G. B. M. F. I. teaching sessions, testimonies, men’s and women’s luncheons, and the closing banquet Saturday day, where Demos Shakarian shared some of the Fellowship’s Victories and achievements across the United States and in foreign countries.

Friday night, Evangelist R. W. Schambach Preached a powerful message on “The Three Hebrew Children in the Fiery Furnace” that resulted in about 50 coming forward for Salvation, and many pressing to the front of the hall for their healing.

Sunday morning, April 3rd, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond F. Anderson, our dear friends for many years, took me and Mrs. Dennis to Breakfast in the Hotel Dining room, then drove us to the Hobby Airport, where we boarded a Southwest Airlines Jet, and arrived in San Antonio, Texas at 12:30 noon.

We drove back to Kerrville that afternoon, enjoying the beautiful day, and Blue Bonnets along the way, and Praising the Lord Jesus for the way He had arranged this holiday for us, for His Love and Protection all the way, and for the many lovely friends, old and new, that made the trip so blessed and refreshing.

Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Dennis

Reckon It Done

“Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (II Cor. 5:17)

How can we grasp this great truth? How is it possible for us, weak and human and sinful, to live as a son of God?

First, we must realize and understand just exactly what Jesus did for us when He died on the Cross of Calvary, realize what He bought and paid for, so that we can believe, accept and claim our new standing before God.
Many people have a hazy comprehension of what Jesus purchased for them at Calvary. They know that He died in their stead, that if they accept Him as their Saviour and continue in his steps, that some day they will inherit Heaven.

But most Christians seem to have little understanding of what Jesus bought and paid for, for them to enjoy while they are HERE ON THIS EARTH, during their mortal life time.

Few have grasped the fact that Jesus made it possible, yes desired it to be so in every born-again believer’s life, for us to live triumphantly over sin, sickness and all the attacks of the devil, right on this earth!

How is this possible?

All things we get from God must be accepted by faith. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, let any man should boast.” (Eph. 2: 8-9)

God’s Word says Jesus not only died on the Cross as an atonement for our sins, so that we could some day enter and enjoy Heaven; but it as plainly says that Jesus actually made it possible, yes planned that it become an actuality, for ALL those who accept Him, to participate spiritually in his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, while right here on this earth.

Jesus did not die for himself. He died for us. His victory over the devil was to be our victory. His triumphal bursting from the tomb was to make possible our triumph over the devil, too. His ascension to the right hand of the Father was meant to carry us up with him “far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion” of the devil and every other creature.

His victory was won in order that we might live victoriously. His ascension made possible our living above and beyond the reach of the devil with his curse of sin and sickness and defeat.

Of course, to share in Christ’s resurrection and his ascension, it is necessary for us to be willing also to share, spiritually, in his death and burial.

The “old man” must die before the “new man” can arise and ascend. God’s Word promises this for the born-again Believer.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were Baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that hence forth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

“Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.” (Rom. 6: 3-9)

Paul had laid hold on this truth when he cried out. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

If the old man is dead, then the man that is now occupying our bodies is a “new creature,” raised up to walk “in newness of life.” We can only walk in this newness of life, as we see that we have become a partaker of his victory over the devil.

But God’s Word promises even better things than this resurrection of the new man, with his victory over the devil. It promises that we are actually participants, spiritually and potentially, of Christ’s ascension “far above all the power of the devil” to harm us.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2: 4-6)

We have been reading these verses for years, yet have not grasped their great promise.

Paul is actually saying that, not only did Jesus rise from the dead and was carried up to Heaven to sit at the Father’s right hand, but that we, if born-again, have also risen from our old dead life, a new creature in Christ Jesus, and we have been “raised up together” with Jesus and are “sitting together” with Jesus at the right hand of the Father.

But, you say, “That is fantastic, I am not there with Jesus. I am right here on earth, amid all the trials and temptations and defeats and suffering that the devil puts upon us. Paul is speaking of our ascension after we die.”

No. Read it again.

“Even when we were dead (past tense) in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.” (Eph. 2: 5) Christ was quickened 1900 years ago. Paul said we were quickened with Him.

No, we weren’t living then, but we can reach back by faith and lay hold on this promise, the same as we must reach back
by faith and lay hold on our being “buried with him into his death,” which also occurred 1900 years ago. (else we would not be saved).

“And hath (already done) raised us up together, and made (past tense) us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2: 6)

But you say, “If that were really true, I would be triumphant over all the power of the devil, instead of him giving me such a rough time as he has been doing.” “If I were actually sitting up there with Jesus I would have authority and power over the devil. He could put no disease or sin or defeat upon me. Nothing he could do would hurt me.”

True, and that’s exactly what Jesus promised us and bought and paid for, and made possible for us to enjoy.

“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall be any means hurt you.” (Luke 10: 19)

“For sin shall not have dominion over you.” (Rom. 6: 14)

“Who (God) hath delivered us from the power of darkness (the devil), and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

“In whom we have redemption (liberty) through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1: 13-14)

But you say, “I’m still having trouble, I’m still sick. The devil still has dominion over me in many ways. How can these Scriptures mean what you say they mean and still be in bondage to the devil and his torments?”

Jesus said, “According to your faith be it unto you.” (Matt. 9: 29)

Paul said, “By grace are ye saved through faith.” (Eph. 2: 8)

Why is one Christian able to live a victorious, joyous life, while another is continually defeated, frustrated, sick and bowed down by sorrow and woe?

God is no respecter of persons. He wants every believer to live victoriously. And He has made it equally possible for all to do so, to share Christ’s victory over the devil, over sin, sickness, the “old man.” For all to sit up there with Jesus, far above the devil’s clutches.

Why does one Christian seem to attain that place of victory, while another, equally good, suffers continual defeat?

“According to your faith be it unto you.”

The victorious Christian must first SEE what God has purchased for him with the death, burial resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. He must BELIEVE that this state of Victory is meant for him personally, and he must CLAIM it for his own.

How? By faith.

Let me paint you a word picture which enabled me to see this place of victory, sitting up there with Jesus, triumphant over the devil.

First, see yourself on the ground being attacked by a ferocious mad dog. (God’s Word says the devil “as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (I Pet. 5: 8)

On the level with the mad dog, you are no match for him. He can attack and kill you, unless help comes.

But beside you is a tall tree. You are not agile enough to climb that tree and thus escape the danger. But see on a stout overhanging limb, a friend, a man with strong arms and a willing heart. See him, as you cry out for help, reach down and with one strong sweep of his arm, catch you up to safety, out of reach of the charging mad dog. With tender hands he places you on the sturdy limb beside himself.

Still trembling, you look down. The mad dog is still there, as real and as powerful and as ferocious as ever. But you are beyond his reach. He growls and snarls and threatens. He leaps and snaps at your heels as they hang down above him. But he cannot touch you. All he can do is rage at his defeat, at your escape.

You turn and thank your benefactor. Did you earn your escape? No. Were you able to work your way up the tree? No. It was purely an act of grace, of his kindness.

But also an act of faith. When you cried out for help, he reached down his strong hand and invited you to reach up and take hold of that rescuing hand. If you had refused to reach up and take the proffered hand you would have been lost. But now you are safe. By his goodness and grace.

Have the dog disappear? Not, not yet. He is still as real as ever, still as strong and mean and ferocious as ever. But he can’t hurt you, as long as you stay up there above his reach.

Of course, if you foolishly jump down, or go to sleep and fall off the place of safety, you are again at the mad dog’s mercy, and he has no mercy.

Friend, that is a picture of our Victory in Jesus. The Victory Jesus won for us and is calling for us to share with Him.

We think we are down on the devil’s level, about to be devoured and defeated. We feel his hot breath, his symptoms and
his pains, his sicknesses and his defeats. And we cry out in despair.

But spiritually, potentially (and actually if we can see, and grasp it by faith) we are not down there any more. No longer are we at the mercy of the devil. We have been "raised up together with Jesus," to the same place of safety he won for himself and bought for us, when by the Holy Ghost He rose triumphantly from the tomb and rose to sit at His Father's right hand.

We are sitting up there now beside Him, sharing his victory over the devil, out of reach of the "roaring lion" that has made life so miserable for us in the past.

We are sitting up there on His Word. Standing on his promises, covered and protected by his redeeming blood, with his precious and powerful Name on our lips with which to resist the charging devil.

"Nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10: 19)

You are out of the devil's reach.

All he can do is roar and frighten you, and he can't do that if you refuse to let him.

But you say, "That all sounds mighty nice, but I'm still sick. The devil still has me down. I would like to BE up there, as you say, but I am not. How can I get up there where God's Word says I am, when I'm not?"

"According to your faith be it unto you." How do you get up there? You get up there by "reckoning yourselves" already up there—as God's Word says you are.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6: 11)

But you say, "Is this Christian Science," "mind over matter," will power, affirmations?"

No. This is God. This is God's Word. Just reckon it done.

The word, "reckon" means more than think, suppose, assume, or even believe. It includes all these but further denotes an accounting a summing up, a keeping of books.

Paul is saying, "Take into account all the circumstances, all the promises, all the benefits, all the power of Jesus' blood, all the truth of his Word, all the Victory in his Name. Add up all that the Word promises—that you ARE a son of God, that you ARE a new creature, that you HAVE BEEN delivered from the devil's clutches, that you DO HAVE all authority and power over him. Figure in all the promises and statements that you ARE up there in a place of safety and victory—on the Word of God—and that nothing the devil can do will hurt you.

And then "reckon it done." Reckon yourselves UP THERE, not down here.

And thank the Lord for your deliverance and quit asking Him to deliver you. For if you are up there, as He says you are, why keep asking him to do something He has already done? After the friend had swung you onto the tree to safety, you wouldn't keep on crying out to him to reach down his hand and save you, now would you?

And, more, tell the devil face to face, personally, that you are no longer at his mercy. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Say directly and aloud to him: "Satan, I am no longer under your dominion or your power. You cannot harm me, or put sickness or disease upon me. I have dominion over all your power and nothing you can do can hurt me. (Luke 10: 19) God has delivered me out of your clutches and has raised me up together with Jesus so I am out of your reach. Nothing you can do can hurt or frighten me again. I am standing on God's Word, covered by the blood of Jesus, and the Name of Jesus on my lips gives me victory over you."

Of course the devil will roar and snarl and snap at you. He'll say, "You're trying to kid yourself into thinking you are up there. When in REALITY you are right down here at my mercy. You feel that pain when I kick you, don't you? You still have that disease I gave you, don't you?"

Your reply must be positive and emphatic, "I reckon myself dead to sin and sickness. I reckon myself up there, out of your clutches. For it is written, "Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. That means me, devil. You can't hurt me any more. Get thee hence, I command you in the Name of Jesus."

But you say, "I don't have that kind of faith. That is for folks with strong faith. I have prayed for faith to be healed but I don't have it."

Faith is largely a matter of the will. You can "will to believe" or you can will not to believe.

You had the choice of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ when you were saved, or the choice of "not believing" on him and being damned.

You threw your will on the side of believing or you would not have been saved.

Likewise you can "will to believe" every other promise in God's Word, or you can weakly succumb to the "will not to be-

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lieve” and let the devil rob you of the inheritance that Jesus
died to purchase for you.

Jesus said many of the Jews of his day on earth did not be-
lieve on him because THEY had closed their eyes and their ears
and their hearts.

“For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are
dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time
they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and
should understand with their heart, and should be converted,
and I should heal them.” (Matt. 13: 15)

Jesus here said those who rejected him had CLOSED THEIR
EYES. They had “willed not to believe.”

People speak of their “lack of faith” as though it were a
misfortune that they were powerless to do anything about. But
God’s Word says that unbelief is sin. Then it must be confessed
as any other sin, and forgiveness asked for our “evil heart of
unbelief.” (Heb. 3: 12)

And God has promised, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful
and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all un­
righteousness.” (I John 1: 9)

Yes, we can determine to a great extent whether we will be-
lieve or not believe, by throwing our will on the side of be­
lieving. We can determine that we WILL BELIEVE God’s
promises, for He is “not a man that he should lie, neither the
son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he
not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”
(Num. 23: 19)

How do you get up there on the Word, far above the power
of satan to harm you?
You will to be up there, by God’s grace and on the authority
of his Word.

You “reckon yourself” up there, now, just as God’s Word
says you are.

You will to look, not at appearances, or symptoms, or what
people say, but you will to look only at God’s Word and what
it says.

You “reckon” God told the truth. You “reckon” his Word
Can be trusted. You “reckon” He knows more about you than
you do yourself. You “reckon” if He says you are up there
with Jesus, far above the reach of the devil, that you ARE up
there.

You “reckon” you’ll tell the devil so.

You “reckon” you’ll thank God for his unspeakable gift of
deliverance from the devil’s clutches. And you do.
You “reckon” you’ll act like you were really up there in a
place of victory with Jesus, and you begin acting like it.
You “reckon” you’ll ignore the devil’s symptoms and lies
and threats and appearances, and you “reckon” you’ll keep
your eyes on God’s Word, and you begin to do it.

You “reckon” you’ll say what God’s Word says about your
victory over the devil, rather than what the devil says about his
dominion over you, and you begin saying it, now.

That, friend, is God’s victory. That is the deliverance which
Jesus purchased for you. It is your rightful inheritance. You can
“reckon” it is yours, and it will be.

It is up to you what you “reckon.”

You can “reckon” you are sick, defeated still under the
devil’s dominion, or you can “reckon” you have all authority
over him because you have been “raised up together with
Jesus.”

You can “reckon” you are still down on the ground with the
mad dog tearing at you, helpless and undone.
Or you can “reckon” you are caught up out of danger, far
above his power to hurt you.

This is not Christian Science (so-called). This is God’s Word.

God brings to pass what his children believe Him for.
You can “reckon” you’ll believe and act on God’s Word. Or
you can “reckon” you “can’t believe” and enjoy it.

It all depends on what you “reckon.”

God’s Word says, “Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto
sin (and to the authority of the devil) through Jesus Christ our
Lord.”

God says, “Reckon it done.”
The devil says, “I reckon you’re undone.”

What do you “reckon?”

J. A. Dennis

“LET THE REDEEMED
OF THE LORD SAY SO”

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall
suffer persecution.” (II Tim. 3:1)

Has that verse ever bothered you? Have you wondered why
more Christians in America have not suffered persecution? I
think that 'this generation' of Christians is not living as godly
as they ought. Always, there are various sins contributing to
ungodliness. But one thing is sure: sin will always silence! And,
a silenced church will never suffer persecution. A godly church
will be vocal about their religion. Herein lies the reason for
either persecution or the lack of it.

If Paul had never opened his mouth he would never have
experienced the persecution he did. By being vocal about the
gospel and his experience with the Lord he ran the risk of
being rejected, opposed, and persecuted. Our precious Lord
suffered the 'contradiction of sinners', yes, because of his deeds,
but also because his words were as sharp arrows into the hearts
of men.

As long as we’re 'close-mouthed' about who we are and
what we believe, we will suffer very little opposition from the
world of unbelievers in which we live. Look at the history of
persecution. Think of the preachers and churches that have
been ridiculed and fought. If all the godly shall suffer persecu­
tion, should not all "godly" Christians be vocal ones? Lift up
your voice O’ Zion!

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DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

IN THE LIGHT OF NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

"The testimony of the first three centuries affords no single instance of a writer who approves remarriage after divorce in any cause during the life of the separated partner."

LINDEL J. CARTER

Among the social problems facing the present generation few if any are more serious and perplexing than that of divorce and remarriage. It is a problem having to do with an evil which gnaws (present conditions indicate something more than "gnawing."—Ed. at the very vitals of our social order, an evil the magnitude of which in these latter days certainly is no credit to our twentieth century civilization.

In the United States of America there were 160,329 divorces in 1932, or one divorce to about every six marriages (The national ratio is now—1963—one to three. Ed.) In three of these states the number of divorces were considerably more than half the number of marriages. Joseph H. Choate is reported to have said not long before his death: "At the time of the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, in 1787, divorce was so rare an event as to be practically unknown, but by the diversity of laws in various states, and by the decline of marital morals, divorce has come to be one of the most shocking and disgusting evils of our day."

(All arguments for divorce and remarriage must still face this fact of history. Why the change? Ed.)

Nor is this evil confined to these United States. It constitutes a growing problem in other countries. For instance, in Canada, 887 divorces were granted in 1932, as compared with only sixty (note, only sixty!) divorces granted in that country the years before the World War I.

If divorced persons were prohibited from contracting a new alliance, arrangements for which are not infrequently made before the suit is begun."

THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

The divorce problem is not new. Moses had to deal with it in his day, and it was a storm center in the religious world when Christ was here. John the Baptist was imprisoned and ultimately lost his life as a result of speaking out on this connection, while the Pharisees tried to involve our Lord in the controversy which was then on between two rabbinic schools on the question of divorce.

One school, that of Hillel, went so far as to justify a man for divorcing his wife for such trivial causes as poor cooking, loud talking—and the fact that her husband had come to prefer some other woman! The school of Shammasi seems to have been much more conservative. Opinions differed then just as they do today, and we presume that when a man really made up his mind to have a new wife he managed somehow to interpret the law in such a way as to meet his particular case. So long as he conformed to the letter of the law as to the "writing of divorce" he felt justified. Human nature was much the same then as now.

When the question was put to Jesus, He faced the issue squarely, and we are glad for His recorded words on the subject. As His professed followers we do well to find out just what He said and what He meant, if possible, and then to take our stand on His teaching at whatever the cost. There can be no higher ideals than those set forth by the Master, and there certainly is a loud call for the highest and most unquestionable kind of precept and example in this matter of divorce and remarriage on the part of the church of Christ in these days of moral laxity and indifference. "Ye are the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world."

What, then, was the teaching of Christ in this matter of divorce and remarriage? He touches upon the question first in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:31, 32). He refers to the law of Moses (v.31; cf. Deut. 24:1-4), and then legislates Himself as follows:

"But I say unto you. That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." (Matt. 5:32).

The next reference to the subject chronologically is to be found in Luke 16:18, and reads as follows:

"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." (Luke 16:18).

It was not long after this that the Pharisees put to Jesus this question: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? (Matt. 19:3 cf. Mk. 10-2). Both Matthew and Mark record what Jesus said in this connection with reference to original and divine order (Gen. 2:24), and the reason for divorce legislation on the part of Moses (Matt. 19:4-5; Mk 10:3-9). We have these words:

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matt. 19:9).

The Pharisees evidently were silenced, but our Lord's disciples questioned Him further (Matt. 19:10; Mark 10:10); and Matthew records what Jesus said to them about eunuchs (Matt. 19:11,12), while Mark records another statement on the subject of divorce (Mark 10:11,12). The two verses read as follows:

"And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." (Mark 10:11, 12).

This completes the teaching of Christ on the subject of divorce and remarriage as recorded in the Gospels. And in the light of this teaching it is very evident that Christ did not sympathize with those of His day who thought that a man was justified in divorcing his wife "for every cause."

The legislation of Moses served as a temporary regulation, "because of the hardness of your hearts" (Matt. 19:8), and the present-day civil legislation allowing for divorce and remarriage on various grounds is intended to meet the present situation insofar as the world in general is concerned. "But from the beginning it was not so" (Matt. 19:8). Jesus goes back of all such legislation to God's
original law in the matter of marriage:

"And they twain shall be one flesh: so that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:8, 9; cf. Matt. 19:5, 6; Gen. 1:27; 2:24).

THE TEACHING OF PAUL

Paul also had something to say on this subject, and we quote a few verses from his inspired Epistles, as follows:

"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from the law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Romans 7:2, 3).

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" (1 Cor. 7:10, 11).

"The wife is bound by the law (‘by the law’ omitted in Revised Version of 1901 edition) as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7:39).

Thus it will be seen that there is a far cry from the teaching of Christ and Paul in relation to the marriage bond to what is taking place today in the world about us in the matter of divorce and remarriage. But followers of the Christ certainly should be expected to maintain a higher standard than that of the outside world in these last days of moral degeneracy and social decay. And what we are discussing here is especially for Christians.

There is sometimes a danger of our looking to the world and being more or less influenced by worldly practices, perhaps without fully realizing it, when as "the light of the world" Christ's followers should seek to find out what the New Testament teaches, and then live it out before the world at whatever the cost. And we may be sure that all Scripture is perfectly harmonious in its teaching when rightly understood.

THE ONE "CAUSE"

As for divorce and remarriage it is probably true that the great majority of Protestants would say that the New Testa-

ment makes allowance for at least one cause, and that one cause is adultery. Even some of the most conscientious of Christians, people who would not only for a moment think of unholding divorce and remarriage on any other ground, are quite sincere in their belief that both are allowable for the innocent party in case of adultery. The supposed authority for this position is a certain exception in Matt. 5:32 and Matt. 19:9.

Now it is no pleasant task to advance a minority opinion on a question of this kind, and the writer certainly does not wish to embarrass conscientious fellow Christians who may not see eye to eye with him in this connection. But we want the truth; and surely there can be no valid objection to a re-examination of our Lord's teaching on this particular point.

However we interpret the exception to which reference is made in the Gospel according to Matthew, that interpretation must be such as not to conflict with the plain teaching of Christ as recorded by Mark and Luke, and the teaching of the inspired Apostle Paul. And it must have been noted that no ground for divorce and remarriage appears in what we have quoted from the Gospels according to Mark and Luke, and The Epistles of Paul. Indeed, nothing is said in the Gospel according to Matthew about the husband's remarrying after putting away his wife, if we accept the reading referred to in the Revised Version footnote under Matt. 19:9.

Many recent critics even go so far as to claim that the exceptive clause in these two texts from Matthew is an early interpolation or gloss, and not to be attributed to Christ at all. This may be an easy way of getting rid of the apparent difficulty, but the present writer does not approve of taking such liberties with the text as it comes down to us. Nor does he think it necessary to substitute the footnote reading under Matt. 19:9, Revised Version, in order to interpret Matthew harmoniously with Mark, Luke, and Paul.

Accepting, therefore, the commonly received text, let us endeavor to find out what is meant by this exceptive clause as recorded by Matthew. What does the exception cover? And why is it found in this particular Gospel and nowhere else?

THE WORD USED BY OUR LORD

If the reader will turn again to Matt. 5:32 and 19:9, he will note that the word used by our Lord in stating this exception is translated not adultery, but fornication. This, as the writer understands it, is the key to a right understanding of these two texts.

The word "adultery" does occur later in each of these texts, but it is the word "fornication" that is used in stating the one and only cause in the matter of putting away one's wife—"saving for the cause of fornication" (Matt. 5:52), "except it be for fornication" (Matt. 19:9). (And this of course before actual marriage as is explained later. Ed.).

That adultery and fornication are not the same thing is plainly evident from the manner in which these two sins are classified in the N. T. Thus we have—

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, etc." (Matt. 15:19; cf. Mark 7:21).

"Be not deceived neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers," etc. (1 Cor. 6:9). "Now the works of the flesh are these: adultery, fornication," etc. (Gal. 5:19).

Indeed, the two different words for unchaste conduct, "fornication" and "adultery" as used in the two texts under consideration show that two different things are intended. If our Lord meant to make adultery the one cause of putting away one's wife, why did He not use the same word in stating the exception as He used later in each of these texts in stating what follows in the case of remarriage?

According to the primary definition as given by Webster, adultery is unfaithful-

LIFE'S WOUNDS

They say the world is round,
And yet I often think it square,
So many little hurts we get
From the corners here and there.

But one sad truth in life I've found,
While traveling to the west:
The only ones who really wound
Are those who love us best.

The choicest smile, the sweetest grace
Are oft to strangers shown.
The careless mien, the frowning face
Are given to our own.

We flatter those we scarcely know,
We please the fleeting guest,
Those who only see
Are given to our own.

Now it is no pleasant task
To make adultery the one cause of putting away one's wife—"saving for the cause of fornication" (Matt. 5:52), "except it be for fornication" (Matt. 19:9).

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ness on the part of a married person, while the sin of fornication applies to the unmarried. And what, we ask, is adultery as defined in these two texts from Matthew? As Dr. Walker Gwynne so well points out, “that fornication and adultery are not synonymous both passages plainly testify, for in both adultery is only used to define the sin of a married person, or an unmarried person who marries one who is divorced” (Holy Matrimony and Common Sense, page 134).

Webster’s primary definition of fornication is quite in harmony with the use of the word in 1 Cor. 7:2; and, while the word may sometimes be used in a broader sense, it is to be noted that the Greek word for “fornication” is never once translated “adultery” in our English Bible.

**A JEWISH APPLICATION**

In the days of our Lord a Jewish betrothal was especially binding in character says the Jewish Encyclopedia; “After Betrothal the parties were regarded as man and wife; and the act could be dissolved only by death or by a formal bill of divorce. If the woman proved unfaithful during the period of betrothal she was treated as an adulteress, and her punishment (that of stoning; Deut. 22:23, 24) was considered to be much more severe than that (strangulation) inflicted upon the unfaithful married woman (Deut. 22:22; Sanh. 52b).”

“Betrothal, according to ancient Jewish law,” says The New Century Bible, “was an essential preliminary to, though distinct from, the marriage proper. The latter consisted in the bridegroom ‘taking’ the bride to his house. But betrothal constituted a relation of binding obligation between the parties which conferred the status of marriage. Thus, if the man died before the marriage took place, the betrothed woman was treated as a widow. After betrothal, therefore, but before marriage (the two ceremonies were anciently separated by an interval, the man was legally ‘husband’ (cf. Gen. 29:21; Deut. 22:23f); and the bond could only be severed by a formal divorce, which necessitated the giving by the man to the woman of a formal document and the payment by him of a fine.”

A case to the point is that of Joseph and Mary (Matt. 1:18-20). Joseph is called “her husband” (v. 19), and Mary his “wife” (v. 20), while as yet they were only “espoused” (“betrothed”) and “before they came together” (v. 18). They were husband and wife, but only so in the sense of betrothal when Joseph “was minded to put her away” (v. 19). This could be done publicly before a court of justice, or her letter of divorce could be “handed her privately, in the presence of two witnesses” (Edersheim).

The exceptive clause in our Lord’s legislation on the subject of a divorce and remarriage as recorded in the same Gospel certainly would cover a case of that nature.

To quote Dr. Gwynne once more: “Fornication was the sin of the unmarried and after the annulment of what was only a solemn engagement, the future marriage of either party was not forbidden. On the other hand, adultery is the sin of the married, after the bond of the ‘one flesh’ has been formed by consummation. Here, while both parties remained alive, there could be no remarriage of either, though the scribes and lawyers of the day, like some of their modern representatives in our own legislatures and courts, stretched and perverted the ancient law to allow divorce from the bond ‘for every cause’ (Matt. 19:3).”

In the light of all this let us now turn again to Matt. 5:32 and 19:9. “But I say unto you,” said Jesus, “That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.” “And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (5:32); while the man who “shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery” (19:9).

This means, of course, that in the case of a man’s putting away his betrothed wife on account of fornication, he would not be guilty of adultery if he should marry another party, inasmuch as he was not actually married to the woman whom he puts away. The exceptive clause might well be placed in parenthesis.

The Gospel of Matthew is especially Jewish in its terminology and appeal, which may well account for the exceptive clause in this particular Gospel and nowhere else. It would apply, and quite so, to cases of infidelity during a Jewish betrothal. While we would expect such a clause in Matthew’s record in order to meet a distinctively Jewish situation, we can well understand why the clause does not appear in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, which seem to have been written more especially for the Gentile world.

**“TILL DEATH DO US PART”**

A news item informs, us of a marriage ceremony in which, at the bride’s request, the words, “As long as we love each other or until legally divorced,” were substituted for the words, “Till death do us part.” But whether the wording of the marriage contract be actually changed to suit the shallow views which so many hold today with respect to this ordinance, or whether there be marital reservations on the part of those who make these solemn vows, the words, “Till death do us part,” are certainly quite in accord with the original law of God as embodied in the teaching of Christ and Paul.

If there should be any thought of divorce on the part of those who are engaged to be married, they had better terminate their engagement before going any further. There are contracts that may be terminated at will, but marriage is something more than a contract. When consummated it means “one flesh” (Gen. 2:24) “no more twain, but one flesh” (Mark 10:8); and “the woman which hath an husband is bound by law to her husband so long as he liveth.” (Rom. 7:2).

A son may cease to love his father, he may even bring disgrace upon his parents; but he is still a son. And so it is with those who are united in marriage: there may be cessation of love; there may be incompatibility; there may be disgrace and regrets; there may even be cases where it seems necessary for husband and wife to live apart; but they are still husband and wife, “no more twain, but one flesh”—“till death do us part.”

There may, of course, be cases of prenuptial impediment or fraud of such a nature as to nullify the marriage contract beyond the shadow of a doubt, so that there is in reality no marriage. But the present writer fails to see, in the light of the New Testament, how a true and actually consummated marriage can be Scripturally dissolved by anything whatever in this present world that may take place between the time when the parties become “no more twain, but one flesh” and the death of either the husband or the wife.

As for the idea that adultery dissolves the marriage union ipso facto, it must be read into the exceptive clause in Matt. 5:32; 19:19. But we may well question such a conclusion. If marriage were dissolved by the sin of adultery, then, of course, it would be wrong for a man and woman to continue living together as man and wife, if either should commit that particular sin. And our Lord’s definition of adultery as given in Matt. 5:28 must not be overlooked in this connection. Moreover, if adultery actually dissolves the marriage union, then it follows that the guilty party as well as the innocent party...
would be free to remarry; which would mean an easy road, indeed, for a certain type of individuals to take, who might desire to change partners!

In this connection we quote from A New Commentary on Holy Scripture, published by The McMillan Co., 1928: “The view that adultery dissolves the marriage bond not only degrades the conception of marriage by making its physical side the dominant consideration: it involves two absurdities. First, a man may cease to be married and yet be unaware of the fact. Secondly, it makes adultery, or the pretence of having committed it, the one way to get rid of a marriage which has become distasteful, and puts a premium on adultery.”

Or in the words of Dollinger, as quoted by Dr. Gwynne in Holy Matrimony and Common Sense: “On this theory either party can at any moment destroy the marriage; and, if feeling it a burdensome yoke, or violently enamored of another person, is strongly tempted to annul by one act a contract formed for life; while the innocent party, no matter how anxious to forgive and preserve the marriage relation, must recognize and accept the actual dissolution of the marriage, and let the children of the guilty party be left fatherless and motherless.”

Can anyone conceive of Christ’s legislating so as to allow and encourage anything like that? I certainly cannot do so.

Separation may sometimes be absolutely necessary and for the best good of all concerned; but such separation should not be thought of as a dissolution of the marriage bond with the privilege of remarriage. So long as the door is left open for repentance and reconciliation, there is always the possibility of a reunion of husband and wife. But where it is assumed that a marriage can actually be dissolved, and a legal divorce is obtained and new alliance entered into, it is not so easy to retrace one’s steps, and especially where innocent children are involved.

There is generally a safe position to take on debatable questions; and, if this matter of divorce and remarriage is still considered debatable, we do well to adopt the safe position, and thus avoid the possibility of serious entanglements and after-regrets.

THE INNOCENT PARTY

In this matter of divorce and remarriage, as well as in all other matters, the follower of Christ should be guided by the New Testament law of love. Where there is sin there is suffering, and in this present world the innocent often have to suffer with the guilty. But Christianity is practicable. And it is better to suffer patiently and hopefully than to run the risk of displeasing Christ and coming under condemnation.

When two persons are united in marriage, it is “for better or for worse.” And if, unfortunately, there should arise anything to mar the anticipated bliss of wedded life and cause disappointment and heartache, we may be sure that divine grace will be given the obedient child of God for every emergency.

Even the sin of adultery is not unpardonable. Said Jesus to the adulteress who was brought before him: “Go, and sin no more” (Jn. 8:11). “When sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Rom. 5:20) God is willing to forgive the repentant sinner who pleads the merits of Christ’s atoning blood. And if God’s love dwells in our hearts, we, too, will be willing to forgive.

If the sin of adultery heads the list of “the works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19), it is also true that love heads the list of “the fruit of the Spirit.” (v. 22) And surely the child of God with God’s love in his or her heart should be expected to set an example in patience and willingness to forgive. Separation in some cases may be necessary, but that does not of necessity call for a legal divorce with the privilege of remarriage, even in the case of adultery. Love “bearareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” (1 Cor. 13:7)

Even if the guilty party never repents and reconciliation is impossible, it is better for the innocent party to suffer than to act hastily and then afterwards regret the step. A newspaper quotes Bishop Slattery of the Episcopal Church as follows:

“I can see little good accomplished by philippics against the previous increase of divorce in America. The Church must do something. The only thing the Church can do is to show forth by the life of its members how much it cares for the family and its integrity. Let us give high praise to the leaders of the Church who really lead, who do more than the law requires of them, and who tell, by concrete instances, what marriage is to the Church.

“I remember the morning many years ago when a young wife came to tell me of her misery. For her children’s sake she had tried to continue the broken home. And now, also for her children’s sake, she found that she must yield to what she believed the inevitable break. I warned her that as a Christian woman with the highest ideals, she must, whatever happens, consider herself a married woman still, and carry herself with the same dignity as in the past. She tried to get on with a legal separation, but she was forced later to get an absolute divorce. But through all the years since no one has ever been allowed to think that remarriage was ever possible for her. The State does not require so much, neither does the Canon of the Church. Quite unconscious of her influence, she stands before her group of intimates as an example of the integrity and sacredness of the Christian home.”

CLOSING WORD TO MINISTERS

The minister of the Gospel may not legislate for the world without, but he certainly has his pulpit and pastoral influence and responsibility. The New Testament is not silent on the question now before us, and the “good minister of Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 4:6) must not shun to declare “all the counsel of God.” (Acts 20:27) It is possible for him to advise and warn those under his charge and especially to help the young people of his flock to understand as they should the sacredness and permanency of the marriage relation. Furthermore, he can decline to officiate at any marriage where there is any question as to its being in harmony with New Testament teaching.

The writer of this article has been a minister and pastor for over a quarter of a century. And during all these years he has refused absolutely to marry any couple where either party has been divorced from another partner who was still living. If all ministers of the Gospel were to take this stand, it is my firm conviction that it would help in a large measure to lessen the extent of a great evil.
How You May Know You Are Saved

Guy P. Duffield, Jr.

SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION YOU’VE BEEN WANTING

"These things have I written you that believe . . . that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life." (I John 5:13)

I MAY KNOW I AM SAVED BY THE TRANSFORMATION OF LIFE AND DESIRES

The story is told of a girl in the highlands of Scotland who came before the church to make her confession of Christ. And in those days they put a person through a real catechising before he was allowed to join the church. As they asked her hard questions, she floundered and blushed, and at last burst into tears. But the tears brought her relief and courage, and looking up she said, “Oh, sir, I cannot explain it, but I know it. It seems to me it is like the washing of the sheep in yonder brook. We take them into the flowing stream, and hold them there till all the dirt has been cleansed from the wool. We cannot tell where the water comes from or where it goes, but we know that the fleece is cleansed. I can’t explain it, but I know the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth me from sin.”

Yes, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”—II Cor. 5:17. It is difficult to explain now the process takes place, but thank God, we know when it happens. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”—John 3:8. No one has ever seen the wind. No one has ever seen the wind, whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Certainly all the believing in the world will not bring assurance without a real turning from sin, and man needs God’s help to do that.

To illustrate the need of repentance—a noted evangelist tells the following true incident: “I was conducting a meeting in Glasgow, a few years ago, that lasted 16 weeks. We had a Glasgow Pentecost. In those Scottish churches thousands of people came to Christ. I moved from church to church in one section of the city, taking a week in each church. I noticed for six or seven weeks a man, a fine specimen of a Scotchman, following me from church to church, night after night. I knew he was concerned and prayed for him. One night I stayed in that old-fashioned box pulpit and watched the congregation leave at the close, and my man sat down below in the pew and watched me, and presently we two were left alone. I left the pulpit and went to him and said, “My friend, I have been watching you for some weeks.”

“Yes, I know,” he replied. “Well, you are concerned about your soul?” “I am,” he said. “I never was so moved in my life as in these last few weeks.” I said, “You know what you have to do?” “Yes, I do.” “I was urging him to make the surrender, and while talking with him discovered a gentleman near us listening. He came forward and said, “Will you let me speak to this brother?”

“I said, ‘Yes,’ and he continued, “I have heard part of the conversation and I want to read to you,” turning to my friend in the pew, “a text,” and he read John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that who­soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:” “Do you believe that?” he asked.

“Yes, of course a Scotsman believes that. I can repeat it as well as you.” The newcomer then read Romans 10:9: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved,” and asked again, “Do you believe that?” “Of course I believe it.” Next he read from John’s First Epistle, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” and asked, “You believe that too?” “Yes, I believe that.” “Then you are a Christian.” My friend straightened himself up and, looking at the man with the Bible, said, “You are wrong, my friend.” “Well, but you believe Christ died for you.” “Yes.” “You believe He rose again for your justification?” “Yes.” “You believe He is able to save you?” “Yes, right on the spot.” “Then you are saved!” “No, I am not.” “How do you make that out?” “Well, you have read three passages, now find one for me.” “Where it is?” “Isaiah 55:7.”

The man with the Bible turned to the passage and read, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his...
thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

“Now, stop,” said my friend, “I am the wicked man. I am the unrighteous man, and I have to forsake the sin and the wicked thought, and I have to come back from my own way to God’s way. His thought is so high and mine so low. In my heart is a great sin, and I am hugging it and am not willing to give it up, and my own conscience tells me I cannot be saved until I surrender!”

The minister telling the incident, said, “That is the best sermon that I ever heard on repentance in my life. A religion that does not turn up sin by the roots is spurious. A Religion that does not make a man a new creature is false. A religion that does not get hold of a man to his very depths and make him right with God is blasphemy.” If you are willing to forsake your sin and make the surrender and truly repent, you can know the reality and the everlasting assurance of God’s salvation. God’s grace transforms the heart and life of the sinner, and we know His grace is ours because we are walking in His righteousness. “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” — I John 2:29.

Secondly, as a result of salvation, the redeemed soul can rightly expect a deep settled peace in his soul. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” — Roman 5:1. Man was made for God. There was placed within him being a spiritual faculty that is capable of communion with, and likeness to God. As long as sin separates and man is estranged from God, he can expected no real and lasting contentment or peace in his soul. “The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”—Isaiah 57:20,21. But what an inexplicable peace comes the moment the burden of sin is rolled away—a “peace that passeth all understanding.” Of all the blessings which salvation brings, perhaps none is so precious as this deep, abiding peace in the soul. The enmity of our rebellious heart is gone, and we have become “reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” If condemnation is gone and as you search your heart before God and His Word, naught but peace remains, surely Christ has saved your soul.

Thirdly, there will come a new power to resist and overcome sin. When the guilt and condemnation of sin are gone there will also go the bondage to the habits of sin, and in its place will be a new power and joy in righteousness. For the first time, the soul will realize it is free.

True liberty at last! The sinner, falsely, believes that the Christian is bound, while he is free. He sympathizes and says, “Poor Christian, you can’t do this or that any longer,” naming a long list of so-called worldly pleasures. “It must be most miserable to be so bound as you.” The sinner supposes that he is free, because he can indulge in whatever he desires, when the fact is that he so indulges because he cannot resist temptation. He is bound and must submit. The Christian, on the other hand, is free. He is not bound by standard and law. He is free to say, “No!” to that which is unprofitable, and free to choose what he knows is right and pleasing to God. For the first time in his life, his enslaved will is set at liberty, and he has the power to judge and choose aright. Quoted so often that many have supposed they are in the Bible, these words have become literally and gloriously true, “The things which I once loved I now hate, and the things I once hated I now love.” Chains are broken, new and holy affections flood the soul, and the redeemed man is a new creature—a new creation in Christ Jesus.”

Though we might enumerate many more, this fourth result will be the last—the fear of death will be completely removed, and an anticipation of seeing the Saviour in glory will take its place. The question of sin has been settled. Judgment and condemnation are past, and to be absent from the body is now “to be present with the Lord.” Earth is now the dressing room for heaven, and eternal life is begun. Death is but the doorway between the anteroom and the throne room. “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”—II Corinthians 5:1-4.

No need now to fear, for Jesus saves! “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—I Corinthians 15: 55-57.

—The Railroad Evangelist