

## Divorce and Remarriage

Dear brethren and sisters of the Berean fellowship:

This is an urgent and fervent plea for unity on the sound basis of the teaching of our pioneer brethren Thomas and Roberts and the whole Christadelphian Brotherhood from its very beginning down to at least the 1920's.

About thirty years ago, a new theory on Divorce and Remarriage was introduced, and laid down as a law and a first principle that all must subscribe to. Faithful brethren of that day - bro. Dowling of Worcester, Gwalchmai of London, Sommerville of Hawley, and others - perceived the destructive and unscriptural implications of this new theory, and fought against it.

Some of us, being young and inexperienced, did not realise the danger of this new theory, and we did not fully appreciate the great efforts the more experienced brethren, some of whom had been personally associated with bro. Roberts, made to oppose it.

A doctrine that locks the door (in all practical senses) on a repentant sinner - this is a terrible doctrine, an impossible doctrine. It is a doctrine of well-meaning people completely out of touch with life and reality and the true spirit of Christ. It is a doctrine of people who do not understand the whole instructive, developing, transforming, educating purpose of our present existence. It is a panic reaction that the corruptions of the world are going to overwhelm us. This danger is always very real, but the safety and solution is not in new and unscriptural rules, but renewal of our inner life and personal dedication.

If we approached even approximately close to the fulfilment of the divine requirements for the Bride of Christ, we would need have no fear from the danger and example of re-admitted and repentant sinners, however weak in the faith they might be.

We have shut our eyes to reality, to human needs. This is why we have dried up spiritually. When the original living fire and internal first-love strength of a community starts to dry up, it has to raise harsh barriers to keep the world from being sucked into its vacuum.

Sadly, I find very many Christadelphians more ready to condemn and expel than to take the trouble in compassion to disturb their own comfortable little lives and to actually put aside their own interests and pleasures and get out and really try to help the weak, and share their burdens and problems and sorrows. This has been a great source of shame, embarrassment and distress to me.

We have been remiss in the past in keeping the clear simple Scriptural teachings of our pioneer brethren on this subject clearly before the Brotherhood. Perhaps if we had, this sad repetition of 1953 would not be upon us.

I thank God we have at least been forced to face this problem, and to perceive the Pharisaism of running away from reality and the problems of others, and "passing by on the other side" of a repentant sinner, just as if we were not all pitiful sinners ourselves, wholly dependant on the boundless mercies of God.

I thank God that faithful brethren proclaimed and defended the true principles of forgiveness and reconciliation, even when I could not clearly perceive them myself, because of inexperience in the spirit of Christ and the realities of life.

This message is, primarily, an answer to a six page article being circulated among you, entitled: "Scriptural Teachings Concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, Part One." This article is obviously extracted, sometimes word for word, from Clapham literature, so I have at times digressed to answer Clapham arguments, and point out Clapham unsoundness, not contained in the article.

But first, I would like to give the true Scriptural stand of bro. Roberts on the subject, teaching with which bro. Thomas was in harmony, and which bro. Jannaway shows to have been the accepted and unquestioned belief of the Christadelphian Body at least into the 1920's. It was subsequent to that time that this new error was introduced. The following are all the statements by bro. Roberts on Divorce and Remarriage that I have ever

been able to find.

1879, Aug., Inside front cover: We regret being (un\*)able to think you did right by marrying, first wife being yet alive. \*The "un" in parenthesis is not in the original - I suspect it's omission is an error.

1882, Apr., Inside front cover: There is nothing in the law of Christ to interfere with the remarriage of a man and a woman who have been previously divorced from one another. The law of Christ rather favours every kind of reconciliation and triumph of peace.

1883, Pg. 31: Question: Can Christadelphians lawfully disannul the marriage contract and marry for any other reason than that given in Matt. 5:32? If a husband or wife renounce the Truth, does that free the other from the marriage tie, so that he may marry again?

Answer: No. "The Lord hateth putting away" (Mal. 2:15). The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will: only in the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:39). Nothing disannuls the marriage contract but death or adultery. Incompatibility, from belief or other cause may lead to separation, but the separated parties must remain unmarried. (1 Cor. 7:11).

1884, Mar., Inside front cover: Divorce is inadmissible according to the law of Christ, except in the case he mentions in Matt. 19:9. Where this case arises, and the parties are divorced, they are at liberty to marry again, both by human law and divine. Objection may be well meant, but it is without ground.

1885, Sept., Inside front cover: There is nothing in human law or divine to prevent a man marrying again, from whom his wife has been divorced for unfaithfulness.

1883, May., Inside front cover: Marriage is the voluntary, professed, and consummated companionship of man and woman for life, recognisable, and (if necessary) enforceable by the community in which they may dwell.

1888, June., Inside front cover: The law - at least in England - will punish neglect, but divorce is only granted for cruelty or adultery.

1888, July., Inside front cover: It is a man's prerogative to pardon the worst offence in his wife. If a brother chooses to exercise this prerogative, his brethren are not called upon to interfere. If he becomes a partaker in her wickedness, that would be a different thing.

1891, Nov., Inside front cover: The safest way, in the doubtful position of the case, would be to receive the brother back. Adultery is not to be compromised on any terms, but marriage with a divorced woman cannot be put in this category. It was wrong to marry an unbeliever. If the brother admits the wrong, receive him, and let the Lord judge.

1891, Dec., Inside front cover: Question: I have been requested to ask your explanation of Matt. 5:32 & Luke 16:18 in view of your statement on cover of last Christadelphian that marriage with a divorced woman cannot be put in the category of adultery.

Answer: Christ's words relate to divorce for insufficient cause (as was at that time common among the Jews). He recognises no divorce as lawful "save for the cause of fornication." This severs the bond. Human law recognises this, and we are commanded to submit to human law where it does not conflict with Divine Law. Where the law recognises man and woman in any case as husband and wife, there can be no question of adultery.

1892, Pg. 422: There seems nothing difficult about Matt. 5:31 & 32. The words of Christ amount to this, that his law recognises no cause of separation between husband and wife except conjugal infidelity. Human law in his day recognised many other causes, and even allowed a man to put away his wife if he had lost taste for her. By the law of Christ, a wife put away from any cause "saving for the cause of fornication" is the man's wife still, and anyone marrying her is guilty of adultery. He does not mean that if divorced from a proper cause, a woman may not marry again. His words must be taken in their connection.

1898, Pg. 377: We returned to Melbourne on Fri. May 6th. Some pain has been caused by the shocking misbehaviour of one brother, and the highly unscriptural action of another in connection with it, in seeking redress in the Divorce Court. The incident has discouraged the brethren somewhat. They have not, however, the cause for shame that they would have if they tolerated or countenanced such infractions of the divine law. When brethren confess their sins and forsake them, they are entitled to forgiveness; but when they defend and vindicate them, they stand in the way of their own mercy.

(The following is the Melbourne intelligence relating to this matter in "The Christadelphian" - 1898, Pg. 363 - the previous month.

"We regret that we have had occasion to withdraw from bro. Middleton, on account of his maintaining the principle that he was justified in petitioning before a Gentile court of law for divorce from his wife. Bro. & sis. Roberts sailed for New Zealand on May 25th.

1898, Aug., Inside front cover: If it is right for a sister to be married to an alien (which will not be maintained by those who are enlightened in the law of the Lord), it is not wrong for a sister to be married to a divorced husband

1898, Sept., Inside front cover: It was the children of a "mixed marriage" that were the subjects of a passing allusion in 1 Cor. 7:14, and the "cleanness" and "holiness" had reference to legitimacy.

End of Robert Roberts quotes.

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Note from No.'s 3 & 11 (10 years apart) that bro. Roberts not only had absolutely no doubt of the meaning of Matt. 5:32, but that he could see no room for anyone having any doubt about it. To his clear discernment, it was inescapably obvious. Some of us with less discernment have taken longer to see it.

The following is by bro. Jannaway, "Christadelphian Answers", an oft consulted standard work among us (published in 1920) Pg. 212.

"For one reason, and only one reason, does the Lord permit divorce, and that reason he gives is adultery (Matt. 5:32). In certain circumstances the parties are permitted to separate, but they must not form any other alliance. (1 Cor. 7:11)

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I would like to add two quotations not directly related to divorce and remarriage because it is obvious, from both reason and experience, that the more divorce and remarriage are discussed among us, the more important it is to keep the basic Edenic marriage law clearly before the mind. One is by bro. Thomas, 1848, before all the above quotations, one from 1895, after most of them.

1848: Elpis Israel, Pg. 50: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Thus Adam pronounced upon himself the sentence that was to bind them together for weal or woe, until death should dissolve the union. This was marriage.

1895, Chdn, Jan. (Law of Moses): Marry whom you will, but once married, man and woman are one flesh by divine law, and "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder."

Now bro. Thomas in 1866<sup>1</sup> said that "Jesus forbade divorce upon any other ground than wife's unfaithfulness." So if we see contradiction between these two brethren's statements (1848 & 1895) of the basic marriage law, on the one hand, and their specific teachings on the Exceptive Clause on the other, then we must assume that both these highly qualified and highly stable brethren - providentially raised-up brethren - completely reversed

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<sup>1</sup> \*On the basis of a statement in this 1866 article, an attempt is invariably made by the promoters of this new theory to imply contradiction between bro. Thomas and bro. Roberts (Guide #45) on the "Pauline privilege". It seems that one of the saddest and most prominent aspects of this new theory is to try to show contradiction within the writings of these two brethren, and between each other.

themselves each at the end of their lives, one one way and one the other! This is absurd.

Bro. Thomas' statement is too brief and passing to assert with certainty that he taught remarriage was permissible for this cause alone. Without much clearer evidence of "contradiction" we must assume in fairness that these two brethren were in agreement. It is absolutely certain they were in agreement on the primary issue before us, the Exceptive Clause, and so was bro. Jannaway, many years later.

There is not a current brother that I know, or whose writings I have read, that has a tenth of the Scriptural knowledge that these pioneer brethren had, and I freely and happily include myself in this comparison. The comparison is so lop-sided it is pitiful. There is no comparison. If we did not have the brilliant, stable, providentially-provided light of the works of these brethren - if we had to depend for help on the poor little flickering candles in the earth today - what pitiful straits we would be in!

Bre. Thomas and Roberts knew the Scriptures as few men have ever known them, and they entered fully into their beautiful and transforming spirit - a thousand times better than those who now repudiate their teaching. Many years ago I came to the firm conviction, daily strengthened ever since, that bre. Thomas and Roberts were divinely and providentially raised up to revive the Truth of God and the Body of Christ in these last days, and that they laid a sound foundation of Truth - all the Truth - as regards fellowship and salvation.

They were not inspired. They were not perfect. They were not always right in everything. But when it comes to the basic beliefs involving fellowship and salvation, it is my ever increasing conviction that, in the providence of God, they gave us a complete and sound foundation. This present controversy has greatly strengthened my conviction of this, and to this extent I am therefore thankful to God for this controversy. We must be forced by bitter circumstances to learn more deeply, and the false often is effectual in bringing out more clearly the true.

In this matter, and in anything sufficiently serious to involve fellowship (and the proponents of this new theory themselves contend it is a matter of fellowship, and therefore a first principle), I stand with bre. Thomas and Roberts, just as bro. Roberts in turn expressed his unity with bro. Thomas:

1893, Pg. 128: "To the charge of holding 'that the knowledge of Scripture, in the writings of Dr. Thomas, have reached a finality', we plead guilty. Our judgement is distinctly to the effect imputed - that in the writings of Dr. Thomas the Truth is developed as a finality, and that they are a depot of the Christian doctrine. In this sense we are "committed to Dr. Thomas". God used him in the doing of His work. In His sight and with His help, we shall hold fast to the Truth brought to light by his means." (End of quotation).

Forty five years of gradually getting closer and closer to these two wonderful men, of repeatedly learning by experience their tremendous and invaluable help in maintaining balance and stability, and getting closer to the spirit of the Scriptures, and correcting the natural tendency of the flesh to crotchets and extremes - has adamantly convinced me that I could never take a fellowship stand about anything that would condemn them in their firmly stated and long-held convictions. If they were so wrong as to be unworthy of fellowship, what hope has anyone? If this matter involves fellowship, and if we consider this new theory the only sound and Scriptural one, then we have no right to call ourselves Christadelphians and claim we represent the Truth brought to light by the labours of these brethren. Rather we are a new group in the earth, claiming we have new light essential for salvation, that they did not have.

I have read many things in the works of bre. Thomas and Roberts that have grated upon me at first. Almost invariably (I believe I could safely say invariably without qualification) I have with further study and experience and the passage of time gradually come closer to them and have perceived that my own view was immature and out of balance. I have gone through exactly the stage these young brethren in Houston are going through, but thankfully I held fast to bre. Thomas and Roberts as far as fellowship is concerned, until my own understanding developed.

This cry we hear so much today in defence of this new theory, raised against the teachings of bre. Thomas and Roberts, "We want the Scriptures, not the teachings of men!" this has been the battle-cry of error right from the beginning. When you hear that piously proclaimed, be well on guard!

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Randell Article – par 1

True: We must get to the fundamental principles.

Randell Article – par 2.

True. Unquestionably, the basic law of marriage from the beginning is one man, one woman, for life. For a professed brother or sister of Christ, any breaking of this bond is a very wicked and abominable sin in the eyes of God. It is essential that this be very strongly emphasized, and constantly kept before the mind.

Any lightness in the consideration of this solemn life-covenant should be resolutely fought wherever it appears. Always in the world, and perhaps never more so than in our day, this covenant has in actual fact been lightly regarded, though at times subscribed to by lip service. Today in the world it has largely sunk to a mere animal level.

We must steep ourselves in the pure atmosphere of the word of holiness, and do our utmost in fervent prayer to guard ourselves against absorbing any of the corrupt atmosphere of the world around us. The marriage bond is for life and any breaking of it is a terrible sin. Once it is entered into, everything possible should be done to preserve it, and restore it if damaged.

Randell Article – par 3.

Here the article begins to lay its major premise, upon which all the rest of the argument is built. The major premise is utterly false. It is...

1. That the Pharisees are trying to get Christ to interpret the law of Moses, and...
2. That in reply he is interpreting it. Both

assumptions are impossible.

In the first place, the last thing the Pharisees wanted to do was to give Christ the appearance of an authority judging between their rival groups. This would have accomplished the very opposite of what they were trying to do. It would simply divide them, and make them look foolish, and it would exalt Christ as an arbiter in the eyes of the people. If they had come in sincerity, as some occasionally did, this explanation might hold water, but we are told they came "tempting him."

Remember what happened when Paul merely said in the Council that was trying him, "I am a Pharisee: for the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Immediately there was an uproar, and the Council which had been trying to preserve a united front to condemn him was torn into factions. No indeed, the Pharisees did not want to set Christ up as a judge among their factions!

And the other assumption is equally invalid. The fundamental and very dangerous fallacy of this article is that Christ is teaching two different laws at different times, and that it takes an involved argument to decide which is which.

The fundamental and simple and beautiful truth of the matter is that Christ is always and everywhere teaching his own law of life, and that we do not need any involved reasoning to decide what to believe...that we can rest with simple confidence and faith upon all he says. Bre. Thomas and Roberts, with their much greater knowledge of the Scripture and discernment of its spirit could see this so clearly and unquestioningly that the thought of difficulty in the matter was foreign to their minds.

To support the theory that Matt. 5 - 7 is a commentary on the law of Moses, Clapham points to the next chapter (8:4)...the cured leper...

"Show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded."

Was Christ teaching his own law here? Of course. His law is to submit to the powers that be. Christ's law taught obedience to the law of any land we live in. The law of Moses had a double claim to obedience as being

directly from God, which man's laws are not. But Christ was not teaching the law of Moses, any more than he would be teaching the law of the United States if he told us (as he would) to fulfil any regulations of the Board of Health if he had cured us (as he did here) of a quarantined disease.

*"The school of Shammai only allowed divorce for adultery."*

The introduction of these traditions of men about the "school of Hillel" and the "school of Shammai" is entirely beside the point. Furthermore, it is a dangerous and confusing obscuring of the picture. That we should need these traditions to explain a first principle of Scripture struck me as strange thirty years ago in Clapham's literature.

In the first place, it is, at best, just a tradition. Human tradition is notoriously undependable. That this should be needed in this elaborate building of a case against what to bre. Thomas and Roberts was the simple and inescapable meaning of Christ's words, is surely a warning red light! In the second place, human tradition is not consistent in its testimony about these two men (or "schools"), in the very aspects upon which this article depends for its basic premise. Four of the few "authorities" that I possess throw doubt on the positive assertion in this article that *"the school of Shammai only allowed divorce for adultery."* Here are three of them...

1. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. 3 Pg. 275:

"Marriage - The school of Shammai treated the second clause (of Deut. 24:1) as the significant one, and emphasised 'unseemly' which they interpreted as meaning immoral or at least indecent conduct."

So according to this "authority" (and it is as good as any)...

a.) The teaching of Shammai did not restrict divorce to adultery. b.) The teaching of Shammai is at best indefinite.

2. Speaker's Commentary, N.T., Vol 1 Pg. 30 (under Matt 5:32)

"The school of Shammai interpreted the unclearness strictly of adultery, or at least immodest conduct. Again, pretty indefinite to build a case on.

3. Peake's commentary, Pg. 716 (under Matt. 19:3):

"...the view of Shammai that a man could put away his wife for serious misconduct only." Again, indefinite.

4. Edersheim, Life and times of Jesus, (book 4, Ch. 2 Pg. 331-336) is the most interesting, for it puts the matter in an entirely different light altogether...that none of the Jewish teachers actually limited divorce to adultery... that at very best, it was a matter of advice and not law. Here we can begin to see how the Pharisees hoped to build a case against Christ concerning the law. Speaking of Shammai's teaching (Pg. 333),

"This must not be regarded as a fixed legal principle, but rather as an opinion and good counsel for conduct...Hence it is a serious mistake for commentators to set the teaching of Christ on the subject by the side of that of Shammai."

Further (Pg. 334)

"it must be again repeated that no real comparison is possible between Christ and even the strictest of the rabbis, since none of them actually limited divorce except to the case of adultery.

This puts the matter in a much clearer light (if true). As Edersheim says in introducing the whole section (Pg. 322),

"Probably they also imagined it would be easy to show on this point a marked difference between the teaching of Jesus and that of Moses and the rabbis, and to enlist popular feeling against him."

It was not at all (could not have possibly been) trying to get Christ to determine between the rabbis. This could only work to the Pharisees confusion and Christ's enhanced stature with the people. It was rather (as they supposed) Christ's new law against Moses and the rabbis. THIS is what they wanted to trip him on. This is clearly illustrated on another occasion. (John 8:2).

"Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou?"

They thought they had him. He had taught either forgiveness if possible, or divorce, if necessary. They claimed Moses' law demanded death. He pointed out that Moses Law presupposed a righteous nation carrying it out, and obeying it themselves. He showed their zeal to be hypocrisy, and he put them in the position of Judah before Tamar (Gen. 38:24 - 26).

So much for Hillel and Shammai, and the shaky and undependable "authorities" and traditions of men.

The picture is equally clear and conclusive as viewed from the other side. Christ came solely and exclusively to proclaim his own law... the new law...rising far above and superseding the Law of Moses which was now "waxen old and ready to vanish away": The "old wine in old bottles."

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time, the Kingdom of God is preached." Luke 16:16

The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Let us get this picture clearly. He was the new: He never taught the old. It would have been confusion. And when they sought to get him to be a judge according to the Law of Moses, he very resolutely rejected the idea.

"Man, who made me a judge and a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14) He kept the picture clear.

Jesus came solely to teach his own new law, and if we can but see this clearly (as bre Thomas and Roberts did) all these fogs about him teaching the Law of Moses in Matt. 5 - 7 and elsewhere will fall away.

The very two passages (Matt. 5:32 & 19:9) in Christ's teaching which this article by the laborious and inconclusive Hillel - Shammai argument, tries to transfer from Christ's law to the Law of Moses, show by their very context and construction how impossible this interpretation is, as we shall clearly see.

*"Christ chose neither Hillel or Shammai. This should teach us that both were wrong."*

This does not at all follow. In the first place, tradition is confused and we do not really know what these men taught. And in the second place, Christ was not concerned with either teaching the Law of Moses or judging between the speculations of the rabbis.

*"If a man under the Law could divorce his wife for adultery, the school of Shammai would have been correct, and Christ would have so stated."*

This is pure groundless presumption, as to what Christ "would have stated", and needs no further refutation. We could with equal right assert, "If the man who sought Christ's help in judging between him and his brother was correct, Christ would have so stated." He did not come to teach the dying Law, but a new and living way. Building a long chain of elaborate argument on such weak links as "If such were the case, Christ would have said so." is surely obviously unsound and dangerous. There are various times Christ chose not to answer a question directly, or even not at all. He had one purpose only.

#### Randell Article – par 4

Let us consider: *"They were asking..." In the Law of Moses, were there any teachings concerning divorce? What were they? They weren't asking any such thing. This completely misses the point. They were not asking him to explain the Law. They were asking him his teachings..."*What sayest thou?...and trying to set him against the Law. This was what they were always trying to do. He had declared...to his disciples, but publicly, in the great foundation statement of his glorious new law of life in Matt. Ch 5 - 7...

"It hath been said (directly quoting the Law) Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. But I say unto (clearly contrasting HIS law, His authority, His new teaching, with Moses Law)...

"But I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery."

In this basic, public, primary declaration of his new law (Matt. Ch's 5 - 7), he specifically, six times (as I shall consider more fully later) quotes the Law of Moses, and then directly contrasts his new infinitely higher law with it, with the same clear formula of contrast each time: "But I say unto you."

And at the end (Matt. 7:28-29): "The people were astonished at his doctrine (NOTE: his doctrine): for he taught them as one having authority."

This is the Scriptural background of Matt. 19:9, not the foggy unclear traditions and legends of men about Hillels and Shamais. He had publicly contrasted his new law with Moses' Law on this very point, and they wanted to trip him into an open denial and contradiction of Moses' Law. This was their constant aim. And NOT (as this article asserts and as it's whole chain of argument requires - that they were asking him to explain the Law of Moses and judge between their squabbling factions.

#### Randell Article – par 5

*"The Pharisees asked Christ one Question, 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?' The question of remarriage is not in the question."*

Very true! An important and significant point! But how can it in any way be considered as helping the argument of the article? Rather it helps to destroy it. "The question of remarriage is not in the question." No, of course not. It could not be, for under the Law of Moses (and it was on the issue of the Law they were trying to trip him) there is no such thing as "remarriage" for the very term pre-supposes monogamy, and the Law permitted polygamy. Under the Law, there was no such thing as committing adultery with one wife against another wife. This can only be under the Eden Law, Christ's Law, the one man one woman law. Divorce of one wife, under polygamy, has no connection with a man's relations to his other wives, either possessed at the time or acquired later.

But (note well) though not in the Pharisees' question (as it could not be) it is very much in Christ's answer, (Matt. 19:9) which very clearly shows that Christ is not teaching the Law of Moses, but his own law, which goes back to the ordinance from the beginning, and pre-supposes monogamy.

When, therefore Jesus says, "Moses suffered so and so...but I say unto you," and then speaks of marrying another as adultery, he is clearly proclaiming his own law and not Moses', for under Moses' Law marrying another was quite irrelevant to the question of divorce. The article later on makes a weak attempt (Para 24) to explain away this obvious flaw, which I shall consider later.

#### Randell Article – par 6

Good! A restatement of the basic marriage law: one man, one woman, for life. It is good to keep that very prominent.

#### Randell Article – par 7

Commenting on *"The terms 'put asunder' and 'put away' are the same as divorce"*. This seems to imply they are always the same, which is not correct. It is not quite that simple. There are three principle words in the New Testament which are used for the separating of man and wife: chorizo (to separate, put space between), aphimi (to send away, to cause to go), and apoluo (to loose, to set free). None are used exclusively of divorce. There are also luo and luis, used once each: they are verb and noun, related to each other and to apoluo. The three principle words are translated inconsistently in the Authorised Version in connection with the marriage relationship, they are variously rendered...

Chorizo: put asunder, depart.



Aphiemi: put away, leave.  
Apoluo: put away, divorce.

Paul uses two of these words in 1 Cor. 7:10-13, and they are not translated consistently. In verse 10 & 11, depart is chorizo. In verse 11 & 12, put away is aphiemi. In verse 13, leave is aphiemi.

As applied generally, apart from marriage, these words are translated...

chorizo: depart, separate.

aphiemi: suffer, leave, forgive, let alone, forsake, omit, yield up, send away.

apoluo: send away, loose, release, let depart, dismiss, set at liberty, depart.

Christ uses chorizo and apoluo of the marriage relationship, but never aphiemi. But he uses aphiemi very frequently in a general sense (other than of marriage). When I speak of Christ's use, of course, I refer to the rendering of his words in Greek, as we have them in the gospels. More on the actual language he spoke later, as it is a factor in this consideration.

Paul uses chorizo and aphiemi and luo and luis of the marriage relationship, but never apoluo. He uses apoluo in the general sense other than marriage.

The use of these words in Scripture in connection with this subject appears haphazard, but there must be a basic pattern, for it is the word of God, and "Every word of God is pure" that is, true, correct, right, perfectly suited.

In the Old Testament, the picture is similar. There are various words involved and translation is not consistent. In neither language does there appear to be a word specifically and exclusively meaning marital divorce, although one in the Hebrew may be this: kerithuth, cutting off. It is just used four times: twice in Duet. 24:1-3, once where God says he did give Israel (ten tribe kingdom) a bill of divorce (Jer. 3:8), and once where he asks Judah (two tribe kingdom) to produce her bill of divorce (Isa. 50:1), implying that she had been given none.

Note the context in Jer. 3:8. The sin for which the bill of divorce was given is described as both fornication and adultery, and it is clear it all refers to action after marriage. I shall go into the significance of this later in considering the meaning of "fornication". In translating this word "kerithuth" into Greek, both the Septuagint and the New Testament (as in Matt. 5:31) use an entirely different word from any of the above considered. It is "apostasion" - a standing away from.

There is another interesting word in the Old Testament. It is gahrash. It is translated "divorce" in Lev. 21:14, 22:13, Num. 30:9. It is also used of a woman "put away" from her husband, in Lev. 21:7, and Ezek. 44:22. It is the word used in Sarah's demand, "cast out this bondwoman," which God tells Abraham to comply with. More on this later.

#### Randell Article – par 8

Good. The basic Edenic law again.

#### Randell Article – par 9

Considering a section from paragraph nine. *"Any time Christ speaks to his disciples, [therefore to all his household of faith], he makes no mention of any permission to divorce or to remarry."*

Now this is put forward as the basic rule to determine which of Christ's teachings and commands apply to us, and which do not. In the first place, it is a very dangerous idea that we must decide, by elaborate argument, whether or not he is teaching us. But this is the rule this article establishes, and by this very rule it destroys its own argument and proves the opposite of what it contends for. Furthermore, this extract is obviously untrue as a statement of fact.

The article here refers us to Luke 16:18, and emphasises the fact that the Exceptive clause is not here mentioned, and proceeds to build on this an artificial distinction between what Christ taught the Pharisees and

what he taught his own disciples. Now note very well to whom Jesus IS talking in this Luke 16:18: Verse 14, "And the PHARISEES heard all these things and derided him." Verse 15, "And he said unto them" - note well "he said unto them" ...and then vs 16-18 follow: (Christ speaking directly to the Pharisees.)

Now it is of no great consequence to me whom he was teaching, because I am convinced he was always teaching his own glorious new law, and never the old "ready to vanish away" Law of Moses. But it is of great consequence to the whole argument of this article whom he happens to be teaching, and the article quotes this Luke 16:18 to illustrate and confirm this supposed rule that the exceptive clause is spoken to the Pharisees and the new law without it to the disciples. And we find the very case here quoted to prove this actually proves the very opposite! Let us test the rule a little further.

Let us look at Matt. Ch. 5-7, the very beginning of Jesus' recorded teaching - the very heart and foundation of all his teaching. Matt. 5:1 -

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came to him: and he opened his mouth and he taught them."

And three chapters later, at the close of this long discourse to his disciples...

"And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." (Matt. 7:28-29)

If there is any place in the gospels where we can say with absolute assurance that Jesus is quietly, authoritatively, specifically, fundamentally, teaching his law to his disciples, then this is it. Sound Christadelphians have always regarded these three chapters as the glorious foundation of the law of Christ - the new law, as contrasted with the old law of Moses. Bro. Roberts extols these chapters repeatedly and lovingly.

I emphasise this strongly because some of the Clapham arguments, in their anxiety to get rid of Matt. 5:32, are positively frightening in their determined attempts to divert this whole discourse into a mere commentary on the Law of Moses, that was ready to vanish away. Here indeed is the new wine in old bottles!

Now our main point at this time: Matt. 5:31-32 - right in the middle of the discourse, in a series of direct contrast with Moses Law, no argument with the Pharisees, no conflict with anyone - a quiet, authoritative teaching of his own disciples. And we have the exceptive clause. So the "rule" completely breaks down again, the second time we test it. Luke 16:18 to the Pharisees: no mention of the exceptive clause. Matt. 5:32 to disciples: Exceptive clause given, in a direct contrast with the Law of Moses.

In fact, there are only four places where this "rule" can be applied to the teaching of Christ: Matt. 5:32 & 19:9, Mark 10:11 & 12 and Luke 16:18. In two of them, as we have seen, if it proves anything, it proves the very opposite of what it is claimed to prove.

I could just as justifiably argue, from Luke 16:18 & Matt. 5 that when Jesus speaks to the Pharisees, he does not mention the exceptive clause and when he speaks to his disciples he does. But this would be equally erroneous as arguing the other way, as this article does, for it is two one way and two the other, to the Pharisees, in a controversy, one with the exceptive clause, one without. To his own disciples, in simple teaching, one with the exceptive clause, one without. Doesn't this clear and striking pattern teach us something? And let us note: among the four cases, Matt. 5:32 stands unique as part of a long, authoritative discourse to his disciples, with the multitudes also listening, and here the exceptive clause appears.

#### Randell Article – par 10

We now come to the strangest part of the whole article. Spend some time with paragraphs ten and eleven; look up the passages and get the picture clearly. Analysed, and with the quoted passages put back in their right places, the article again "proves" the opposite of what it contends for.

Briefly, the picture is this. The article takes Matt. 19:10-12 (eunuchs) away from Matt. 19:9, (the exceptive clause) and attaches it to the end of Mark 10:11-12 (the basic law without the clause). Having done this,

it attempts to prove something about the law without the clause which, when the verses are put back in their proper place in Scripture, "proves" (if it proves anything) the very opposite to what is being argued.

Let us look closer. Much is made in Paragraph No. 10 of "in the house" in an endeavour (which we have seen broke down in two previous tests) to prove that Jesus taught different laws to different people. The more I think of this theory, the more dangerous I realise it to be. We have seen that what he says here, to the disciples "in the house" in Mark 10:11-12 (basic law without the exceptive clause), is the same as he says to the Pharisees out in the open, in Luke 16:18. In Mark 10, as the article mentions, he also adds the reverse rule, saying a woman commits adultery if she puts away her husband and marries another.

The article calls attention to this later point to prove Jesus cannot be teaching the Law of Moses on this occasion, but his own law, for the Law of Moses had no provision for a woman initiating a divorce. I have no quarrel with this, for I believe Jesus is always teaching his own law, but the attempt to use it to make a distinction between his teachings to different groups is dangerous. And it does also strengthen my argument (see my paragraph 25) that Matt. 19:9 can't refer to Moses' Law because the wording is inappropriate to its circumstances. But the point is not even then as strong as it appears, for "authorities" (for what they are worth) tell us (and anyone can easily confirm this) that...

In the Roman world (the then existing constitution), women could divorce husbands. We know that many Jews (perhaps the bulk of them - as today - lived by Gentile law). Ref: "The Grecians of the New Testament." And...

Under Moses' Law, in Christ's day (and before) a woman could "put away" her husband by being sufficiently offensive to force him to divorce her and that this was not at all uncommon. So in practice, the Law worked both ways. (But all this is really beside the point either way).

#### Randell Article – par 11

Here comes the strangest part. The article says *"to support the above conclusion, we would go to Matt. 19:10: 'His disciples say unto him, if the case of a man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.' What did they mean? We find the answer is in Verse nine."* What verse nine does the article refer to? Mark 10:9 or Matt. 19:9? It must be Matt. 19:9, because the article has just quoted Matt. 19:10, and says the answer to it is in verse nine. And what is Matt. 19:9? It is the key verse of the whole issue - the law with the exceptive clause!

And the article goes on to carefully prove that this Matt. 19:9 (with the exceptive clause) is for Christ's faithful disciples: "Them to whom it is given." Let us read further from paragraph 11 of the article...

"Rather than get into such a problem as revealed, then would it not be good to remain unmarried? Christ then said to them, "All men cannot receive this saying, "SAVE THEM TO WHOM IT IS GIVEN." (Article's own capitals).

What "saying" is referred to here in Matt. 19:11? The article says it is Christ's saying in verse nine, (by which it must mean Matt. 19:9), the second previous verse. This is, of course, the exceptive clause. The article here is giving its opponents a stronger argument against itself than some would of themselves feel justified in taking out of the passage. Many take "this saying" to refer to the disciple's statement in verse ten ("It is better not to marry"). This, I believe, has been the usual understanding of this passage, and fits really better with what follows about eunuchs.

But the article asserts "this saying" is Christ's saying in verse nine, so it inescapably pins itself down to the conclusion that Matt. 19:9 (exceptive clause) was given to Christ's faithful disciples, for the article very carefully identifies *them* as "they to whom it is given." And it goes on (end of para 11) to tie the knot tighter by describing the other side...

Christ said, (last clause of verse 12), "He that is able to receive it let him receive it." The others are those who do not obey Christ because of hardness of their hearts. These 'cannot receive this saying'." (Still clearly

referring to "this saying" in Matt. 19:9 - exceptive clause).

Randell Article – par 12

Another re-statement of the basic Edenic law. There can never be a Scripturally acceptable divorce without first there being a very abominable sin.

Randell Article – par 13

Quite correct, we must obey all that the Lord has spoken.

Randell Article – par 14

Passages to consider - Matt. 19:7-9 and Mark 10:3-5, as also Matt. 5:31-32.

Randell Article – par 15

Matt. 19:7 - Pharisees still trying to tempt Christ. \_

Randell Article – par 16

The article says that Deut. 24: 1-4 is the only place in the Law (of Moses) where divorce was permissible. This is not correct. There are at least three other regulations involving divorce - Exodus 21:4 & 11 and Deut. 21:14 which all undermine the arguments of this article. I shall consider them later.

Matt. 19:8: The permission of Deut. 24:1-4 was for hardness of heart. Very true. Keep this well in mind, for the article proceeds to elaborate a theory about the meaning of Deut. 24:1-4, that inexorably narrows it's only possible application down to the exact circumstances of Joseph and Mary, and therefore forces us, if we accept the article, to the monstrous conclusion that Joseph, blessed of all generations on earth to be the foster father and to bring up the infant Jesus with a father's loving discipline, was a hard-hearted man. On the very contrary, God tells us he was "just" (dikaios, righteous - a term applied to God himself)

Randell Article – par 17

The article hammers away at this hardness of heart theme, showing (very truly) what a terrible thing it is, and it concludes...

*"A man of God who had betrothed a woman to be his wife, would have a soft heart towards her and forgive any previous sin of uncleanness because God would forgive her if she sought forgiveness."*

So clearly then, by this new theory, we must conclude that Joseph was not only hard-hearted, but he was not even a "man of God" at all.

Randell Article – par 18

The reply begins by considering... *"what Christ really is teaching is that, under Moses' Law, God allowed them to put away their wife for one certain cause; but if they wanted to please God, they would not want to do so"*

So Joseph did not want to please God! This expression "for one certain cause" is slipped in without proof, and it cannot be proven. The Scriptures do not state that Deut. 24:1-4 was "for one certain cause" far less do they say that that "one certain cause" was what the article claims it was. Truly, we could say it was for "one certain cause" if we define that "one certain cause" as "because he hath found some uncleanness (ervah davar: thing of nakedness) in her." But this is just reasoning in a circle and does not get us any closer to the meaning.

Incidentally, the only other place this expression "ervah davah" occurs is Deuteronomy 23:14, and it most certainly there does not mean what this article says it means in Deuteronomy 24:1, but I believe it gives us a guide as to what it really does mean.

But inasmuch as Christ is giving his own clear law, and not teaching the soon- passing-away Law of Moses it is not important that we determine what the "thing of nakedness" covers. We just need to prove (1) that Christ is teaching his own law and (2) that the theory of this article about Deut. 24:1-4 is unproven and unsound.

Paragraph eighteen again tries to make a distinction between Christ's teaching to his disciples and his teaching to the Pharisees. I have shown this rule disproves itself. And when we consider (1) that there were very sincere men (as Nicodemus and Paul) among the Pharisees, and (2) that there were always some men of honest hearts in the audiences that listened to Christ as he went about teaching and in his many encounters with his adversaries, we realize how impossible and how dangerous is the theory that he taught different laws to different people.

Christ's whole life was a perfect unity of teaching, from his earliest recorded words, "I must be about my father's business." More and more we perceive and marvel at that perfect unity and harmony in all he did and said.

#### Randell Article – par 19

The article comes to Matt. 19:9.

#### Randell Article – par 20

The article quotes Matt. 19:9, omitting the exception, and points out that it is (other than the mention of the exception), exactly the same as Christ's law elsewhere where the exception is not mentioned. Very true. If this proves anything, it proves that it is the same basic law all through - Christ's law - the (rare and very undesirable, but necessary) exception being mentioned twice - the first two times - two witnesses.

And then, just as we would expect, not again. But the basic law, the law that bears down on each individual heart, being emphasised and kept to the fore. The exceptive clause is a terribly sad provision for solving a tragedy.

It is like taking care of a death. Surely we would not expect it to be given any more prominence and repetition than necessary to establish it for the rare cases of tragedy where it may be needed - and even used then with the greatest reluctance. To keep repeating this sad and ugly possibility every time the beautiful and powerful "until death" marriage law is emphasised, would certainly be getting things out of proportion.

It is this very commendable attitude of keeping the prominence of the exception to a minimum, keeping it in the background, keeping it from casting its ugly shadow of tragedy and failure over every bright nuptial beginning - it is this reasonable and proper attitude (but carried to an extreme), that has unfortunately led us into our present dilemma, wherein many have completely lost touch with the sound teaching of the first 80-100 years of the truth.

The article demands that the exceptive clause be repeated every time this subject is mentioned, before it will believe. This is unsound and unreasonable from many points of view. The Pharisees, in the face of clear evidence, demanded a sign - laid down their own rules for God's revelation. Wisdom will take God's revelation as it is - not asking for more, and not labouring to get rid of what is there - and humble contemplation will more and more see divine wisdom in it as it is.

#### Randell Article – par 21.

No contradiction in God's word. Absolutely right! But we must be careful not to infer and create contradiction when there is none, just to support a theory. I am tremendously saddened at attempts to see "contradiction" both in Jesus clear and consistent teaching, and also in the writings of our pioneer brethren on those teachings.

An exception is not a contradiction. It is axiomatic that "the exception proves the rule." An exception confirms and establishes a rule, showing the rule is not just indefinite and general, but universal outside the stated exception. Many rules are general and exceptions are understood to be possible, but if we say "This is the only exception", we confirm the rule's universality in every other case. This is surely an obvious and elementary fact of language and reason, and to try to stigmatise a clearly expressed exception as a contradiction is to make language and reasoning meaningless.

It is recorded in Mark 8:12 that Jesus said (to the Pharisees - note) "There shall no sign be given unto this generation" - period - no exception.

In Matt. 16:4, the same incident is recorded - "There shall no sign be given unto it, BUT the sign of the prophet Jonas."

It is not essential that we prove this is the same incident. The illustration is just as clear otherwise, but actually this can be demonstrated to be the same incident beyond any reasonable doubt. Why did Mark omit the exception that Matthew recorded in the same incident?

Are we to throw out this beautiful exception - the sign of the prophet Jonas - just because Mark does not mention it? Are we to demand that Mark have it in before we will believe? Are we to charge "Contradiction" as the world is so quick to do in any seeming discrepancy? Note again, Matt. gives the exception; Mark recording the same incident does not. Is it conceivably possible that the supporters of this article have any difficulty with this contradiction?

Let us consider another similar "contradiction". As we shall see later, the article (para 28) speaks (rightly, I believe) of Exodus 22:16-17 as describing the same circumstances as Deut. 22:28-29: the violated unbetrothed virgin. The article appears to find no "contradiction" in the fact that the Exodus account gives an exception not contained in Deuteronomy 22, and it is this very exception that is essential to the article's use of this case in its argument: -

Deuteronomy says the man must marry her - Period, no exception.

Exodus says the man must marry her - BUT if the father refuse to give her, the offender must pay a fine.

Now it is this last exception, only given in Exodus, that the article depends on to make the woman available to fit it's theory of Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

Paragraph 21 states "*Paul makes no provision for divorce or remarriage.*" And yet in the one place where the article (Para 41) confesses that Paul is speaking of the remarriage of a divorced person, it has to rend two contiguous and obviously directly related verses apart (1 Cor. 7:27-28) to prevent what appears to it to be another "contradiction".

Paragraph 21 states "*When men, because of personal desires, seek to subvert the God's word to satisfy their own desires or to excuse some who may be close to them.*" It is true that this is a tendency of the flesh, and must be guarded against. The article itself is not free of that danger. We must all be careful. But we will make no headway, and we put ourselves in a very dangerous position, when we infer that the opposition to our theories must be for some evil and self-serving motive. I have no reason to question either the motives or the sincerity of the article, and it would be much more conducive to the proper spirit among us if the article were equally charitable to the brethren it refers to.

#### Randell Article – par 22.

The article says that, in explaining the permission of Deut. 24, "*Christ answers them: First: because of the hardness of their hearts, and Second: for fornication.*" This is a completely untrue and impossible reading of Matt. 19:8-9, made even more impossible by the very parallel frame of words in Matt. 5:32. We shall see that it is fatal to the article's arguments. This article says We shall see that it is fatal to the article's arguments.

The article says that "*Even under the law of Moses a man could not put away his wife if it was for the purpose*

*of marrying again.*" Under the Law of Moses, which permitted polygamy, there was no connection between putting away one wife and marrying another. There is regulation of the treatment of wives, one against another (Exod. 21:10; Deut. 21:15-17), and according to Exod. 21:11, if a man in this case would not treat his wife as commanded, he HAD to put her away.

From the various regulations, and from the historic examples in Scripture, it would appear that polygamy, if not the most common form, was surely very common. Certainly it would appear that most of the individuals mentioned in Scripture, where we know of their marital state, are revealed as polygamous: Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Elkanah, David, Solomon, most kings of both kingdoms, etc. In a society where women outnumber men (because of war and the greater ordinary hazards to the male), and where children were an asset and not a burden (in a rural economy), and where singleness in a woman was a great hardship, and where barrenness was a shame and a reproach, we would expect to find polygamy common, if permitted. Here we see God's practical working. Monogamy is the ideal, but polygamy was permitted where (due at the root to man's sin upsetting the divine pattern) a lot of single women would be a greater evil and sorrow.

This picture must be borne in mind - the general prevalence of polygamy and the relation of Moses' Law to this fact, for it puts everything in a different light, and shows the argument of this article to be completely out of touch with reality.

The article states "*Once an Israelite took a wife, and took her into his house as his wife indeed, there would be no provision to divorce her.*" This is not true. It is based on the article's unsound assumption of the meaning of the grounds for divorce in Deut. 24. It is disproved by Exodus 21:4 & 11 and Deut. 21:14, as we shall see in considering Paragraphs 27-29.

The article states "*Christ does not allow in his statement divorce for any cause whatsoever once a woman becomes a man's wife in very fact.*" This is unproven and untrue.

#### Randell Article – par 23.

The Greek word for except does not mean "may" as the article states. This is an error from misreading Strong's Concordance. "May" is given there as the pronunciation of the word, not its meaning.

The teaching of Christ (Matt. 5:32; 19:9) is not (as this paragraph states) in accordance with Deuteronomy 24, because in both cases it is clearly and carefully given by Christ in direct contrast to Deut. 24. Nor, as the article asserts, does either Christ's teaching or Deut. 24 limit the permission to cases of pre-marital sexual relations. As to Deut. 24, I have shown this by other regulations of the Law, by the case of Joseph, and by the example of God with Israel. (Jer. 3)

As to Christ's teaching (Matt. 5:32; 19:9), this assumption that he limits it to pre-marital unchastity is based on an erroneous understanding of the meaning of "fornication", as we shall see later in full detail.

#### Randell Article – par 24.

Quoting from paragraph 24 "*Under the Law, Christ was condemning the practice of violating the rights of the first wife, and putting her away illegally, and then adding to his sin by marrying another woman to take the place of the wife he had wrongly put away. Christ says that such a marriage was adultery - that is, adultery against the first wife.*"

This is not true. This is wholly artificial and strained language as applied to conditions under the Law. In the first place, as I have shown and shall further show, Christ in Matt. 19:9 is not teaching the Law of Moses, but his own law. And in the second place, under the Law of Moses which permitted polygamy, no action a man did in connection with one of his own wives is ever, or could ever be spoken of as adultery. This is just twisting the meaning of words.

Christ's words in Matt. 19:9 - part of his law in direct contrast to the Law of Moses: "But I say unto you" - Christ's words here are tied directly to the previous phrase, but from the beginning it was not so - the original

monogamous ideal: one man, one woman, for life. This they fit perfectly. Monogamy, the "from the beginning" ideal, is the essential foundation to give Matt. 19:9 any meaning. It cannot be fitted into the Law of Moses, and straining the word "adultery" to make it apply to a man's relation to one of his own legitimate wives surely shows the unsoundness of the theory.

These paragraphs (22-24) try to establish that in Matt 19:9, Christ is explaining the Law of Moses. Let us look very closely at Matt. 19:8 & 9

Vs 8: "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives."

That is the Law of Moses. That is all concerning the Law of Moses. Now begins the contrast...

"But from the beginning it was not so, and\* I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."

That is the law of Christ - the law of God "from the beginning." That is the simple and obvious construction, and there is no other possible construction. That is how bro. Thomas and Roberts read it, and there was no question in their minds: no doubt: no difficulty. (Bro Thomas could read the Greek.)

\* This word "and" at the beginning of Vs 9 is "de", the common word for "but", and exactly the same word as the "but" in Vs 8. In English we do not use a double 'but in such cases. It is like a double negative. In English the first 'but' covers both phrases, and therefore 'and' is "But from the beginning...but I say unto you."

In the original, the beginning of verse 9 is exactly the same as the beginning of Matt. 5:32, where Christ is directly contrasting his law and Moses' Law in six particulars:

"It hath been said...But I say unto you."

The construction here is exactly the same as Matt. 5:32. The Law of Moses is spoken of, then follows the direct contrast with Christ's law. This is obviously the case in Matt. 19:9, even considered alone. Compared to the parallel Matt. 5:32, it is even more inescapably the case.

#### Randell Article – par 26.

The article asks, "What is the uncleanness for which Moses permitted divorce?"

#### Randell Article – par 27- 29.

The cases under the Law where a woman could lose her virginity before marriage.

The article quotes Exodus 22:16-17 & Deut. 22:28-29 (unbetrothed virgins enticed or forced) and Deuteronomy 22:25-27 as circumstances supplying the woman envisioned in Deut. 24, according to the article's theory.

It is a very strained theory; a theory that appears artificial and contrived on the face of it. But more: it is directly disproved by three other cases of divorce in the Law: Exodus 21:4 & 11 and Deut. 21:14. And these paragraphs (27-29) inexorably close in on Joseph as a hard-hearted man, not a man of God.

Let us look at the three other cases of divorce under the Law. They are very interesting and instructive as to the ways of God, and how he deals with the weaknesses of men, and the actual realities of the circumstances under the present dispensation which sin has created. I quote these cases to illustrate the fallacy of this article's strained theory of Deut. 24, and the incorrectness of the article's statement that "Once an Israelite took a wife, and took her into his house, as wife indeed, there would be no provision to divorce her."

1. Exodus 21:2-4: A Hebrew slave (sold for debt, Lev. 25:39; or theft, Exodus 22:3) is given a wife by his owner. He 'takes her into his house' in the full sense of the words, he has children by her, she is his wife for a period of up to six years. Then, when the time of his service is ended, if he chooses to be free, he must leave behind both the wife and the children. Here clearly is divorce in the full sense of the word: the



complete severance of a legitimate, consummated marriage of years duration.

2. Exodus 21:7-11: A Hebrew girl sold as a slave-wife (obviously because of poverty in the family). We may wonder that such practices were permitted, but we are repeatedly impressed that God deals with man with very practical reality in the present sad and woefully imperfect vale of tears, though the beautiful and perfect ideal is always present in the waiting background.

If the husband subsequently takes another wife (vs. 10) he must continue to treat the previous one equally well, or he must let her go 'free'. Here again, a clear case of divorce: the termination of an established marriage relationship - enforced upon the man if he will not fulfil his obligation.

3. Deut. 21:10-14: The captive taken in war. She is permitted a month to mourn.

Vs. 13: "After that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife." Note the consummation.

Vs. 14. "And it shall be, if thou find no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will. Thou shalt not sell her, because thou hast humbled her."

Here again is divorce. Both Vs's 13 (go in unto her) & 14 (hast humbled her) show that the marriage has gone beyond the point where the (Dawn) article draws the line for permission for any divorce under the Moses' Law.

This list is not necessarily all cases. There may be other cases of regulation or example or type which help to open up and balance this picture for us: to get us in touch with actual realities. God's word is a beautiful unity. God's ways are not our ways. We are repeatedly impressed that God's ways - infinitely above ours - always combine holiness of purpose and principle and ideal with compassion of operation toward weak and stumbling mankind.

#### Randell Article – par 30.

"Fornication, therefore, is unchastity, or premarital sexual intercourse". This is an untrue and unproven assertion, and is the root of much, if not most of the confusion on this subject. It is absolutely groundless. The more we look into the English (fornication), Greek (porneia) and Hebrew (Zanah), the more we conclusively find...

1. That fornication in all three languages includes all sexual unchastity.
2. It is used principally (in preference to 'adultery') in the Scriptures for the after marriage infidelity of a wife.

Take the trouble to do this: check through all the Scriptural uses in the Old Testament of 'zanah' (fornication) and 'naaph' (adultery). This can most easily be done in the Englishman's Hebrew Concordance: Pg.'s 389 & 1344 (zanah & taznuth, a derivative), and pg. 782 (naaph). It can also be done with Strong's or Young's, but not so easily. And check these passages in the Greek of the Septuagint and note that the Septuagint consistently translates zanah by porneia, and naaph by moicheia.

This is one aspect of the subject in which, the more we look into it, the more overwhelming the evidence becomes. If we think this matter is important enough to be concerned about as to fellowship, then let us at least take the time and trouble to thoroughly search it out for ourselves, and get the full picture.

The elaborate case that is built upon the word 'porneia' (fornication) to escape the obvious and simple meaning of Matt. 5:32 & 19:9 falls completely to the ground when the words and their uses are examined. English, Greek and Hebrew all agree, and the Septuagint and the quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament tie the Hebrew and Greek inseparably together.

"Porneia" (fornication : zanah) includes all sexual sin, including adultery, in English, Greek and Hebrew. "Moicheia" (adultery: naaph) is a more limited term. As soon as we get a true picture of the Scriptural use of these words in connection with this very matter (marital unfaithfulness), we see very clearly why it was much

more fitting and expressive and natural for Jesus to use fornication instead of adultery. And it greatly strengthens the truth on this matter, and the position taken by Bre. Thomas and Roberts. Jesus uses it in exactly the same sense and meaning that God repeatedly uses it in Ezek. Ch. 16, 23 and Jer. Ch. 3, etc.

Merriam-Websters' 3rd. New International Unabridged (accepted as the basic authority everywhere) defines 'fornication' as...

1. Human sexual intercourse other than between a man and his wife.
2. Sexual intercourse between a spouse and an unmarried person.
3. Sexual intercourse between unmarried people.

Note that the definition on which this theory depends as the only meaning of the word is third in order, after two other meanings which destroy the theory. And Hebrew and Greek and Bible usage agree perfectly with this.

In Ezek. Ch.'s 16 & 23, God uses the word for fornication (zanah) forty times concerning Israel's unfaithfulness to him, and the word for adultery (naaph) only six times. In these chapters, and in Jer. Ch. 3, both words are used for the same offence (which in this case is a woman, Israel, playing the whore against her husband, God), as will be seen from Ezek. 23:43, where both words occur. This clearly shows the fallacy of this article's argument built on an artificial definition of 'fornication' as exclusively non-marital intercourse.

Notice that after she was "old in adulteries" (moicheia), they commit whoredom (porneia) with her, and she with them. Read these two chapters through carefully, and note the continuous and repeated use of zanah (porneia in the Septuagint) for Israel's relations with the Assyrians and Babylonians. In Ezekiel Ch. 16, note...

Vs. 8: "Thou becamest mine (God's)."

Vs. 20. "Thy sons and thy daughters whom thou hast borne unto me." Then, after this...

Vs. 22. "Thy whoredoms" (porneia).

Vs. 25. "Multiplied thy whoredoms" (porneia).

Vs. 28. "Played the whore" (porneia).

Vs. 29. "Multiplied thy fornication."

And so on through the chapter, repeatedly using porneia of a married woman.

The Septuagint in these chapters translates consistently, using moicheia for naaph (adultery), and porneia for zanah (fornication). It is inescapable from these two chapters that both words are used for the same offence: a wife's unfaithfulness. Note that Strong's says that in Old Testament usage, zanah (the Hebrew equivalent of porneia) more often refers to adultery, less often to "simple" fornication. Why the two words?

In the light of these chapters, and in the use of the words generally in the Scriptures and in ordinary language (Hebrew & Greek), and in their basic root meanings in these languages and in English (all consistent), it is perfectly clear why Christ used porneia (fornication) and not moicheia (adultery) in Matt. 5:32 & 19:9. This is why...

Porneia (fornication, harlotry, whoredom) strongly carries the connotation of a continuous way of life and character. Moicheia (adultery), on the other hand, connotes single acts, and does not necessarily carry the atmosphere of continuance or character. Distinguished, then, in this sense, Christ appears to be saying, by his choice of words, that single acts of unfaithfulness (moicheia), while a terrible abomination and possibly having terrible consequences for the rest of life that cannot be reversed, can be forgiven by the partner if there is true repentance and forsaking; but that fornication (porneia, harlotry, whoredom) as a fixed way of life makes continuation of a marriage impossible, however loving, Christlike and forgiving a partner may be.

The way of Christ is always for forgiveness and reconciliation where that is possible, and where there is repentance, regardless of how bad a sin may be. The way of Christ, as so faithfully expounded in this

matter by brethren Thomas and Roberts and those who followed them, provides a healthy solution to an intolerable condition of corruption, but it is also merciful to temporary weakness and folly.

I believe this is also why, in Ezek. Ch.'s 16 & 23, God almost exclusively uses zarah (fornication) instead of adultery, though He uses the latter also in the same context and for the same offence, fencing off this current Clapham error and showing its fallacy.

A proper understanding of the meaning and Scriptural uses of adultery/moicheia/naaph and fornication/porneia/zarah completely destroys the false theory built on a false meaning, and beautifully exemplifies the Truth as brethren Thomas and Roberts believed it.

It will be noted with deep interest that bro. Roberts covers this distinction between temporary failure and permanent addiction very beautifully in his remarks on divorce (#8). I had not seen the force of this until someone recently in this controversy grossly misinterpreted him to make him say that one sin by the wife irreparably broke the marriage and there could be no reconciliation. If someone had not just happened to ask him this question in 1888, we would not have this record of his reply, and it would have been difficult to defend him against this terrible accusation.

I would suggest that you go through your Bibles and mark all places where naaph and zarah occur in Hebrew, and moicheia and porneia in Greek. It will give a sound understanding of the true Scriptural use of these words, and show clearly why Christ used porneia and what he meant.

Naaph (and derivatives). are always translated adultery (and derivatives): never anything else (one exception - break wedlock - same meaning). And every time adultery occurs in the Old Testament, it is naaph in original (one exception: Proverbs 6:26). The Septuagint always translates naaph by moicheia. And where the New Testament quotes from the Old Testament, it always uses moicheia for naaph (as thou shalt not commit adultery).

Zarah (and derivatives). are always translated fornication, whoredom, harlotry (and derivatives): never anything else. And every time fornication occurs in the Old Testament, it is zarah in the original. The Septuagint always translates zarah by porneia. And when the New testament quotes from the O.T. it always uses porneia for zarah (as Rahab the harlot).

Likewise, in the N.T., moicheia is always translated adultery, and adultery in the Authorised Version (A.V.) is always moicheia in the original. And porneia is always translated fornication, whoredom, harlotry; and fornication in the A.V. is always porneia in the original.

So we have an unvarying and unbroken chain of usage in English, Greek, Hebrew, O.T., N.T. & the Septuagint version... Adultery/moicheia/naaph.

Fornication/porneia/zarah.

Gesenius (the most widely quoted authority on Hebrew) defines zarah: "To commit fornication, whether married or unmarried."

Henry Browne: Dictionary of Scriptural words in Hebrew, Greek and English:- Naaph/moicheia/adultery. Zarah/porneia/fornication.

Davie's Hebrew Lexicon: Zarah: " 'fornication' - used of a married woman, of an unmarried

woman, of religious apostasy or unfaithfulness to God, regarded as whoredom or adultery since the covenant between the Eternal and His people Israel was compared to a marriage union."

Robinson Greek-English Lexicon: Porneia: "Fornication, lewdness: used of adultery, of incest, and generally of all such intercourse as Mosaic Law interdicted."

I quote these "authorities", not as final arbiters, but to show that the very limited meaning of porneia and its Hebrew equivalent zannah, upon which this theory depends, is quite unsupported from any direction, and is contrary to the universal understanding of the very meaning of the words.

#### Randell Article – par 31.

The reply begins by considering..."The fact that Christ in one verse, (Matt. 19:9), uses two entirely different words would mean that he means two different things."

I have shown the complete groundlessness of this argument based on porneia, which is so vital to this theory, and of which it makes so much. I have shown that the word Christ used is the exact equivalent of the word God overwhelmingly used of His unfaithful erring "wife" Israel. I have shown why porneia here is more appropriate than adultery would be, for it connotes a way of life.

A further point to make it even stronger. For simplicity, I have spoken throughout of Christ "using" porneia, meaning that this is the word we find in the Greek of the gospels. However, it is absolutely clear that Jesus spoke Hebrew. It is common to speak of the Palestinian language of that time as 'Aramaic', but it is spoken of as 'Hebrew' in Luke 23:38, John 5:2, Acts 21:40, etc. That Jesus spoke in Hebrew is clear from the fact that several times his actual words are quoted, and then translated, as: talitha cumi, ephphatha, eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani. When he spoke to Paul from heaven, it was 'in the Hebrew tongue' (Acts 26:14).

So Jesus actually did not use porneia at all, but the Hebrew zannah: Exactly the same word as God did in Ezekiel 16 & 23 concerning His erring wife Israel. This does not change the picture any, it just binds the bonds even stronger, for zannah we have far more copious usage than porneia.

#### Randell Article – par 32..

This paragraph attempts to prove that Deut. 24:1-4 could not refer to adultery, for the Mosaic penalty for adultery was death. I do not take issue with this, for it is beside the point, as Christ in Matt. 5:32 & 19:9 is not talking of Deuteronomy Ch. 24, but giving his own law. Actually it is clear that Deuteronomy Ch. 24 does not restrict divorce to adultery, for Christ contrasts it with his own law which does restrict divorce to adultery; and Christ calls Deut. 24 a 'hardness of heart' provision, which his law was not.

Christ's law goes back to the Edenic one-flesh law...indissoluble except by death or by the wicked and persistent introduction of a third flesh into the relationship, destroying the ideal 'one flesh' and making it impossible. Two cannot possibly continue to be 'one flesh' where one partner insists on introducing a third party into the relationship. This must destroy the ideal, Scriptural 'one flesh' union...and this obvious fact Christ's wise and merciful law recognises.

God does not deal with technicalities, but realities. There is an ideal, but it can be destroyed by wickedness. When one partner insists on destroying a marriage by corruption, Christ's law reasonably and mercifully frees the other. If the law were otherwise, we would have to accept it, but surely this provision appeals to the mind of reason and holiness. To perpetuate a dead form just for a technicality has no appealing element of goodness and reason. It is only the mind of the flesh that delights to do that. God's laws for man are wholesomely based on reason and reality. To meaninglessly bind an innocent victim to a destructive lifelong yoking to corruption, or to condemn them to lifelong sterility, has no appeal to loving reason, only to harsh Puritanism.

Under the Law of Moses, adultery meant death. Does the Law of God bind an innocent partner perpetually to death? Surely the enlightened mind of brotherly love is not so cruel that it could inflict this on others without the clearest and most specific of commands. What it binds on itself is one thing: what it binds on its weaker brethren it must answer for before their elder Brother. The mind of flesh, rooted in orthodox hypocrisy, delights to do this as its strange conception of 'holiness', but the Law of God, as the Spiritually-minded brethren Thomas and Roberts understood it, is more merciful and realistic.

It is said it will "open the doors to corruption." How does freeing a man or a woman from a corrupt partner "open the doors to corruption."? It is said the provision will be abused, and adultery will be committed just to open the door for divorce. Let us then deal with the abuse, and not throw out the law itself. What we need is not new and ill-advised man-made walls, but a far deeper sense among us of the realities of sin and righteousness, and of the deadly abomination of adultery or of anything else outside the divine ideal of marriage: perfect inseparable oneness of love. Let us emphasise the positive realities of the beauties of holiness, in this as in every thing. Let us not fear disaster from being merciful and kind, but rather build something that is strong and holy enough that it can afford to be merciful and kind.

The fact that the righteous Joseph was about to put away Mary (the word here is *apoloio*, and the Diaglott has 'divorce') just as the righteous God gave the ten-tribe Israel a 'bill of divorce' for adultery, shows that Christ's words about permission to divorce for hardness of heart clearly refer to divorce for lesser causes. To me this is conclusive. I believe it should be to anyone. Matt. 19:9 cannot possibly be a definition of the hardness-of-heart Deut. 24 provision (as this theory makes it), because it would condemn both Joseph and God for hard hearts.

#### Randell Article – par 33.

Considering... "*they knew they had no answer*" If Jesus' statement in Matt. 19:9 was given as an explanation of Deut. 24, the Pharisees would have had plenty of answers to confuse him with, as I have shown. In Christ's direct contrast in Matt. 19 to Moses' hardness-of-heart permission, he took them back to God's Edenic law, and they knew it.

#### Randell Article – par 34.

We finally come to Matt. 5:32, the rock on which this new theory founders. This article says very little about this verse, though if it is to establish its theory, it must completely dispose of this verse.

Recent Clapham literature indicates that they have completely lost the picture of Matt. Ch.'s 5-7 as the most powerful and comprehensive and transforming presentation of Christ's glorious new way of life, as contrasted with the Law of Moses, and have now swung right around to regarding these chapters as a defence of the Law of Moses against the traditions of the Pharisees.

Christ, they now say, is not quoting the Law, and then giving his new law: "But I say unto you." Rather (they say) he is quoting the traditions of the Pharisees, and then defending the Law against them. How utterly impossible a theory this is, will be apparent to any who unbiasedly consider these three chapters, especially the six contrasts in Matt. 5:27-43, as we shall see.

In their obsession to get rid of one verse (Matt. 5:32) that destroys their theory, they have lost the living force of the three most beautiful and powerful chapters of the Bible. Truly they speak diffidently about the address having 'present day applications': the 'principles' they say, remain, but there is clearly none of the fervour and enthusiasm about these three chapters that we find in the writings of bro. Roberts and other sound writings on the Truth. There is clearly no perception of the perfect unity of all Christ's life and teachings, of the undeviating, single minded purpose of all his teachings. He was, out of all the ages, as he said in the synagogue at Nazareth, anointed to preach the Gospel of Salvation – to preach it in every act and word and thought of his perfect life, right up to his nailing the law of carnal commandments to the cross in his death.

To 'prove' Christ is teaching and defending the Law and not contrasting it with his own new law, Clapham points to the words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil." (Matt. 5:17) How beautifully

true this is, properly understood! The whole Law, every ordinance, every sacrifice, pointed straight to him as its glorious fulfilment. He was everything in reality that the Law in shadow foreshadowed and portrayed. The Law was nothing - meaningless - without him. Truly, he did not come to destroy the Law, any more than the flower 'destroys' the seed, or the blossom the bud.

But he did not come to perpetuate the Law. He did not come to teach the Law. He came to take it away. The Law was old wine in old bottles. The Law was "waxen old and ready to pass away." As soon as he appeared, the Law had fulfilled its purpose and run its course:-

"The Law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of heaven is preached."

- note the significance in the contrast of what was 'preached' or taught.

"The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Throughout, we have the emphasis on this sharp contrast between what had been preached and what was now being preached. In the face of this, can anyone assert that in his most notable address he was teaching and defending the Law of Moses?

Let us perceive the true picture. Let us perceive the sharp deliberate contrast between the old wine and the new. He did not come to destroy the Law, to break it down, to teach a less rigid holiness, but he did come to terminate it, to "take it out of the way", and to nail it to his cross, not to teach it.

Again, those who teach the theory of Christ preaching the Law of Moses in Matt. 5:32, point to his words (Matt 5:19):

"Whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be the least in the Kingdom."

True indeed! It was the law of the land. And it was the Law of God, still in full force for 3½ more years, and as a national legal code for another full generation. He taught obedience to it, and he obeyed it perfectly himself, even as he did everything perfectly. But in the end, despite his perfect obedience to it and submission to it, it cursed him in his very hour of greatest submission and obedience, to show that it was indeed a "ministry of condemnation".

At the very hour when he was - at the turning point of all the ages - fulfilling in perfect obedience the reality of every shadow sacrifice that had ever been offered under the Law, and in the very act of supreme obedience and sacrifice itself, the Law cursed him, and thereby 'destroyed' itself.

It broke itself upon the impregnable rock of his divinely fortified holiness. The full force of its curse came upon him, and he suffered it and bore it away.

It had to be removed. It was a barrier to life. It cursed everyone who ever came under its power, even the perfect son of God himself, and as long as it stood, no one could attain to life - only to cursing and condemnation. I am showing how impossible is this theory that he was ever teaching the Law of Moses. Truly, the Law was "holy, just and good" (Rom. 7:12). Truly, the Law was "ordained to life" (Rom. 7:10). Truly, it is said, "He that doeth these things shall live by them." But it could not give life, only death..."If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been given by the law." (Gal. 3:21).

When the Law came on the scene, mankind was already under curse. And the Law, of itself, provided no way of escape from that curse, but rather added to it - doubled the burden of curse upon mankind. The Law required an offering of purification for the very circumstance of birth itself. By that very ordinance, it demonstrated its own inability to give life. It demonstrated that for anyone born of Adamic flesh, there must be a sacrifice, not a shadowy typical animal sacrifice, but a true sacrifice, even the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

In the very birth of Jesus himself, the Law required that Mary be purified, and that a sacrifice be offered (Luke 2:22-24). Even Christ himself had to be circumcised (Luke 2:21) - the cutting of the flesh. Even Christ himself

had to be baptised (Matt. 3:15) - the washing away of sin, the burial unto death: "I have a baptism to be baptised with..."

The great message of the New Testament is the contrast between the Law of Moses, the 'ministration of death and condemnation' (2 Cor. 3:7-9), and the glorious new law of Christ, the 'ministration of righteousness' (vs. 9 - read Romans, Galatians and Hebrews). Christ's glorious "Sermon on the Mount" is not a teaching of the Law of Moses, the "Law of carnal commandments" imposed 'until the seed should come.' He was the seed. The seed had come. He came proclaiming a glorious new law.

This new law did not contradict or violate the law of Moses. Rather it went far beyond it. It was infinitely higher and deeper and broader and more heart-searching in every respect. The Sermon on the Mount is its most beautiful and comprehensive exposition, and right in the midst of this glorious new message we have Matt. 5:32, given in direct contrast to the hard-hearted provision of Moses' Law.

How essential, then, as he began his mission to Israel, as he began to publicly proclaim this Law-superseding, glorious new message of life - how essential that he carefully warn them that he was not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil! They must understand the true relation of his new wine to the old wine in the perishing old bottles of the law. It was not conflict, but consummation. It was not destruction of the Law, but fulfilment and absorption.

How essential that he solemnly warn against breaking the least commandment of the Law and teaching men so! This was not the way of escape from the Law's burden which "neither they nor their fathers were able to bear."

Jesus came proclaiming liberty, but not licence. In exchange for the death bringing servitude of the Law's external and mechanical bondage, he offered the true freedom of an infinitely more searching and demanding law - a law that required every fibre of energy and zeal and love and devotion that man could ever possess. This was the freedom of complete bondage to holiness - the freedom from the "freedom" of licence and indulgence and sin and at last, death. Paul had to contend with this same danger, and this warning:

"Ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." (Gal. 5:13).

How beautifully this contrast between the external law of carnal commandments and the inward law of Christ is brought out in these six examples that Jesus quotes in Matt. 5:21-42. What a loss when we have to throw them aside - completely reverse their true meaning and deepest teaching, just to get rid of a verse that does not fit our theories! We look again briefly at the introduction...

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying..." (Matt. 5:1-2)

We look at 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." Here, in its fullness, he lays out before us the Gospel of the Kingdom.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted"..."In thee and in thy Seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed."

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."..."Thy Seed shall possess the gates of his enemies"..."All nations shall serve him."

"Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness."..."As truly as I live, saith the Lord, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of God."

And so we could go throughout this whole glorious Gospel teaching. Let us then look at the six great contrasts with the Mosaic Law. We shall note that Christ does not contradict the Law. Rather in each case he goes infinitely beyond its requirements to the eternal principles of which the Law is but the most elementary and partial and external expression.

Contrast No. 1 (from Matt. 5:21).

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time." First of all, this word "by" should be "to". This makes it much clearer and more conclusive that he is quoting the Law of Moses. If we retain the "by", it must be in the sense of "by means of" - that is, "God said by means of" the ancients: Moses and the prophets. I have checked this in every version of the Bible I have and every one (except just one of little authority) other than the A.V., uses "to" and not "by": "It was said to them of old time." The list using "to" includes: Revised Version, American Rev. Stan. Rev., Diaglott, Rotherham, Bagster, Nestles, Weymouth, Goodspeed, Berkley, New Century, New English, Basic English, Douay, Geneva, (1560 AD, before AV), Moffatt, Berry, Amplified, Young. I suggest you look them up and convince yourself.

There is no preposition (to or by) in the original, but the article "the" is in the dative case (tois). The dative case is that which indicates the indirect object. "Them of old time" (literally "the ancients" - tois archaiois) is the indirect object here. A "Greek Grammar" (Jays) says...

The dative case is used for the indirect object, and may be translated "to" or "for". That is: "It was said to (or for) the ancients."

I desire to make this conclusive because this makes it even more inescapably clear that Jesus is quoting the Law. To say, "It was said to them of old." And then to directly quote the Law, "Thou shalt not kill:" - surely can mean only one thing, unless we have a theory to defend which requires us to deny the clear meaning.

So in this first case we find Jesus is undeniably quoting the Law, word for word, then contrasting it with his new higher law: "But I say unto you." Check the Clapham rule here - that Jesus is quoting the false Jewish traditions ("Thou shalt not kill") and then explaining the Law of Moses ("whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgement"). It creates an absurdity. Can anyone believe that in this series of six very parallel contrasts, in some of them Christ is contrasting the traditions of men with Moses Law, and teaching the latter; and in some of them (without any indication of change) he turns right around and quotes Moses' Law and then contrasts his own law with that? What confusion! How would anyone know what to follow?

#### Contrast No. 2 (from Matt. 5:27).

Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Again, an obvious and undeniable direct word for word quotation from the Law, followed by: "But I say unto you." Again check the Clapham rule: Jesus is quoting the false Jewish traditions (Thou shalt not commit adultery") and answering them by teaching the Law of Moses ("Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart"). Again, absurdity.

#### Contrast No. 3 (from Matt. 5:31).

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorcement," again followed in exactly the same pattern by the direct contrast, "But I say unto you". Even standing alone (but especially in the light of the first two cases and the general background of the whole address to his disciples), how can anyone assert with a straight face that he is just quoting false Jewish traditions, and then teaching the law of Moses?

Now - if he is - let us, just for a moment, just for the sake of the argument, suppose that he is teaching the Law of Moses. We have noted the tremendously searching character of his first two "But I say unto you" pronouncements. They forbid the very inner hidden roots of anger, even though unexpressed; they forbid the slightest inner incipient thought of impurity, calling it adultery (adultery was punishable by death under the law he is supposed to be explaining).

Now this third "But I say unto" must be in harmony with the high spiritual teaching of the first two. We are told by the proponents of this theory that: "A Jew who faithfully and sincerely carried out all the teachings of Christ in this chapter would be fulfilling the precepts of the Law in the way most pleasing to the Father." (Clapham booklet on divorce.).

Note then the dilemma this theory creates. We must interpret Jesus' answer here (as in 1, 2, & later contrasts) as the deepest expression of the true meaning of the Law of Moses, "the spirit behind the Law", we are told.



What does Jesus say?

"But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery." Now the article tells us elsewhere with great vehemence that whoever took advantage of this was hard-hearted, that God was not pleased, that a man of God would never do this. But here Clapham tells us (and this article is Clapham arguments from Clapham literature) here we are told that a Jew who followed Matt. 5:32 would be "fulfilling the Law (of Moses) in the way most pleasing to the Father."

But getting back to the true meaning in this third case (Matt. 5:31-32). It is quibbled in Clapham literature that vs. 31 is not word for word from the Law of Moses. (Note that contrast one and two are word for word, but they still tell us they are just the false traditions of the Jews). They say here of contrast three...

"These words (Matt. 5:31) will be found nowhere in the Pentateuch. They were tradition."

Now we are dealing with three languages of transmission: Hebrew, Greek and English, and Christ is summarising four verses (Deut. 24:1-4) into one, and yet to any reasonable person it must be perfectly obvious that he is referring to the provision of Deut. 24. There are many quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament where the wording differs much more than here, but a direct quotation is attributed. Compare Deut. 18:19 with Acts 3:23; Amos 9:11-12 with Acts 15:16-17; Matt. 21:5 with Zech. 9:9 and many many others.

To any reasonable mind, Matt. 5:31 is an obvious reference to, and a correct summary of Deut. 24:1-4. I find no evidence anywhere that anyone has ever questioned this until this new theory was developed. This is strengthened by the same pattern and the same contrast in the very parallel passage in Matt. 19:8-9. There Jesus specifically attributes the permission to Moses.

The Clapham theory, and the theory of this article, has to have Christ teaching the Mosaic Law in Matt. 5:32. If this cannot be established, this theory collapses. We have to believe that Christ, out of the blue sky, without any external questioning or controversy, right in the middle of a planned and systematic teaching of his own disciples - it has to have him, without warning or explanation, introduce as his teaching a precept of the law contrary to his own law, and then again, without warning or explanation, go back to teaching everything that is in harmony with his own law.

And we are warned by this theory that we must of ourselves discern that in this one spot he is teaching contrary to his own law which we must not follow on pain of disfellowship. How can anyone ask us to believe that? What confusion if we can say, right in the middle of any discourse by Christ: "That does not apply to us. We must not follow that: just the verses before and the verses after."

Note too, that this theory tells us that in the other five contrasts, he is bringing out the deep spirit of the Law, well-pleasing to God, and in harmony with his own law, but here, and here alone, he is teaching a precept of the Law of Moses that was displeasing to God even as part of the Law of Moses, and completely out of harmony with his own law.

Let us follow the pattern of these six contrasts through to further confirm the truth that Jesus is quoting Moses' Law, then giving his own in contrast.

#### Contrast No. 4 (from Matt. 5:33).

"It hath been said to them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." See Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21; Lev. 19:12.

Is this the Law of Moses, or the false traditions of the elders? Note for this theory to be true, these cases of "It hath been said" must be false traditions that Jesus is correcting by giving the true teachings of the Law. By this theory, "Thou shalt not kill", "Thou shalt not commit adultery", "thou shalt perform thine oaths" must be false traditions needing to be corrected. Jesus continues in vs. 34...

"But I say unto, Swear not at all...but let your communication be yea, yea and nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Is that a teaching of the Law of Moses in contrast with the false traditions that oaths must be honoured? Did the

Law forbid oaths - or did it in some cases require them? Do we have here the Mosaic Law, or do we have Christ's own glorious, new, infinitely higher, never-before-heard-of principles of perfection? No wonder the people "were astonished at his doctrine" - no anger, no first beginning of impure thought, a plain, simple, never violated Yea and Nay, no resistance to evil, blessing and loving everybody.

Truly in the marvellous wisdom of God we can dimly discern these glorious principles of perfection deep-hidden in all previous Scripture, beginning with the coats that covered Adam and Eve in their sin and shame. And this includes the whole Law of Moses, as everything else. The sacrifices, the ever-present deaths and reminders of death, were the most glorious part of the Mosaic Law. Every sacrifice was an expression of hope, and a promise of peace, and an exhortation to love, if men could but see it.

But we must keep the Law of Moses in Scriptural perspective. It was a "ministration of condemnation" added because of transgressions, "that every mouth may be stopped and all the world be guilty before God." It was a strict penal code, a "ministration of death," necessary to the regulation and control of unregenerated flesh, but of itself powerless to the flesh's reformation and purification. The Law strictly commanded...

"Thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee: Thine eye shall have no pity upon them." (Deut. 7:16).

"If thy son, or wife, or friend, which is as thine own soul, shall entice thee (to serve other gods)...thine eye shalt not pity, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him: thine hand shalt be first upon him." (Deut. 13:6-9)

"Thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; hand for hand; foot for foot." (Deut. 19:21).

This is the Law of Moses, and we are not under it. Judgement will truly be carried out by God on all wickedness, but not by us in this present dispensation. This "eye for an eye" Law is not a matter, as Clapham suggests, of man "demanding the maximum penalty." It is a matter of faithfully fulfilling the Law of God (like Saul and the Amalekites) that gave the responsible individuals no scope one way or the other: "Thine eye shall not pity." A private individual, faced by the case of Deut. 13:6-9, must carry it out. He could not follow the spirit of the Law and bless and spare the offender. Matt. 5:38 (to which we now come) is the Law of Moses, and not the "false traditions of the Jews."

#### Contrast No. 5 (from Matt. 5:38).

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

In the light of what I have just quoted (Deut. 7:13 & 19) can anyone dare to assert that Jesus is here quoting the false traditions of the Jews, and that in vs. 39 he is teaching the Law of Moses: "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil"? Surely it would be impossible to be more clear that he is quoting the Law of Moses word for word, and then giving by contrast his own new law, for an entirely new dispensation, now being heralded, and very soon to begin. The Law of Moses, of course, presupposed an enlightened nation with righteous rulers and true teachers - a nation centred in the Holy High Priesthood as the supreme court of appeal, and with the immediate presence of God manifested between the Cherubim. This is the essential foundation of the Law of Moses. Conditions were far from this in the days of Christ. Both the Law and the nation were on the verge of death, breathing their last, utterly broken down and corrupted.

#### Contrast No. 6 (from Matt. 5:43).

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy."

This is the highest and final contrast. Here he leads into Godlikeness and perfection (vs 45-48). Here Christ's law reaches its supreme pinnacle in universal love and benevolence. It is the last and greatest contrast in which the proponents of the new theory believe they have the strongest argument that Christ is condemning the false traditions of the Jews, and teaching the Law.

Their whole argument rests on the word "hate". It is said that the Law never commands "Hate thine enemy",

and such precepts of the Law are quoted as "If thou meet thine enemy's ox going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him." (Exod. 23:4)

This objection, raised to prove Christ was not talking of the Law of Moses, completely collapses when we note two facts. First, Christ uses this exact same word "hate" (miseo) as a requirement of his own law: "If any man hate not his own father, wife, etc...he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). No intelligent believer rejects this part of Christ's law, just because it has this word "hate", nor do they have any difficulty in understanding how Christ uses it here to emphasise the complete necessary supremacy of devotion to him.

So if we argue that Christ cannot be referring to the Law in Matt. 5:43 because of this word "hate", then we are reasoning that the Law of Moses was a higher and more loving law than the law of Christ. This, of course, is absurd.

And second, there are many passages in the Law to which the comparison of Christ (love neighbour, hate enemy) can very properly and naturally be applied, as...

"Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days forever" (Deut. 23:6)  
- spoken of the Ammonites and the Moabites.

"Thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword." (Deut. 20:13)

"They warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses, and they slew all the males." (Num. 31:7)

"Ye shall chase your enemies and they shall fall before you by the sword." (Lev. 26:7)

"Smite Amalek: utterly destroy all: spare not, slay man, woman, infant, suckling." (1 Sam. 15:3 - see Exod. 17:14)

In the light of these passages, how can anyone deny Matt. 5:43 is a clear reference to the Law, just as the previous five were? But it is argued, "That all refer to national enemies, not personal enemies." Very true, but where is the difficulty? How does that help to prove Jesus is not talking of the Law? Jesus does not specify personal enemies. In fact, his contrast here between "neighbours" and "enemies" would point, if anything to group enemies.

The Law of Moses was a narrow, restrictive, national law. It made a distinction of treatment between some people and others, merely on the basis of whom they happened to be ("Love neighbour, hate enemy"). It commanded the destruction of certain enemies.

The Law of Christ sweeps all such distinctions away, and commands universal benevolence, after the example of God who sendeth His rain on the just and the unjust, and who has blessed the wicked and rebellious nations on earth infinitely more than they deserve or appreciate.

It does not mean that wickedness will be unpunished, but it emphasises the glorious fact that the present dispensation is one of love and entreaty and blessing and non-resistance, after the example of Jesus himself: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke 9:55) - See John 3:17.

In five previous places, Christ's quotation of the Law, and contrasting it with his own law, is obvious and inescapable. In this sixth and highest and culminating contrast, there is absolutely no ground for breaking this consistent pattern, and interpreting it otherwise. It would be utterly incongruous.

This was the great new lesson - of sweeping away all barriers and radiating universal benevolence - that his disciples (and we ourselves) find hardest to fulfil. One thing is sure: the more we understand the depths of the teachings of Christ in these three chapters, and the more we live that teaching in our lives, the less we could possibly believe that he is simply explaining the Law of Moses.

The Law of Moses, like the rest of Scripture, truly carried within it the seeds of the law of Christ, but it had certain restrictions and ordinances and principles of action - suited for their own time and circumstance - that

were utterly incompatible with the full and universal manifestation of the spirit of Christ's law. So the Law had to be taken away. The enmity had to be taken away. Paul sums it up in saying (Eph. 2:14-16)...

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

Surely here is an inspired and inspiring commentary on this sixth and greatest contrast between the Law of Moses and the law of Christ! So the pattern throughout the six is consistent and beautiful, culminating in this last.

Christ is always, with perfect unity and consistency, living and teaching his own new law of life, never the "ministration of death." His life was a perfect, harmonious, single minded entity. Therein lies its irresistible power and beauty. Do this. Find a red letter Bible, and read all Christ's words straight through.

You will be deeply impressed by the utter unity of all he said - always the new wine in new bottles. Never any confusion with the old. Even in cases where he is most directly confronted with the Law of Moses, he goes back beyond and up above it: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" What is the answer? "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Going back to God's original appointment in Genesis 2:3)

"The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." (by whose law, - Moses' or Christ's?)

"It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (as applicable today as the moment it was spoken).

Christ's law reiterated nine commandments, but not the Sabbath. But Christ did not "destroy" the Sabbath: he absorbed it - he spread it seven days wide. He made every day a Sabbath, a day of God's work and not our own, every day a refraining from one's own natural interests and desires and advantage.

Let us remember that when they asked him, "Is it lawful...?", they were not asking him to explain Moses' Law. They were quite satisfied they knew that. They were saying, in effect, "We know what Moses said about this: do you say it is lawful to do so and so...? - trying to set him against Moses. Consider again, faced even more directly with the Law...

"Which is the greatest commandment of the Law?"

Again his answer goes earlier, higher, the first law of Eden -

"This is love, that we keep his commandments.... On these two commandments (love God, love neighbour) hang all the law and the prophets."

These were greater, older, higher than the Law. They stood eternally above its passing carnal commandments "imposed until the time of reformation". The Law simply was a temporary appendage, for a temporary purpose, hanging from them.

Clapham quotes "Leave thy gift before the altar" (Matt. 5:24) to "prove" Christ was teaching the Law of Moses in the Sermon on the mount. Surely this is childish! Altars go right back to the beginning, to the beginning of sin and the divine provision for sacrifice and atonement. The principle is timeless, from the promise in Eden of the slain lamb, to the great culmination in the Paradise of God: "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the Tabernacle." We cannot cut the infinite scope and beauty of Christ's teaching down to fit merely into the narrow literal confines of the temporary Mosaic ritual.

Returning to the article's Paragraph 34.

Note that in this paragraph it admits that the "It hath been said" of Matt. 5:31 does refer to Deut. 24:1-4, which Clapham takes great pains to deny, as destructive to its theory. If as this article admits, Matt. 5:31 does refer to Deut. 24, then it runs into the direct contrast of Matt. 5:32, "But I say unto you" - proving that the provision of Matt. 5:32 (the exceptive clause) is not the same as, but contrasted with, Deut. 24. Clapham clearly perceives this, and labours mightily to "prove" Matt. 5:31 is false tradition and not Mosaic Law.

Randell Article – par 36.

We must take all the law of Christ, and not just part of it. We must make it all fit harmoniously together. Matt. 5:32 & 19:9 are just as much the law of Christ as any other part.

Randell Article – par 37.

(Quoting from paragraph 37) *"If Christ does not allow a brother or a sister to divorce and remarry, we should read such in the writing of the Spirit through the Apostles."* This is mere presumption. It is like the Jews demanding a sign, when they had all the signs God considered necessary. Are not two clear statements by Christ himself sufficient? If not, how much more would be needed?

Do we have to demand it be revealed just as we say, before we will believe? If there were four places, would we demand eight? The Scriptures are one: one perfect, God planned unity. The fact that different books were written by different men is incidental. If a specific and secondary exception is sufficiently covered in one place, it doesn't have to be in another. It's all one book of God.

I would expect (if our personal expectations are worth anything) the picture to be just as it is, and would be surprised if the exceptive clause were more prominent. Why make that over prominent? It is given right at the beginning in Christ's most comprehensive and systematic statement of his new law. It is given again the next time the matter is discussed. Surely any more repetitions would be giving undue prominence to a very sad (and hopefully very rare) circumstance, especially in the light of the propensities of the flesh. Paul does mention it obliquely in passing, to prevent his advice to the divorced to remain single being misinterpreted as a command. The article has to woefully wrest Scripture to get away from this, as we shall see.

It will be noted that Mark 10 (while obviously recording the same incident as Matt. 19 - see context) not only omits the exceptive clause but also that part of the question directly related to it.

Mark: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?"

Matt.: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"

Why the difference in reporting the same question? "Contradiction"? No. Mark is clearly concerned with the general law. Matthew gives more detail, and includes both the exceptive clause and that part of the question relating to it. How do the proponents of this new theory explain the variation?

Continuing paragraph 37.

"Dare any of you... go to the law before the unjust...?"

I do not believe anyone in the Berean fellowship would for a moment suggest or condone going to law against another for any cause. This has been a firm, clear and agreed stand from the beginning. Bro. Roberts spoke frequently and vehemently against it. Truly it is good that this principle be kept clear, and repeated frequently, but to so introduce it in juxtaposition with the basic theory of this article is to create a misleading impression that those who are against this theory countenance going to law against another.

Randell Article – par 38.

To this all will heartily say Amen! But let us not manufacture artificial "contradictions" as straw men to knock down.

Randell Article – par 39.

Referring to 1 Cor. 7:27: "Bound to a wife: seek not to be loosed." The article here clearly (and correctly, I believe) defines "loosed" as that which is forbidden in the basic marriage law, namely (I suppose the article means), divorce. However paragraph forty makes this unclear, for it makes a point of saying the second "loosed" of vs. 27 is a different word from the first.

Randell Article – par 40.

Considering: *"Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife."* The article makes a point of the words "loosed" being different, but it does not say what it thinks this proves. Actually the difference is simply between a verb (luo: to loose) and its related noun (luisis: a loosing). Strong says the noun luisis is derived from the verb luo. The article says this second "loosed" means "divorced" and this would seem the obvious and simple meaning from the context. It is the common Greek word for loose. In usage, it was employed to signify divorce.

Randell Article – par 41 & 42

The article refers to the immediately following sentence: "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned ." Vs 28. Here we find in the article another strange claim of "contradiction", and another strange manipulation of Scripture, wresting two contiguous and obviously- related verses apart because together as they are in the Scripture they do not fit this theory. First, let us consider this claim that 1 Cor. 7:27-28 is a "contradiction" if read together as it stands in Scripture. The related section is verses 25-28. The obvious line of reasoning is this:-

Vs. 25:"Now concerning virgins": should they "abide as is"? (Vs. 24). "I have no commandment (note well) to give."

"I give my judgement - advice - as one who is specially qualified to give guidance to the Ecclesias."

Vs. 26."I suppose (that is, it appears to me to be best) that a man (virgin) stay as he is.

(It would appear from "man" in the answer that "virgin" in the question refers to both sexes. This agrees with Greek usage).

Vs. 27."But suppose you are already bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed." "Or you have been married but have been loosed (divorced) from a wife? Do not seek a wife."

Vs. 28."But if you do marry (the one just mentioned), it is not a sin - that is, I am not commanding you (see Vs. 25), I am advising in answer to inquiry. "And if a virgin (unmarried person) marry, she (or he) has not sinned."

It is so inescapably obvious that Paul is giving advice. He takes great pains to make this clear: "I have no commandment; I give my judgement; I suppose." How then could anyone possibly see a "contradiction" just as verses 27 & 28 stand together? It seems so obviously reasonable and in complete harmony with the whole chapter and so crystal clear to understand it as the brethren always have: "I advise you to stay single, but you do not sin if you marry."

On this matter of finding "contradictions" where there are none, and then building arguments on them, just another word in illustration of the groundlessness of the alleged "contradiction" between bro. Thomas and Roberts (see my pages 3 & 4 - 1866 quotation). It will be noted that there is an apparent contradiction between quotations #7 and #10 from bro. Roberts (see my Page 3). No. 7 says the law of England at that time permitted divorce for adultery and cruelty; No. 10 mentions adultery only. To resolve this contradiction it is necessary to know that divorce by English law at that time for cruelty (divorce a mensa et thoro: "from table and bed") did not allow remarriage; divorce for adultery (absolute divorce) did. In alleging "contradiction" between witnesses known to be reliable and competent, there must be very strong and clear evidence. This is a basic principle even in human law. If an unknown factor can be reasonably suggested that would reconcile apparent "contradiction", it must be accepted.

Having discovered this supposed "contradiction" between verses 27 & 28 of 1 Cor. 7, the article on the strength of it takes the terrible liberty of wresting vs 28 away from vs. 27, to which it is so clearly connected by the conjunction "but". And why? To make it stop saying what it continues to keep saying as long as it is together as in Scripture: You, the man "loosed" from a wife, do not sin if you remarry."

If I felt at liberty to treat Scripture like this, to wrest verses apart because together they say what I do not agree

with, or to take Matt. 19:10 and move it to Mark 10, so that it refers to Mark 10:9 instead of Matt. 19:9 as it stands in Scripture - if I felt at liberty to do this, I am sure I could make Scripture prove or disprove anything. There is absolutely no contradiction in 1 Cor. 7:27-28, just as it stands together, and just as it has always been understood together. We have neither reason nor authority to rend them apart. No one would think of doing it if they did not have a theory to justify.

Randell Article – par 43.

On the basis of it's theory, which I believe I have proven to be unscriptural, the article makes some final unproven assertions which have no basis in Scripture.

Randell Article – par 44.

"One who has remarried commits adultery, therefore remaining in this condition would continue to commit adultery."

The article makes this bold statement, and makes no attempt to prove it. It is untrue and unprovable.

Randell Article – par 45.

Commenting on paragraph 45. *"Therefore the only way either one or both could be received back into fellowship is to first separate from the sinful union, and then after repentance could be received into fellowship."* A bold assertion, unproven and unprovable. In legislating that such couples must separate, and such families must be broken up, we are going beyond the command, and tampering with powers and forces far beyond our control. We are blithely legislating financial burdens and further needless disruption and sorrow, and lifelong physical abnormalities.

I find that the spirit of some in regard to this problem is condemning and punitive, rather than loving and compassionate, eager to run and meet the repentant sinner. Brethren write to me that these sinners must be "punished" - that they must by all means be deprived of the fruits of their sin. I find this harsh viewpoint very distressing. I cannot feel it is the spirit we are taught to have toward erring brethren. Our kindness and compassion must balance our purity and zeal, or we are but "holy" monsters. Christ was the purest and most zealous of all men. He was also the most compassionate and loving and understanding toward the weak and the sinner.

This new theory is, as bro. Roberts described a similar well-meaning but erroneous theory about the permanent exclusion of those who contract alien marriage, "monstrous". This theory is monstrous because it is out of touch with reality - because it legislates sorrow just for the sake of sorrow, to punish the sinner. It shuts the Ecclesial door of comfort and strength and love and companionship on a repentant sinner just when he needs them most.

If we had the power of God, if we could turn back the clock, if we could expunge solemn life-commitments, if we could restore virginity, if we could put children back in the womb, if we could undo actuality, then perhaps this theory might be realistic. But we cannot do these things. We cannot change facts. We can only with our tampering make a bad situation worse, and a sad situation sadder.

This theory requires both partners, innocent or guilty, to live the rest of their lives in what is for most people a sexually abnormal condition, under great temptation (1 Cor. 7:5) and it makes no provision for a normal family life for any children involved.

This theory involves an utter incongruity for which I have in vain sought a logical and Scriptural justification for thirty years. According to Clapham's clause B, the brother at present at issue in the controversy could never be received back as long as he maintains relations with his present wife. According to clause C, his present wife, if she pass a Scriptural examination, must be accepted while in her present relationship to him, and she must be told it is her duty to fulfil that covenant-relationship. This is an impossible situation.

If one cannot be accepted, it is on the grounds that, as this article claims, their present state is "adulterous". It is absurdity to say of a married couple that the state of one is adulterous and the state of the other is pure. To such confusion does adding to the word of God lead us. Honestly face this impossible anomaly, do not avoid it or turn from it, but think it through to the end, and it must force any sincere and reasonable mind to the conclusion that this theory cannot possibly be correct. There must be a solution with practical, wholesome hope on which a sound new future can be built.

The teaching of Christ, as faithfully expounded by bre. Thomas and Roberts, present a simple solution to this impossible dilemma of this new theory. Adultery is a dreadful abomination, and divorce is a terribly sad evil, but the way of Christ is a facing of the facts, and of dealing with them, and of clearing away the broken remnants of the old failure, and of laying a new, cleared foundation with hope for the future. It does not condone the dreadful sin that lies at the root of the problem, but it does provide a logical and practical solution, and extend mercy, and offer hope for a normal rebuilt future, and it does not perpetuate a dangerous lifelong abnormality that can serve no useful purpose. Divorce, in the one extreme case permitted by Christ, is the surgeon's knife to cut out the cancer of incurable adultery and permit the rebuilding of a normal life.

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These basic truths should again be re-emphasised in closing:-

- 1) Marriage is for life: to break it is a very serious sin - an "abomination."
- 2) Going to law against another for any reason (including divorce) is a very serious sin against the deepest principles of Christ's law in Matt. Ch's. 5-7.
- 3) Divorce and remarriage are evils, and are to be utterly avoided as long as there is any possible hope of Scriptural reconciliation. (On this point, the Berean Restatement was never meant to contradict the consistent stand of the early Brotherhood in harmony with the teachings of bre. Thomas and Roberts. I can testify personally to this as I had the most to do with it. It went just as far as the Brotherhood chose to go. There are many who would never have accepted it if they had understood it to repudiate the convictions of bre. Thomas and Roberts and condemn them and their beliefs to disfellowship.)

We all have much to learn about spiritual things, about what love and compassion really are and really call for in help and service to the weak and straying. This present problem and controversy is to teach us many things, if we will face it and learn. At best we perceive the divine beauty of the Christ character as through a glass darkly. We are all, like the unconverted Paul, self righteous Pharisees at heart, especially if we are, or fancy ourselves to be, zealous for "purity" - that is, other people's purity. If we were so zealous for purity in ourselves - real deep-down purity of heart and thought and emptying of self and of service unto others - purity from all the daily-repeated ugliness and selfishness of the flesh - what divine and heavenly places the Ecclesias would be!

Finally, beloved brethren and sisters, may I very strongly urge this. It is much easier, and more exciting, and more spectacular, to break down than to build, to scatter and stampede a flock than to gather it together in love. We have laboured together for years to build.

Before you support any new movement to break up the Berean Brotherhood on this the very verge of the Master's return, give to the convictions of our bre. Thomas and Roberts all the weight which their deep knowledge, and spirituality, and lifelong service to the truth, deserve. If they were wrong in vital matters of fellowship, what hope have we, who depend on their God-provided help so greatly. Could we write Eureka, or Elpis Israel or Christendom Astray? Look at the puny efforts of all who have tried to supplant them.

These brethren were not ignorant men, they were not changeable men, they were outstandingly consistent men, stable men, and they left a consistent record throughout lives of complete dedication to the service of the Truth. They did not (in the words of this article), "*Seek to subvert God's Word to satisfy their own desires or to excuse some close to them.*"

On the contrary, they were spiritually minded men, deeply versed in the true spirit of the Scriptures; they were



compassionate and realistic men. They had no emotional orthodox fetishes about marriage. They recognised that God who appointed marriage could regulate as He chose, and as He did in such a great variety of ways in the past, clearly manifesting that He was not blindly bound to the technicalities of His own ordinances, but adjusted them to man's needs in wisdom and in love.

These brethren recognised that God alone could solve its problems and promulgate its laws to bring the greatest good and least evil out of what is simply a passing provision for the present weak, stumbling mortal existence - "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage."

Do not be misled into an unsound position that rejects these brethren and all who believe like them as unfit for fellowship. Consider their teachings, and the teachings of Scripture, prayerfully and with an unbiased mind. Let us examine the processes of our own thinking, and free ourselves as much as possible from blind and unreasoning emotion, and from fetishes and prejudices unconsciously absorbed from worldly and orthodox sources.

I for one deeply value, and daily thank God for, the providentially-provided help and guidance of these two brethren, apart from whom I would never have known the glorious saving Truth of God, and I stand with them until the end.

G.V. Growcott,

July, 1971.