

5-1-1956

A Biblical Study of Marriage

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A BIBLICAL STUDY OF MARRIAGE

by

Paul H. Pike

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the

Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Divinity

Portland 22, Oregon

May, 1956

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of The Problem. The Church is somewhat divided on the issue of marriage and its related problems. The problem presented here is: What is the Biblical teaching as to God's standard for marriage?

Objectives. It was the purpose of this study to discover what the Bible says about marriage and the related problems of polygamy, divorce, and separation. With the Bible as the guide, these were the specific objectives dealt with: (1) To set forth a birds-eye-view of the biblical teaching on marriage and the related problems of polygamy, divorce, and separation. (2) To determine what is the biblical teaching on marriage as an institution. (3) To determine what the Bible says about monogamy. (4) To determine what the Bible says concerning the indissolubility of the marriage union.

Assumptions. It is assumed that (1) the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and is the final authority for all religious and moral conduct, and (2) that the Bible gives God's plan and standard of marriage for mankind.

Justification Of The Study. It appears that the present age is confronted with a real problem in the area of marriage and its related problems. The problem is an apparent disregard for God's plan

of marriage as found in the Holy Scriptures. This problem exists both within and outside of the Church.

A study such as this should help (1) many pastors, teachers, counselors, and Christian laymen to know what God's plan for marriage really is according to the Holy Scriptures, and (2) many young people who are about to enter the blessed experience of holy matrimony.

II. LIMITATIONS AND METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Limitations. This was primarily a biblical study, with some references to works by noted authorities where such work contributed to the study. The subject was limited to marriage and the related problems of polygamy, divorce, and separation.

Method Of Procedure. This was a research study of the Bible and its teachings on marriage and the related problems of polygamy, divorce, and separation. The inductive method was used in searching the Scriptures. The American Standard Version, 1901, of the English Bible was used throughout the study.

Various works on Christian Ethics, and marriage practices were studied. These are listed in the bibliography.

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Marriage. Marriage, as used throughout this study is defined as the voluntary compact between one man and one woman, based upon mutual affection, whereby they agree to live together as husband and wife, until separated by death.

Divine Institution. By divine institution is meant an institution of divine origin: that is, God being divine, created man and woman and declared (Gen. 2:18) that the two of them should become one flesh (Gen. 2:24) through holy matrimony.

Monogamy. Monogamy is that state where one man and one woman live together in holy matrimony.

Polygamy. Polygamy is that state where one man is married to more than one wife.

Divorce. Divorce, as used in this thesis, means a final severance of the marriage bond.

Separation. Separation is the parting of the husband and the wife for a season. It is not divorce. Reconciliation may unite the two again.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The organization of the remainder of the thesis is as follows: Chapter two is a historical survey of the biblical teaching on marriage. Presented in this chapter is (1) God's original plan for marriage, (2) the entrance of sin and its effect on marriage, and (3) the New Testament teaching on marriage.

Marriage as a divine institution is the "subject" of chapter three. (1) The Genesis account, (2) the teachings of Christ, and (3) the teachings of Saint Paul, are the main divisions of this chapter.

In chapter four, monogamy as God's standard is presented. The

two areas studied were (1) the biblical teaching on monogamy, and (2) the biblical teaching on polygamy.

The study made in chapter five concerns marriage as an indissoluble union. The areas covered in this chapter are: (1) the indissoluble nature of marriage, (2) the original divine law of marriage, (3) Christ's teachings relative to the Mosaic Law, and the divine standard for marriage, and (4) the teachings of the Apostle Paul, relative to Christ's teachings.

A summary of the entire study, some conclusions at which the author has arrived as a result of the study, and some recommendations for further study, are presented in chapter six.

A bibliography, containing references to all books, encyclopaedias, and other sources of material, is found at the end of the paper.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON MARRIAGE

The purpose of this chapter, in light of the over-all study which has been made, is to give a biblical bird's-eye-view of God's plan for marriage. This historical survey highlights the major steps in the biblical history of marriage which are (1) marriage as God originally planned it, (2) marriage after sin entered the human race, and (3) marriage under the dispensation of grace.

I. GOD'S ORIGINAL PLAN FOR MARRIAGE

With the creation of man and woman (Gen. 1:27, 28), God began to lay the groundwork for a permanent union between the two so long as they both lived (Gen. 2:18-24). In the Genesis 1:27, 28 portion of scripture several things are said concerning the creation of man as related to marriage. (1) These two persons were made in the likeness and image of their Maker (Gen. 1:26). This fact implies that man was a morally responsible being. A study of the nature and attributes of God helped to show the degree of "likeness" in which he created man. This moral responsibility was planned by God to enable man and woman to rightly interpret and fulfill the true meaning and significance of the marriage act. This law was to serve in all the areas of life, subsequent to marriage, and even before marriage. It is seen (Gen. 3:6) that when sin entered the human race, this moral "likeness" was marred, and man and woman lost the proper interpretation of marriage and life as God had planned it (Rom. 3:23). God's original plan for

marriage, then, hinged upon the moral responsibility of the man and the woman. Marriage was to flourish within the bounds of moral law. Anything outside of these bounds was transgression against God's will and desire. (2) These two persons were made male and female (Gen. 1:27). The creation of the two different "kinds" was God's plan for bringing about a union, or marriage. God wanted man and woman to come together in a sexual union that would not only serve as a means of propagation of the "kind", but would unite the two in the bonds of love and holy matrimony. Man's physical nature then, and his moral nature, enabled him to carry out a perfect union. God's perfect plans for marriage were workable only as the two persons followed the plans. They had the necessary physical qualifications; they had the necessary moral and spiritual qualifications, and they had God's approval and sanction upon them (Gen. 1:31). (3) These two persons were given specific instructions to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28). In all of God's creation, including man, he has ordained that a union of the two kinds should produce fruit after their kind (Gen. 1:11, 21, 22, 24, 25, 28). Reproduction of "kind" is one of the divine purposes for marriage.

A study of the Genesis 2:18-24 passage brings to light several direct, and inferential facts concerning God's plan for marriage.

(1) Woman was given to man as a help meet to him (Gen. 2:18). This infers a mutual respect by both parties; they were to be interdependent. In the original Hebrew language the word for help meet is ִּזְכָּתוֹ, (k^e ne g^e dho) which means, as over against him, i.e. corresponding

to him, his counterpart; or one like him (Lee). ¹ (2) The woman was taken from Adam's side (Gen. 2:21, 22). This infers that woman was to be co-equal with man. She was not to be lorded over or tramped upon, but she was to walk side by side, in intimate fellowship with her husband. (3) Marriage involved a separation of both parties from their parents (Gen. 2:24). The history of marriage is cluttered with case after case of broken marriage vows caused by the intervention of the parents of either party. God's plan for marriage was that there be a separation from the parents of both parties. (4) The marriage union united the two into "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). God planned for marriage to be permanent and indissoluble.

The first two married people knew no shame (Gen. 2:25). They were naked, and were not ashamed of their nakedness.

God's plans for marriage included an intimate knowledge of the mysteries of both sexes. This was revealed at the union of the two in the marriage act. "And man knew Eve his wife" (Gen. 4:1). The scriptures infer that this intimate, secret knowledge of sex life is to be known fully only by the two persons. This mystery of knowledge was to be an integral part of the sacred marriage act. If a third person came into this intimate knowledge, adultery was committed. It was a revelation of the kinds to one another.

II. THE ENTRANCE OF SIN AND ITS EFFECT ON MARRIAGE

With the entrance of sin into the human family, the marriage

1. B. Davidson, The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon (London, Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited, n.d.), p. 533.

relations, like all others, soon began to degenerate.

Immediate Effects. Adam and Eve were ashamed of their nakedness (Gen. 3:7), and they covered their bodies with fig leaves. They knew good and evil.

The two persons tried to hide from their Creator (Gen. 3:8). Adam said, "I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Gen. 3:10). The man and woman knew fear.

They began to excuse themselves from the blame and responsibility for their sin (Gen. 3:12). Adam blamed the woman (Gen. 3:12), and the woman blamed the serpent (Gen. 3:13).

Women's conception and child-birth were destined to be painful (Gen. 3:16). Pain came as a result of sin. Pain has accompanied man since Adam's transgression against God. The travail of child-birth, signifying great pain, has been used as symbolic language throughout the Bible (Psalm 48:6; Isa. 66:8).

The husband was to rule over the wife (Gen. 3:16). The woman was to be in subjection to her husband (I Cor. 14:34, 35). This was not so in the beginning; they were co-equal.

Making a living was to be a toilsome task for the married couple (Gen. 3:19). The ground was cursed because of their disobedience (Gen. 3:17), and thorns and thistles came (Gen. 3:18), and death was pronounced upon them because of their sin (Gen. 3:19).

Cain, the first recorded child of their marriage, became a murderer (Gen. 4:8), for he slew Abel his brother. Again God cursed the ground, and made Cain a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth (Gen. 4:12).

Men began to take more than one wife. "Lamech took unto him two wives" (Gen. 4:19). This was not according to God's original plan for marriage.

The general corruption of mankind mentioned in Genesis 6:1-5, seemed to center around the wrong use of marriage. It seems that men were wantonly taking many wives (Gen. 6:2), however this may not have been the case.

Effects Upon The Chosen People. Having more than one wife was not in God's original plan for marriage, and doing so brought about hatred and jealousy among the wives of men (Gen. 16:4), for, "and when she (Sarai) saw that she (Hagar) had conceived, her mistress was displeased in her eyes." Esau's two wives brought grief (Gen. 26:34), for, "they were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah." It seems that woman was created to live with one man. Any infringement upon this relationship by an outsider, or third party, usually brought jealousy and hate. God planned for one man and one woman to live together, and to be separated only by death.

Shechem forced his intentions upon a virgin (Gen. 34:2). While Shechem's people may have had no compunctions against such an act, it is certain that the Jews did, and they treated it as an wholly abnormal thing. God's plan is that a woman remain a virgin until married to a man. She is to be kept pure, clean, and reserved for her own mate and husband. The mystery of marriage is wronged and cheated by men who prey upon virgins. Dinah's brothers later said, "Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot" (Gen. 34:31)? And Dinah's brothers slew Shechem for humbling their sister (Gen. 34:26).

Many evil things which were not in God's plans for marriage, were done by men and women (Gen. 38:1-30).

Joseph, a righteous man, respected God's plans for husband and wife, by refusing to yield to Potiphar's wife's desires (Gen. 39:9). Here is a supreme example of a righteous man. Joseph was faithful to his master, and to his God. He said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" And he continued "day by day" to refuse the woman's evil desires.

Through Moses came the Ten Commandments, of which the seventh and tenth were specific moral laws concerning marriage. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14), and, "Thou shalt not covet----thy neighbor's wife" (Ex. 20:17). These were severe indictments against the sinfulness of the chosen people during this period. The giving of the law brought a more specific indictment against sin and unrighteousness. Now they had no excuse for sin was condemned by law. Defilement, incest, and other unchaste crimes were forbidden under the law (Lev. 18). Adultery was punishable by death (Lev. 20:10). This was a severe crime, and it demanded a strong punishment. It seems that under such a strong punishment men and women would think twice before prostituting the marriage relation.

God planned that all men should marry. An unmarried state is an abnormal life. Non-celibate priests are spoken of in Leviticus 21:13; "He shall take a wife in her virginity." There is no teaching in God's Word to support the theory that all priests should remain unmarried. While God may have special cases, to promote his cause, the normal pattern is the married state.

The test of adultery (Num. 5:12) was a very trying ordeal. It must have been very humiliating, even to those who were innocent of the crime.

The practice of marriage to captive women was very loose (Deut. 21:10-14). This practice was a long way from the standard God set in the beginning. "If thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will" (Deut. 21:14). God planned for marriage to be permanent and indissoluble.

The bill of divorcement is spoken of in Deuteronomy 24:1. While certain restrictions governed this act, divorce was not in God's original plans. Christ said, "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment" (Mark 10:5).

Effects Upon The People Prior To And During The Captivity.

Gideon had concubines, for, "he had many wives" (Judges 8:29, 30). Samson had relations with a harlot (Judges 16:1). The two wives of Elkanah caused trouble, for, "her rival provoked her sore" (I Sam. 1:6). David's wives and sins are related in I Samuel 18:27; 25:42; II Samuel 11. Amnon forced Tamar and what was called avid love issued in avid hatred after the sin (II Sam. 13:12). During these times, it seems, the standard of marriage was very low, and even God's great men practiced the acceptable customs of the day.

Mixed marriages were a great problem to Israel (Ezra 9). When Ezra heard that "the holy seed" had been mingled with the people of the land, he rent his garments and plucked the hair of his head and beard, and sat down confounded (Ezra 9:2, 3). He was confounded because of

their trespass, and prayed to Almighty God to forgive his people of their abomination (Ezra 9:5-15). This scene ended with a whole series of divorces (Ezra 10:19).

The Proverbs contain many warnings against false marriage practices. The peril of strange women (Prov. 5:15); the perils of unchaste love (Prov. 5:7-10); the folly of yielding to the harlot (Prov. 6:24); the foolish woman (Prov. 9:13-18); and a worthy woman (Prov. 31).

Wanton women were denounced in Isaiah 3:16. Hosea's whoredom and second marriage, were both symbolic of Israel's fall and restoration (Hosea 1 and 3). Conjugal sins were condemned in Malachi 2:10-16.

III. THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON MARRIAGE

With the coming of Christ into the world, the marriage relation, along with the rest of man's life, took on greater purity and was restored to God's original plan and elevated through grace. In the New Testament this is seen early, for in the attitude of Joseph toward Mary, the woman whom God chose to bare his only Son, is seen the true nature of love (Matt. 1:18).

Jesus' Teaching On Marriage. In his sermon on the mount, Christ gave new moral impetus to the moral law of God, when he said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery----everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:27). This great teaching brought the marriage act to a new and greater meaning. Christ restored the marriage standard to its original place. While God's standard for marriage had never changed, man had, and Christ came to restore the image of God in the moral nature of fallen

man, and to redeem him from all sin. Jesus gave fornication as the sole ground for putting away a wife (Matt. 5:31). Jesus reaffirmed God's original plan for marriage and restated the fact of its indissolubility by man (Matt. 19:3-12). Christ's teaching concerning the indissolubility of marriage, by man, is a strong judgment upon the human race. Christ acknowledged his Father as the author of holy matrimony, and he said that his Father was the only person who could break the marriage tie.

Jesus clarifies the purpose for Moses' bill of divorcement, when he said, "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment" (Mark 10:5).—When he came, Christ fulfilled the law, doing away with the ceremonial laws of Moses, and the letter of the law as practiced by the Jews. Grace became operative, and restored the purposes of God to their proper order and place. Among these purposes was the permanency of marriage. Time and again the Pharisees questioned Jesus, and each time he exposed them for what they were. Many times he used scripture to defeat their evil designs. In the Mark 10:5-12 passage, Jesus reaffirms all that God had ordained that marriage should be. "Male and female"; "a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife"; "the two shall become one flesh" (Mark 10:6-8). Then Jesus strengthens the argument by saying, "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:9). Jesus taught that marriage was a permanent union.

Jesus said to the disciples, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery" (Matt. 10:11, 12).

Jesus told the Pharisees that according to the scriptures there would be no marriage in the resurrection (Matt. 12:25).

The contrast is shown between the Old Testament standard of the legal law, and the New Testament standard of grace as Jesus dealt with the woman taken in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11). In many instances where the Pharisees questioned Jesus, they used the law of Moses as their standard, and in many of the replies, Jesus used the law of grace. On this particular occasion he pointed to their own sinfulness and then forgave the woman and told her to sin no more (John 8:7-11). Again, when Jesus dealt with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:7-26), he offered her the "living water", and while he perceived that she was an adulteress, he offered her grace rather than stoning.

The Teaching Of The Apostles On Marriage. Paul tells of the ravages of sin in regards to the sexual nature of man (Rom. 1:26). "Uncleanness", "bodies dishonored among themselves", "vile passions", the natural use of the sex organs was abused and changed; homosexuality and vile sin was committed, and they were "without natural affection" (Rom. 1:24-32).

Paul condemns the fornication (incest) in the Corinthian Church (I Cor. 5). In no uncertain terms Paul tells the Corinthians to "purge out the old leaven----keep the feast----not with old leaven----but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7, 8). Later, Paul tells them to "flee fornication" (I Cor. 6:18).

God founded marriage upon the "one flesh" basis (Gen. 2:24). Christ reaffirmed the "one flesh" basis (Mark 10:8). The Apostle Paul taught this same plan of union for man and woman (I Cor. 6:16).

In I Corinthians 7 Paul gave some commandments of God concerning marriage, and some other teaching which he thought was applicable to the situation. If one were to read only I Corinthians 7 hastily through, without taking note of other statements made by Paul in his other epistles, one would think that Paul favored celibacy to marriage. But such is not the case, for this passage should be interpreted in the light of three things, (1) Paul was answering some questions which the Corinthians had asked him in a letter, concerning marriage. This does not mean that they all had the same problem, but Paul's answer is in response to their asking (I Cor. 7:1). (2) "The distress that is upon us", i. e. the immediate shortness of time which Paul envisioned, and the imminent tribulation, must be taken into consideration in interpreting the passage (I Cor. 7:26). (3) What Paul said in other epistles (Eph. 5:22; I Tim. 4:1-3) concerning marriage must be dealt with. Paul seems to have taught that peace in separation is better than war in marriage (I Cor. 7:15). This section of scripture (I Cor. 7) has been more fully discussed in chapter five.

In his chapter on "apostolic liberty" Paul said that he, like the other apostles, had a right to lead about a wife who is a believer (I Cor. 9:3), but he forwent this right so as to be more useful to the Lord in preaching the gospel (I Cor. 9:12).

Even as God created woman for man (Gen. 2:18), so Paul taught that woman was created for man (I Cor. 11:9).

Paul likened the marriage relation to the Church of Christ (Eph. 5:22), and the "one flesh" idea to the Church of Christ (Eph. 5:32), and said, "love each one his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see

that she fear her husband (Eph. 5:33).

The qualifications for the leaders of the Church were given to Timothy by Paul (I Tim. 3). He told young Timothy that a bishop must have only one wife (I Tim. 3:2), and that a deacon must have only one wife (I Tim. 3:12).

By what he said in I Timothy 4:3, Paul made it clear that marriage is God's will for man. Here he warned of seducing spirits, and false prophets who forbid to marry. He also desired that "young widows (women) marry, bear children, rule the household" (I Tim. 5:14).

The writer to the Hebrews said, "Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). This is a strong warning against those who have prostituted God's plan for marriage.

Peter taught that both husband and wife have specific responsibilities to each other. The wife is to be subject to her husband, and her behaviour is to be a testimony to him (I Peter 1:1, 2). Her "adorning" is to be in the inward "hidden man of the heart", and "a meek and quiet spirit", and not of the outward appearance (I Peter 3:3, 4). The husband is to "honor" the wife by recognizing that she is the "weaker vessel" (I Peter 3:7).

John wrote in the Revelation, of the Church at Thyatira, "I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to idols" (Rev. 2:20); and, "Behold I cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works" (Rev. 2:22).

Summary. The foregoing chapter has given a bird's-eye-view of marriage and marriage practices, both good and evil, as recorded in the Bible. This bird's-eye-view revealed that: (1) God, in his creative work, set the plan and standard of marriage for mankind. (2) Adam and Eve, having been created moral beings, were able to rightly fulfill the marriage act. (3) Sin entered the human race and had both immediate and far reaching effects upon the marriage relationship. (4) With the coming of Christ and his teaching, marriage took on greater purity and was restored to God's original plan and elevated through grace. Christians were thus enabled to fulfill Christ's commands regarding true marriage. (5) The Apostle Paul reaffirmed the standard of God and the teaching of Christ in regards to marriage and its related problems. Paul taught some things concerning marriage which were not direct commandments from God, but in doing so he said that he thought he had the Spirit of God. (6) The other apostles harmonized their teaching with that of Christ.

CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE AS A DIVINE INSTITUTION

This chapter deals with the divine origin of marriage, that is, marriage as a divine institution. The chief source of study has been the Bible. Included in this chapter are (1) the Genesis account of marriage, (2) Jesus' teaching on marriage, and (3) Paul's teaching on marriage.

I. THE GENESIS ACCOUNT

Many of the central truths and doctrines of Christianity have their origin in the first book of the Bible. In this portion of scripture called Genesis, or commonly referred to as "the book of beginnings", are found the central truths concerning holy matrimony. It is only proper then that a biblical study of marriage should begin in the book of Genesis. And especially does it begin in that portion of scripture which deals with the account of the creation of man and woman, and their purpose in life (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24).

The scriptures speak very clearly concerning the creation of man and woman and their purpose in life when they say

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing

that moveth upon the earth. ¹

This portion of scripture teaches that man and woman were not only made in the image of God, but they were made male and female. This fact gives specific importance to the reason and purpose for the creation of all living things, and especially man. The implication is that there was to be a sexual affection for one another, and that this attraction was to be guided and developed by certain moral factors.

In that portion of scripture which follows the act of creation, God gives a more specific account of Adam's help meet, and a more exact standard of moral conduct regarding marriage. The scripture says

And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. And out of the ground Jehovah God formed every beast of the field, and every bird of the heavens; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And the man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the heavens, and to every beast of the field; but for man there was not found a help meet for him. And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. ²

On the basis of the foregoing scriptures, it is seen that marriage is primarily a divine institution. It is primarily so because

1. Genesis 1:26-28, A. S. V.

2. Genesis 2:18-24, A. S. V.

while the "civil" aspect most certainly enters into the picture of marriage, the biblical standard and order was a divine act of Almighty God. It was God's plan and purpose that every marriage be contracted upon this scriptural basis (Gen. 2:23, 24). God formed this perfect workable plan in the beginning on the basis of man's innocence and original righteousness.

As to the divine origin of marriage, Gregory said

God himself constituted it at the beginning. He made man male and female, and ordained marriage as the indispensable condition of the continuance of the race. He commanded marriage. God has made known the nature of marriage, the prerequisites to the marriage compact, the ground of its dissolution, and the end and duties of the marriage relation. Its existence before the origin of civil society proves it to be in its origin not a civil institution. ¹

This Genesis account brings to light several essential characteristics of marriage as pertains to its divine origin. Knox Little spoke of these as: (1) unity or exclusiveness, (2) mutual consent, and (3) real union of life. ²

Unity Or Exclusiveness. The marriage bond by divine institution, and according to Christianity, which reaffirmed the divine institution, is the bond between one man and one woman. This is recorded in the marriage of the first Adam, and is spoken of by the second Adam when he said, "they twain shall be one flesh." This was the

1. D. S. Gregory, Christian Ethics (Philadelphia, Eldredge and Brother, 1875), pp. 274-75.

2. W. J. Knox Little, Holy Matrimony (London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900), p. 71.

divine intention. The corruption of human nature caused a departure from this unity or exclusiveness. This was restored by Christ. Christ re-instituted the original divine ordinance, that one man and one woman should be husband and wife. ¹

Mutual Consent. In the original institution, when God brought Eve to Adam, the consent of the two was implicitly understood. God, making his creatures after his image, endowed them with freewill; and in this first true act of marriage there was implied the consent of both, of which God himself deigned to be the witness and minister. He himself presented the woman to the man, not only to teach the holiness of marriage, but also, and above all, to show the need of free consent, on the part of those married, to the sacred contract. ²

Real Union Of Life. This union is so close as to be the chosen representative in the world of "the mystical union betwixt Christ and his Church." It is intended to be a union of will and affections, of heart and body, the closest that it is possible to imagine. ³

A further study of the scripture in Genesis revealed that something dreadful happened to this newly married couple. Sin was committed by this couple who had been created in the image of God. In his work "Holy Matrimony", Knox Little pointed out that when they committed sin (Gen. 3:6) these two people forfeited their righteousness. This forfeiture is what is called "original sin." Before the Fall,

1. Little, op. cit. 71.

2. Ibid., p. 73.

3. Ibid., p. 75.

Adam and Eve were in a condition to recognize and use rightly the relation of marriage, according to the divine intention. ¹

Sin dealt a terrible blow to the blessed nature of holy matrimony. Brunner says that the erotic sexual impulse which, in itself, like all that God had made, is pure and good, through sin has become one of the greatest dangers for the life of the individual as well as for that of society. ²

II. THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

In Chapter II of this study it was seen that with the coming of Christ and his teachings, marriage practices were reformed and the standard which God gave in the beginning was reaffirmed (Mark 10:6-12). With the coming of Christ, and the dispensation of grace, this divine institution was elevated to its highest level. The standard which God set was not changed one iota, yet the sacredness, solemnity, and beauty of holy matrimony took on new and deeper significance for the Christian. Little said

For Christian men and women have become "members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." They are in many senses different; they are on a higher level; they have greater gifts; they have deeper responsibilities than those who are not in the Christian covenant. Their marriage is especially, according to the teaching of our Lord, a reverting to marriage as originally instituted, in which there must be indissolubility and the mutual faithfulness of the two persons; but also

1. Little, op. cit., 60.

2. Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1947), p. 352.

it rises to a higher level. 'These the members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit, when they are united in marriage not merely remain each blest of the Spirit as before the marriage; but the grace of the indwelling Spirit, working through the Divine institution of marriage, makes the marriage union to be a deeper, more intense, more mysterious interpretation of being than it had been even in Paradise.' Further, it is a mysterious expression and symbol in the outer world of the close and mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church. ¹

When Christ came, he taught a new concept of the moral law. He said that when a man's thoughts or intentions were evil, then he had already sinned. He said that the seventh of the ten commandments taught that man should not commit the act of adultery. Christ taught that it was wrong to even desire another woman, other than one's wife, in thought, for when a man looks on another woman and purposes in his heart to commit adultery with her, he has already committed adultery in his heart (Matt. 5:27). Christ's teachings brought a whole new meaning to life. While marriage was elevated by grace, a whole new ethic came to govern and control marriage practices.

Christ demonstrated grace even to those who wrongfully used the marriage relations. To the woman at the well (John 4:7-26), Jesus offered the "living water." To the woman taken in the act of adultery, (John 8:1-11) Jesus gave forgiveness. In Moses' time this woman would have been stoned to death (Lev. 20:10).

While more is said in chapter five concerning divorce, it is significant to note here that Christ gave the only condition for recognizing divorce, that being adultery (Matt. 5:31).

1. Little, op. cit., 61, 62.

It is also interesting to notice that wherever Christ has been presented to the peoples of the world, and has been accepted by them, their society has soon changed. Customs and mores which are contrary to the gospel plan are gradually done away with, and are replaced with Christian practices. This is true too in relation to the practices of marriage. The history of missions shows that in many areas of the missionary enterprise wrong or perverted marriage customs have been in practice. When Christ was embraced the old ways were left, and God's plan of marriage was usually accepted. This has had a tremendous effect upon the position of the woman in many lands. So often the woman has hardly been more than a beast of burden. Christianity teaches that man and woman are co-equal (Gen. 2:18-24). In her book September Monkey Induk Pakk relates how that with the coming of Christianity to Korea the women of the land began to find their freedom from the dominance and slavery of men. Her own life is a testimony of what Christ can do to enlighten the oppressed women of the world, and set them free. ¹

There can be, and there is marriage outside the Christian covenant, but to be a marriage that is well pleasing to God, Christ should be a partner to the contract. Brunner supports this contention when he says

"Companionate marriage" or "experimental marriage" is never true marriage, because it lacks the most essential element, that is, the

1. Induk Pakk, September Monkey (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1954), pp. 20, 21.

obligation to be faithful. For this very reason marriage is not something merely natural, but, as a divine institution, it is also something holy, whose deepest meaning can only be understood and held fast in faith. It is no accident that strict monogamy (in the sense in which it has been described in these pages) is a product of Christianity, so that with the disappearance of the Christian Faith----or indeed with the disappearance of any kind of religious belief----it is uprooted and fades away; all that is left is the unstable "love-bond" on the one hand and the State-protected institution of "civil marriage" on the other. ¹

III. THE TEACHINGS OF PAUL

A portion of the Apostle Paul's teaching concerning marriage may be found in I Corinthians 7. As to the divine aspect of marriage, Paul reaffirmed Christ's teachings concerning the original plan which was given by God in the beginning. The Apostle argued again for the "one flesh" basis for marriage (I Cor. 6:16).

Although most of Paul's teachings deal with related problems of marriage, he said something more concerning the divine origin of marriage (I Cor. 7:3, 4). Here the Apostle spoke about the mutual respect and honor which the two parties are to share. There is a very natural order to marriage, as well as a divine order and sanction. Marriage, if it is a marriage in the Biblical sense, has to do with two individuals. Paul said that these two were to show mutual respect and honor for each other's body (I Cor. 7:4). He mentions the need for a close relationship with out separation except for a season with mutual consent (I Cor. 7:5).

1. Brunner, op. cit., 358.

The teaching of mutual respect and honor in marriage cannot be too greatly stressed. It begins with the two individuals and their marriage experience. Furthermore, it issues into the realm of the offspring and hence into society itself. In other words, when man and woman marry, they become "one flesh" and consequently individuality does not henceforth exercise nearly all of its prior rights.

Knox Little emphasised this point when he said

Men have tried to construct theories of society, beginning with the individual. This is a false method. We are not, as a matter of fact, isolated individuals. Each finds himself or herself in the world as the child of two parents. We begin life in a real relation to others, and the well-being of society demands that right relations to others be fostered and preserved.¹

While it was not the purpose of this study to deal with the family, it is worthwhile to note that what Paul taught concerning mutual respect for both parties in the marriage relation, he most certainly applied to the fruit of marriage, namely the child. Brunner contends for Paul's philosophy here when he says

From the point of view of the individual human being there is not simply the "right to sex experience," or even "the right to have a child;" for the child also has a right to a father and a family, and sex experience is not a good which can be severed from the responsibility which goes with it in the natural order.²

1. Little, op. cit., 7.

2. Brunner, op. cit., 366.

When dealing with Paul's writings, the question comes up concerning celibacy. Did Paul teach celibacy as superior to the divine institution of marriage? In his treatise on Christian Ethics, Paulus said

When, in I Cor. 7, Paul prefers celibacy to married life, it is not because he thought slightly of matrimony and considered celibacy as morally higher---for in that case how could he in Eph. 5:22, etc., speak of matrimony as the symbol of the communion of Christ and his Church, and in I Tim. 4:1-3, say of the doctrines of those who prohibited marriage, that they are lies and doctrines of devils?---but, as he himself says, on account of the coming persecutions, that is, on account of "the present distress," in which "the unmarried could stand more easily than the married, who were involved in all kinds of family cares." ¹

While there may be some cases, and there are, where the single life is in order, due to special duties, circumstances, or a special call of God, nevertheless, it remains a fact that a single life is an incomplete life. Humanity in its greatest fulfillment of life is not a man or a woman; it is man and woman. While each, alone, expresses an incomplete life, on the basis of the divine institution, the relationship of husband and wife when ordered according to God's law expresses the complete idea of man. ²

While dealing with the matter of marriage as a divine institution, attention should be given to Paul's teaching about the "oneness in the ideals of life," as Smyth so termed it. ³ Reference is made to

1. C. F. Paulus, The Christian Life (Cincinnati, Cranston and Curts, 1892), p. 317.

2. Little, op. cit., 14.

3. Newman Smyth, Christian Ethics (New York, Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 407.

the scripture (II Cor. 6:14-18) where Paul said, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." This great central truth cannot be lightly reckoned with when a young man selects his lifetime help meet. In the greater treatment of the text, Paul made it mandatory for a marriage to be composed of two Christian believers if it was to be a compatible and lasting affair.

Summary. This chapter has dealt with the divine origin of marriage, or marriage as a divine institution. It was learned that the book of Genesis teaches (1) that man and woman were created for each other, (2) that they were made in the image and likeness of God, as morally responsible beings, (3) that unity, mutual consent, and real union of life are essential characteristics of holy matrimony, (4) that sin destroyed man's natural understanding of true marriage, (5) that with the coming of Christ, new moral values were restored to man and the concept of marriage was elevated through grace, and (6) that the Apostle Paul preached the divine standard for marriage, by teaching mutual respect for both parties, and marriage as the best thing for man and woman.

CHAPTER IV

MONOGAMY AS GOD'S STANDARD

This chapter deals with the monogamous nature of holy matrimony. It presents the biblical teaching on monogamy and polygamy.

I. THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON MONOGAMY

The Old Testament Teaching. A proper study of the biblical teaching on monogamy must begin with the Genesis account of the creation. The first argument for monogamy begins with the order of God's creation of man. "Male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). One man, and one woman-----made for each other. This was God's pattern for marriage.

In the fuller account of the creation of woman, God specifically said, "It is not good that man should be alone: I will make a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). Two things are apparent in this fiat of God. (1) It is good for man to have a companion, and (2) God's perfect plan for man's life consisted of giving him a help meet. God alone fully understood his creation. He alone understood the whole nature of man, and he planned for a perfect relationship; a man should have one woman for companionship.

Brunner says

In the idea of the Creation all those elements form a unity which outside the idea of Creation fall asunder: the indissoluble trinity of husband, wife, and child, the "monistic" element in the experience of love,

and the personal character of the relation between human beings. Only where---in the recognition of the order of creation--- husband and wife bind themselves together in love and know themselves bound---marriage means "binding"----has marriage (on its subjective as well as on its objective side) been "concluded." One creator it is who wills to give life to the human being through two human beings, who to this end uses the means of natural love, and who yet, neither in the one nor in the other, wills any other relation between human beings save one which at the same time is personal: who, indeed, uses this natural element in order to lead to the personal. ¹

In Genesis 2:24, where God gave the prerequisites for the marriage act, it is plainly stated that the man shall "cleave unto his wife" and "they shall be one flesh." The teaching here is that (1) man shall have only one wife, and (2) that upon the union of marriage, they shall become one flesh. There is something sacred about marriage. This sacredness makes it not only a physical union, but somewhat of a spiritual union. This "love union" cements a physical and spiritual relationship between one man and one woman.

Speaking about the monistic essence of love, Brunner says

Genuine natural love is in its essence monistic, and that quite apart from all ethical obligations, those who love each other do feel the intrusion of a third person to be intolerably disturbing, that a strong and genuine love---still quite apart from any idea of ethical obligation---does want the loved one wholly and solely for itself. Genuine love is single-minded-----

1. Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1947), p. 348.

-----indeed that is its power. ¹

If a polygamous instinct exists in man, as Brunner says it does, ²
it exists because of sin in the heart.

It is seen then, that God gave the pattern for holy matrimony.
As Martensen has said, any other plan or approach to marriage, is
unnatural, immoral, and sinful, and will not be sanctioned by the
courts of heaven (Eph. 5:11). ³

God's standard was given "in the beginning." He planned a perfect marriage. In chapter three it was seen that in the time of man's
innocency this relation was divinely instituted. While it was still
a divine institution, sin entered, and greatly changed man's desire
for moral good. Knox Little emphasized this when he said

In the long centuries between the Fall of
man and the coming of Christ, we find no change
made in the fundamental truth as to the Divine
institution. Things, however, had greatly
changed; degradation and corruption had come
on the human race; there was alienation from
God; but still, as we have seen, here and there
the sense of that relation which was divinely
instituted was in the minds of men. Amongst
the chosen people, the legislation of Moses
was intended to raise the standard. He found
things in such a condition that the relation
of marriage was treated with the greatest lax-
ity. Husbands put away their wives on the most
trivial grounds and from mere caprice. In the
Mosaic legislation this was checked; for any
putting away, the husband was compelled to have
a document legally attested before a high auth-
ority. Adultery was looked upon as so dreadful

1. Brunner, op. cit., 347.

2. Ibid., p. 347.

3. H. Martensen, Christian Ethics (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark,
1892), p. 9.

that it was given the death-penalty; and no putting away was permitted except for 'some uncleanness,' or 'the shame of the thing,' which probably included 'grave cases of immodesty and indecent conduct, and also such-----defilement--- as by the Levitical law rendered a person "unclean."' Mosaic legislation, therefore, raised the whole question to a higher level. Polygamy, indeed, was permitted under certain restrictions, but re-marriage after divorce was discountenanced in the strongest possible manner. Whatever allowances were made for separation in regard to marriage at all, were made because of the 'hardness of their hearts,' to a people who had not yet received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which is given to Christians, and were only just emerging gradually from idolatry. ¹

The Teachings Of Christ. In the book of Matthew (Matt. 19:4-6) Jesus, in answering the Pharisees, summarized the Old Testament (Gen. 1:27; 2:24) teaching concerning man's creation and marriage prerequisites. Then, he made a strong statement about the permanency of the marriage union, "what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." While the permanency of marriage, or its indissolubility is treated in chapter five, it is significant to note that Jesus recognized God's plan of creation, that is, "male and female."

The most characteristic example of marriage and the family, as given by the Lord, is that in which he describes the kingdom of God as a social order in which the relationship of men to God is like that between sons and a father, and their relation to each other like that between brothers. Jesus' entire theology may be described as a transfiguration of the family. Christ's teaching was of a kingdom of God

1. W. J. Knox Little, Holy Matrimony (London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900), pp. 60, 61.

"within you," the chief element of it being communion with God, and the loving relation of "children" to a "father," a present possession.¹

The Teachings of Paul. The whole tenor of Paul's teaching regarding the married state of man, seems to be that of a monogamous relationship. Such a statement as "let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" (I Cor. 7:2) can hardly be interpreted as anything other than monogamy. In all of Paul's conversation concerning marriage (I Cor. 7), the singular pronoun and the singular article are used, referring to one husband, or one wife, i.e. "his wife", "her husband", "the husband", and "one the other."

Paul spoke of his right to lead about "a wife" (I Cor. 9:5). He did not say, "wives."

In his reference of the likeness of marriage to the Church and Christ (Eph. 5:22), Paul taught the unity, oneness, and the inseparableness of the two. He inferred that any variance from pure fidelity of Church and Christ, is an adulterous relationship. He said (Eph. 5:31) that when man and woman marry, they become one flesh. He said, "this mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church. Nevertheless do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself: and let the wife see that she fear her husband" (Eph. 5:32). Did Paul leave any room for any other kind of relationship other than a monogamous relationship here in his teaching? He did not. He taught

1. James Orr, "Marriage," The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids: 1952), III, 1999.

one Church and one Christ; one wife, and one husband.

In his admonitions to Timothy, Paul said that a bishop should be "the husband of one wife" (I Tim. 3:2), and that a deacon should be "the husband of one wife" (I Tim. 3:11). The basis for such teaching, as these requirements for church leaders, is God's original plan for monogamous marriage.

II. POLYGAMY

The Meaning Of The Term. As The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia has pointed out, "polygamy practically means "polygyny" (γυνή)(gune), i.e. it describes a many-wived man. There is, however, hypocrisy beneath the word polygamy. It is an attempt to cover up by the term "plural marriage" that which is not marriage and cannot be marriage. Polygamy, whatever its meaning, is a violation and negation of the marriage relation."¹

"Throughout the history of polygamy, the might of the physically strongest has dictated the situation. Man has on the average one-fourth more muscular force than woman. When it comes to wrong in sex relation, man has that advantage, and it has given him the field covered by the word "polygamy." There is the man, who is the master, and the woman, who is the victim."²

This same idea of extreme male dominance has prevailed in many countries where Christ was not allowed to enter, or where Christians

1. James Orr, "Polygamy," The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (Grand Rapids: 1952), IV, 2416.

2. Ibid., p. 2416.

have not taken the gospel. In her book, September Monkey, Induk Pakk cries for the time when she and the women of Korea might be free from the terrible dominance of man. She was "disturbed by the power which Korean men held over their wives who could not move one inch without masculine consent." ¹ Customs, traditions, inheritance laws, and most of the mores in many of these un-Christianized lands revolve around the male dominance, and women are held in complete subjection.

The Origin Of Polygamy. Polygamy was caused by man's disobedience toward God. However, it developed rapidly and was encouraged during the early tribal wars. When men had separated into clans, The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia says, wars soon occurred between them. ²

In Old Testament times, the tribal wars caused an excess of women, and hence polygamy was encouraged. When Lot was taken captive by the warring kings (Gen. 14:12), they took, among all his goods, the women also (Gen. 14:16). This custom was repeated many times by warring men in Old Testament history.

When the first Europeans settled in North America, they learned that the Iroquoi Indians destroyed the Hurons. The great majority of men were massacred; the women and children, driven to the abode of the conquerors, disappearing there mainly in concubinage and slavery. What happened to the surplus women? Here again might was right, and the

1. Induk Pakk, September Monkey (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 93.

2. Orr, op. cit., 2416.

strongest chief chose the women he wanted, and concubinage, or what is the same thing-----polygamy-----was set up. Successive wars came, and soon the chief, sheik, or king had his harem. Under these sinful practices, no longer was there the "help meet" originally destined for man-----"bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"-----for whom he would "leave his father and his mother" and to whose single life he would "cleave" for life (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:5, 6). Monogamy, with its unity in labor, thought and feeling, with its immeasurable modifying influences of moral, ideal and spiritual cast, was gone under such a system as polygamy. Woman was reduced to the position of ministrant to man's unmodified sensuality .¹

Concerning polygamy, Paulus said

Polygamy is a sinful distortion of matrimony. The esteem of woman, which is essential to true love, is incompatible with it. The wife is a slave, and takes the position of a prostitute toward the husband. The idea of the mutual faithfulness of husband and wife is almost without meaning here. Naturally man also distrusts his wives; therefore their seclusion in harems. The development of a healthy family life also is impossible by jealousy among the wives, and the enmity among the half-brothers and half-sisters, the children of different women. Hence it is not surprising that the custom of polygamy was removed wherever the spirit of Christianity gained dominance. Christianity brings matrimony, which was deranged by sin, back to its true moral significance, and lifts woman up to the enjoyment of equal moral rights with man, which is due to her as joint heir of eternal blessedness (I Cor. 7:4). ²

1. Orr, op. cit., 2416.

2. C. F. Paulus, The Christian Life (Cincinnati, Cranston and Curtis, 1892), p. 307.

The Old Testament And Polygamy. The complications introduced into morals by polygamy have not often been considered. But the Bible sets them forth in plainness. The marriage of Abraham and Sarah seems to have been an original love match. Still Sarah, under the influence of polygamous ideas, presented Abraham with a concubine. Yet afterward, when she herself had a son, she induced Abraham to drive out into the wilderness this concubine and her son. Abraham was humane and kind, and it is said, "The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight" (Gen. 21:11). But he was in the toils of polygamy, and it brought pain and retribution. ¹

The conditions of Jacob's marriages were such that it is hard to say whether any of his children were any other than of polygamous origin (Gen. 35:22-26). Where the family idea and affection went, in such mixed condition, is evidenced by the unblushing sale, for slavery in Egypt, of one of the brothers by the others (Gen. 37:28). ²

David wanted to be a righteous man with all his heart. Like many of the military leaders and kings of the earth of his day, he had a polygamous career. While David's chief sin and shortcoming may have been his adultery and murder, nevertheless, his polygamous life did not help him, even though it may have been an established custom. David's retributions ran along an extended line. There was the case of incest and murder among his children (II Sam. 13). The son in whom he had most hope and pride organized treason against his throne, and lost his

1. Orr, op. cit., 2416.

2. Ibid., p. 2416.

life in the attempt. David left his kingdom to Solomon, of whom this can be said----a man bright, keen-witted, wise, and yet in his old age he went to pieces by the wiles of the women with whom he had loaded his harem. An excess of foreign alliances may have been the chief cause for Solomon's downfall, but his extravagance in his polygamous life, and his attempt to build temples in distant places for the religions represented by the inmates of his harem, bankrupted his nation. ¹

Summary. The monogamous nature of marriage has been the theme of this chapter. It was seen that: (1) Monogamy alone is God's standard for marriage. (2) The Old Testament, Christ's teaching, and the Apostle Paul's teaching gave grounds for only one marriage standard, that being one wife and one husband. (3) Polygamy was found to be unnatural, and a distortion of marriage. (4) The word polygamy is a misnomer, for marriage with more than one person is not true marriage at all. (5) The origin of polygamy came chiefly because of disobedience, but was promoted largely by tribal wars. (6) The Old Testament lesson of polygamy showed that many retributions followed those who practiced it. This included most of the great men whom God used.

1. Orr, op. cit., 2416.

CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE AS AN INDISSOLUBLE UNION

In discussing the indissoluble nature of holy matrimony, two closely related problems to marriage must be dealt with; the problem of divorce, and the problem of separation. This chapter presents (1) the indissoluble nature of marriage, (2) the original divine law of marriage, (3) Christ's teaching relative to the Mosaic Law, and the divine standard for marriage, and (4) the teachings of the Apostle Paul in light of the divine revelation.

I. THE INDISSOLUBLE NATURE OF MARRIAGE

In the original plan of marriage God ordained that a man "shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Several factors supporting the indissoluble nature of marriage are found in this one scripture. (1) To "cleave" to a wife means to adhere or stick to her. In the simplest sense of the word, it means to stay with her through thick and thin "till death do us part." The act of leaving father and mother also indicated that God planned for this union to be permanent----a breaking with parental ties, and a cleaving together-----in a new relationship. Jesus said, "they are no more two, but one-----let no man put asunder" (Mark 10:8, 9). (2) Adam was to cleave to his wife. The thought here is that of a "single" "binding" relationship. It was not to be broken (Mark 10:9), at least by another other than God, and only this single relationship could keep it unbroken. (3) The "one flesh" mentioned in this scripture

portion signifies a permanent union. Marriage should always be one union---indissoluble----until broken by death, or separated by sin.

II. THE ORIGINAL DIVINE LAW OF MARRIAGE

"In the beginning" it was necessary that marriages between those who were close in kinship be permitted. Afterward, however, in keeping with the law of God as revealed in natural causes and effects, marriages between those "near of kin" were forbidden (Lev. 18:6).

Putting aside all exceptional conditions, when the divine law of marriage was given, it included the exclusive union of one man with one woman (Gen. 2:18-24). While the Genesis account does not specifically state that death should be the only cause severing the bond of marriage, it is so inferred, and was later inferred by the Lord Jesus Christ, who in referring back to the divine institution or law of marriage said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mark 10:9). It is seen in the Gospels that the first institution of marriage is identical with the Christian institution (Gen. 2:18-24; Mark 10:6-9).

After the Fall mankind became corrupt (Gen. 6:5). In regard to marriage, divorce and polygamy were contrary to the original law of marriage (Gen. 2:18-24). Divorce took place as a concession to human weakness, and was permitted on account of the hardness of men's hearts-----*πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν* (pros sklerokardian) (Mark 10:5). Neither of these departures from the divine institution, divorce or polygamy, was instituted by the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law was a great reform, which found polygamy and divorce in possession, according

to long established custom. While Moses did not attempt to suppress either of these customs, he did restrain and amend them, and put them within strict limitations (Deut. 24:1-4). Divorce was to be granted only under careful legal forms, and for a definite cause, and no encouragement was given it. Among the latest utterances of the Old Dispensation, it was taught, "I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel (Mal. 2:16).

Knox Little said

The original institution, as found in the Old Testament scriptures, is the only divine one. Anything to the contrary was a mere concession, because of human corruption, and was to be completely withdrawn with the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, which enabled human nature to fulfill God's law. 1

III. CHRIST'S TEACHINGS RELATIVE TO THE MOSAIC LAW, AND THE DIVINE STANDARD FOR MARRIAGE

The real question which confronts man is as to the re-marriage of separated persons. One of the most important testimonies of the scriptures, concerning marriage, is found in the utterances of Jesus Christ. There are four passages of scripture, which are the recorded utterances of the Lord, which bear directly upon the question. (1)

The Gospel of Mark states

And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry

1. W. J. Knox Little, Holy Matrimony (London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1900), p. 80.

another, committeth adultery against her; and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery. ¹

Several important things are noted in these recorded words of Christ. (a) Apparently the disciples were in the midst of heart searching, and had pressed this question further in their private communings with Christ. This passage is an explanation of the explanation which Jesus gave to the Pharisees (Mark 10:2), and is of the nature of a last word. (b) This passage allows no room for the dissolubility of marriage. It states distinctly that for a husband to divorce his wife, and marry another is adultery. Similarly, for a wife to put away her husband, and marry another, is adultery.

(2) The Gospel of Luke says

Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery. ²

The truths of Luke 16 were scoffed at by the Pharisees (Luke 16:14). Jesus had just said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). When they laughed him to scorn, Jesus said, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts----- it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall" (Luke 16:15-17). Jesus told the Pharisees that there was a danger that that which was utterly false and wrong might be

1. Mark 10:10-12, A. S. V.

2. Luke 16:18, A. S. V.

clothed, as it were, in the garb of right. "That which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). Christ was exposing the Pharisees for what they really were. They may have thought they were sheltered beneath the shield of the law, but Jesus said that without reservation or exception, every one that puts away his wife and marries another, is an adulterer, and that to marry a divorced wife is to sin with a married woman. It is adultery.

On Mark 10:10-12 and Luke 16:18 Knox Little said

Taking these two passages as they stand, we seem to get a clear and consistent view of the case that marriage is, as we have said, a relation and not only a contract and that the parties to it enter upon a new relationship, a relationship constituted by God as really and truly as any other human relationship, as truly, e.g. as the relation of brother and sister, or parent and child----a relationship, therefore, which it is as impossible for man to break in the one case as the other. Whatever else may come between them, father is father, and son is son, and brother is brother, and sister is sister, while the world stands. And husband is husband, and wife is wife, "till death----do part." To put away a wife and marry another is to attempt to break what man cannot break. It is adultery. To put away a husband and marry another is to attempt to do what man cannot do. It is adultery. To marry a divorced woman, and by parity of reasoning---under a covenant in whose contemplation, in Christ Jesus, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female"-----to marry a divorced man, is to stimulate a bond that cannot bind. It is adultery. ¹

(3) The Gospel of Matthew says

It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce-ment: but I say unto you, that every one that

1. Little, op. cit., 84.

putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery. 1

Knox Little said that this passage has to do with the "bill of divorcement." It is dealing with the seventh commandment in one of a series; and Jesus here treats it differently than that of the third and sixth commandments, for it is not introduced by the formula, "It was said to them of old time," and this is precisely what it was not. Jesus did not alter the Mosaic Law, but corrected a wrong interpretation of it. What the Rabbis had said about divorce had not been told by Moses. In the law given to Moses, the question of divorce had been placed under strict restrictions and limitations; but the lax interpreters of one Rabbinical School had allowed the mere giving of a "writing of divorcement", in place of all those limitations. Jesus did not say, "it was said by Moses," but more likely he implied "it has come to be a saying," i.e. it has come to be a saying through the corruption of Rabbinical laxity. The Jewish practice in this matter was a wholesale gloss upon the text, and like Corban, came within the scope of Jesus' censure, "making the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition"-----explaining away the law which they professed to interpret. 2

Little's conclusion that Matthew 5:31 had to do with the "bill of divorcement" is not a contradiction of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. This passage comes in naturally. It is the divine limitation of the licence

1. Matthew 5:31, 32, A. S. V.

2. Little, op. cit., 85, 87.

which the law permitted *πρὸς σκληροκαρδίαν* (*pros sklerokardian*), "for the hardness of men's hearts" (Matt. 19:8). Christ's words must have spoken like the voice of accusing conscience to many of his hearers who had permitted themselves, in fancied security, a licence undreamed of by the law as given by Moses.

It was noticed in Matthew 5:31 and 32 that Jesus used the exception, "saving for the cause of fornication" (Matt. 5:32). He forbade a separation on the part of the man or the woman except it be for *πορνεία* (*porneia*); this exception, said Dorner, in his System of Christian Ethics, "Refers not to sins committed before marriage, nor merely to adultery in the narrower sense of the word, but to any kind of unchastity in married life, as for instance the woman allows herself to be treated unchastely." ¹

It also was Dorner's idea that when Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife (*ἂπολύσῃ*) (*apoluse*)," he meant, evidently, an arbitrary putting away, a repudiation. This relation is so sacred, it ought to keep both parties together, and it continues to have claims upon a man even when he arbitrarily withdraws from it. Christ inferred this when he said that he causes her who is put away to commit adultery. That is, he brings himself into such a position as to render it impossible to restore the marriage that has been broken, while the ease with which such a separation is effected makes it easy for the woman to enter into an adulterous connection with another. It is further

1. I. A. Dorner, System of Christian Ethics (New York, Scribner and Welford, 1887), p. 540.

said that he who marries her that is put away (that is, arbitrarily and invalidly put away) commits adultery, for he makes the restoration of the marriage and the duty of reconciliation impossible. In the third place, Christ adds that when a man has sinfully repudiated his wife, and marries another woman, he thereby violates a still existing marriage. In this case Christ always spoke of marrying again, because in the case of an unjust divorce it is a second marriage that gives finality to the separation----that is, where monogamy prevails. In the second marriage the sin of separation has reached its climax, for any renewal of the former relationship has now become impossible, unless polygamy were permissible. Thus, any arbitrary exercise of authority, in the way of breaking an existing marriage relationship, is censured by Christ in the strongest terms, and represented by him as equivalent to the sin of causing adultery. The duties of that party who is only passively implicated in the separation, are not discussed. The words, "He that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery," could signify that a woman even when divorced without any fault of her own must not marry again. But Christ is here speaking of arbitrary divorce by means of a bill of divorcement. In this case the marriage still remains valid objectively, and is broken by a second marriage. This scripture then is a warning against divorce on frivolous pretexts, reminding hearers that an arbitrary separation leads to adultery, to the violation of a marriage that ought to be maintained notwithstanding the bill of divorcement. ¹

1. Dorner, op. cit., 540-41.

(4) Again Matthew's Gospel says

And there came unto him Pharisees, trying him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.¹

Once more the question of the latitude allowed by the "bill of divorcement" comes up. The Pharisees echo the prevailing laxity, voicing the extreme left of the Rabbinical schools by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause" (Matt. 19:3)? Several things are seen in the answer the Lord gave to them. (a) In his own teaching on marriage Jesus referred to its original institution, "from the beginning it hath not been so" (Matt. 19:8). (b) For the marriage relationship, one man, one woman was given. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife" (Matt. 19:5). (c) A relationship closer than that of parent and child was to come about. "The two shall become one flesh" (Matt. 19:5). (d) A relationship was established by God, and therefore could only be divorced by God. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

1. Matthew 19:3-9, A. S. V.

Regarding Matthew 19:3-9, the question asked by the Pharisees must be answered. "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away" (Matt. 19:7)? The answer is difficult---both textually and as a matter of interpretation. Bruce's book, The Ethics Of The Old Testament, sheds light on the problem. It was Bruce's idea that the language of the Authorised Version (Deut. 24) has led to a misunderstanding of the passage. Bruce said that the first three verses of chapter are all conditional, and the apodosis is in the fourth verse. Read thus, it is clear that divorce is not instituted nor enjoined in this chapter, though the right of divorce is presupposed. All that is said is that if a man give his wife, for some reason or other, a bill of divorcement, and if she gets married to another husband, and he also hates her, and writes her a bill of divorcement, then the first husband shall not marry her again, for "that would be an abomination before the Lord." The Law simply regulates a custom that had long been in vogue in the East, and strives to soften its harshness. An arbitrary repudiation was prevented by the necessity of making out a legal instrument, showing that the grounds of it were not the mere pleasure or spite of the husband, but that they were founded on fact and reason. What the offenses were that were considered justifiable grounds of separation is not stated; but the Rabbis mention very trivial faults, and Josephus seems to have exceedingly lax ideas of the marriage tie. But the whole proceeding evidently is a glaring inconsistency with the Old Testament conception of marriage, which admits ethically to no dissolution. Adultery works divorce, but it was divorce that was to be brought about summarily by death. The Lord gave the correct spirit

of the passage in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 when he said that Moses suffered the Jews to put away their wives "πρὸς τὴν σκληροκαρδίαν ὑμῶν" (pros ten sklerokardian humon). ¹

In his treatment of this passage Knox Little said

In the forefront of this difficult passage stands, like sentinals, two words of warning---it was permitted, "for the hardness of men's hearts," and, "from the beginning it was not so." Then it would seem, assuredly, that if the licence of the law was a temporary concession, permitted lest bad should lead to worse; if it belonged to a time and condition of things which is designated as one of σκληροκαρδία (sklerokardian), when men's hearts were not accessible to God's grace (John 1:17), it is a concession which, when that state of impenetrability had passed, would naturally cease. And now that state has passed, and we live in the enabling power (Acts 13:39; Rom. 8:3, 4; Phil. 4:13) of the dispensation which the prophet Ezekiel saw afar off: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And---I will also save you from all your uncleanness" (Ezek. 36:25-27, 29). ²

In Matthew 19:3-9 Jesus again mentioned "fornication" (Matt. 19:9).

In the opening discourse of his ministry, Christ enabled men to understand the true ethical content of the word. Not only fornication, but every

1. W. S. Bruce, The Ethics of The Old Testament (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1909), pp. 160-62.

2. Little, op. cit., 91, 92.

impurity, whether of thought, word, or deed, is forbidden. Jesus said that the commandment is already violated by the lustful look (Matt. 5:27-32). If the libidinous desire is harboured, the guilt of the sin has been contracted.

The Pharisees had strained the law to the breaking point. They had come to Jesus tempting him. They had pressed home with a pitiless logic, the instance of Moses, giving a bill of divorcement, that should condemn Christ. But the law in which they had made their boast turned against them. Christ set before them the irrevocable truth of the indissolubility of the marriage act.

While it may be argued that nothing short of death can bring about a final divorce in the sight of God, it must be recognized that sin does destroy the marriage relations of many people. It was Dorner's idea that marriage may be destroyed in two ways, corresponding to the idea of marriage, which is compounded of both the physical and the spiritual. (a) The physical side, which is essential to the idea, may be withheld, either through desertion, of which the Apostle Paul speaks, or through adultery with a third party, which comes under the head of *πορνεία* (porneia) (Matt. 5). (b) The spiritual side may be entirely withdrawn; love, for instance, may be lost, husband and wife lay snares for each other's life, there may be attempts at murder, the one may endeavour to ruin the other in body, in soul, or in reputation; the husband may try to force his wife to prostitution, or may persist in living a dissolute life, utterly regardless of the duty of supporting wife and children, and may be worse than a heathen. Naturally, love, the first requisite in marriage, does not exist here, but is

changed into hatred and malignity. The only part of marriage that remains is the physical side; but a cohabitation that is merely physical, and from which all love and affection have disappeared, is simply *πορνεία* (porneia). Under these circumstances, if the marriage relation were kept up, the injured party would be degraded by being used merely as a means of satisfying sexual desire. Christ said *μη ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ* (me epi porneia) (Matt. 19:9); marriage must not exist for the sake of *πορνεία* (porneia). Therefore, when the spiritual elements of love and affection are wanting, neither State nor Church can compel husband and wife to live together, because marriage must not be turned into *πορνεία* (porneia). On the one hand, marriage is not to be regarded as being something of the nature of dogma, purely divine, and indestructible----in other words, as a sacrament. On the other hand, it is also an ethical product, and therefore is both exposed to the danger of being destroyed and being delivered up to loyal and moral keeping. But, on the other hand, no countenance can be given to divorce, or to second marriage on the part of those who have been divorced, unless it can be proved that the marriage has been broken in one of the two chief ways above mentioned. Of course, when both parties are Christians, no such thing as divorce can take place, or sin is committed. But when this is not the case, marriage may be destroyed by sin, and it may be necessary (as with the Jews under the Old Testament dispensation) to make allowance for hardness of heart, in order that evil may not be made worse. ¹

1. Dorner, op. cit., 544-45.

IV. THE TEACHINGS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL, AND THE DIVINE REVELATION

In examining the four specific passages of scripture where Jesus dealt with the divorce problem, it has been seen that his voice declared unmistakably the entire indissolubility of the marriage bond. The remaining important passages of scripture on the subject of marriage are found in the writings of Saint Paul. How does Paul understand and interpret divine revelation?

Paul found it necessary to instruct the Corinthians in various subjects touching the relation of the sexes. The rules laid down by the Apostle are applications of the Lord's recorded teaching, or statements of what Saint Paul knew by direct revelation received from Christ. In Paul's teachings the duties of married persons are referred to the normal principle, "They two shall be one flesh" (I Cor. 6:16), and the duties to unmarried, to another normal saying which belonged to Christ, but which Paul used to carefully point out a counsel and not a command, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matt. 19:12). First, Paul forbade polygamy; next, he gave certain practical directions about married life; and next-----which closely touches on the subject at hand-----he spoke as follows

"Unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife" 1

1. I Corinthians 7:10, 11, A. S. V.

Paul gave an unqualified command entirely opposed to divorce. These words are clearly along the lines of the Lord's teaching. Paul was writing to Corinth, where sins against the marriage vow, and kindred sins, were most common. It is unreasonable to think that if the Lord had laid down a rule that in certain circumstances divorce should be permitted, Paul should have been entirely silent, especially to such a people, about such a rule.

Paul taught that separation may take place, but in any case, the person departing should remain unmarried, or be reconciled again to his wife, or the husband, whatever the case (I Cor. 7:11). In the case of the unbelieving party leaving, Paul seems to infer that "it is better to have peace in separation than to have war in marriage," but that there is a possibility that the faith of the believer may see the unbeliever brought to Christ, and the marriage reconciled (I Cor. 7:12-17).

Dorner felt that it was Paul's idea that the believing wife must not separate from the unbelieving husband, and conversely. God can make the continuance of their marriage the means of winning the husband to the Christian faith. Difference of religion therefore affords no grounds for dissolving a marriage that has already taken place, though it may be a reason to prevent a Christian from forming one. But if the unbelieving husband does separate himself from his wife, then she is only a passive party to the separation.) The Apostle Paul does not bid her to do penance for the guilt of her unbelieving husband, who has separated from her, nor to remain exposed to trials of her faith or to manifold sufferings on account of her Christian profession, but said that if her unbelieving husband will not stay with her, she is no longer bound

to him (οὐ δεδουλωτῇ) (ou dedoulowtie), as is seen in I Cor. 7:15. The question may arise, why does the apostle tell the woman that she is free from her husband, when it may be that the latter, although not as yet a believer, will become one by and by; in other words, why does he not expressly require the woman to remain unmarried in expectation of the happy result? The circumstances of the case, and the individual relations between her husband and herself, may be such as to leave room for hope on his behalf, and then it will be both a right and Christian thing for her to wait in involuntary separation until a later date. From causes, however, connected with the man or the woman, the circumstances may point in an opposite direction, and for this reason the apostle is content with the indefinite οὐ δεδουλωτῇ (ou dedoulowtie).¹

In the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:22) Paul dwells upon the oneness produced by marriage, and takes the Incarnation of the Lord and his indissoluble union with his Church as an adequate illustration of the unity produced by marriage. Had Paul known that part of the divine law was that marriage could be dissolved, he could never have used an illustration so entirely inapt.

In the Epistle to the Romans, when writing from Corinth, Paul said

For the woman that hath an husband is
bound by law to the husband while he liveth;
but if the husband die, she is discharged
from the law of the husband. So then if,

1. Dorner, op. cit., 542-43.

while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adultress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adultress, though she be joined to another man. ¹

Here, Paul made use of the law of marriage as an illustration of the passing from the earlier dispensation to the dispensation of the Gospel (Rom. 7:4-6). The passage, whatever confusion there may appear to be in the illustration, teaches that the apostle believed that nothing but death could undo the marriage bond.

Summary. The foregoing study has pointed out the following: (1) That marriage can be dissolved only by God. (2) That God gave the divine standard for marriage, i. e. the union of one man and one woman. (3) That Christ taught that marriage can be dissolved only by God. That a man putting away a wife and marrying another woman, except for *πορνεία* (porneia), was committing adultery. (4) That Christ exposed the Pharisees for bending the law to hide their own sins, in the case of divorce. (5) That while only death can bring about a final severing of the marriage bond, sin can destroy the bond. And, (6) That the Apostle Paul taught the indissoluble nature of marriage, but did allow for a separation until reconciliation was made, or the unbelieving party departed.

1. Romans 7:2, 3, A. S. V.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter contains a summary of the complete study, and some positive conclusions which the investigator has arrived at as a result of the study. Also, some recommendations for further study have been mentioned.

I. SUMMARY

This has been a study of marriage. The problem presented was: What is the biblical teaching as to God's standard for marriage? Having assumed that the Bible was the inspired Word of God, and that it gave God's standard of marriage for mankind, this investigator attempted to present anew, the standard of God's plan for marriage. Such presentation was needed because of the marriage problem facing the world today, namely the willful disregard for God's plan of marriage as found in the Holy Scriptures.

The subject was limited to a biblical study of marriage itself, and the related problems of polygamy, divorce, and separation.

The main source of material was the Holy Bible. The version used was the American Standard Version, 1901. However, some works on marriage, and Christian Ethics by noted authors were referred to. The inductive method was used in searching the scriptures.

The study was divided into six chapters. The chapter titles were: (1) Introduction. (2) An Historical Survey Of The Biblical Teaching On Marriage. (3) Marriage As A Divine Institution. (4) Monogamy As

God's Standard. (5) Marriage As An Indissoluble Union. And, (6) Summary and Conclusion.

The second chapter gave a bird's-eye-view of the biblical teaching on marriage practices, both good and evil, as recorded in the Bible. This bird's-eye-view revealed that: (1) God, in his creative work, set the plan and standard of marriage for mankind. (2) Adam and Eve, having been created moral beings, were able to rightly fulfill the marriage relation. (3) Sin entered the human race and had both immediate and far reaching effects upon marriage. (4) With the coming of Christ and his teaching, marriage took on greater purity and was restored to God's original plan and elevated through grace. Christians were thus able to fulfill Christ's commands regarding true marriage. (5) The Apostle Paul reaffirmed the standard of God and the teaching of Christ in regard to marriage and its related problems of polygamy, divorce, and separation. (6) The other apostles harmonized their teaching with that of Christ.

The third chapter dealt with the divine origin of marriage, or marriage as a divine institution. It was seen that the book of Genesis teaches (1) that man and woman were created for each other, (2) that they were made in the image and likeness of God, as morally free and responsible beings, (3) that unity, mutual consent, and real union of life are essential characteristics of holy matrimony, (4) that sin darkened man's natural understanding of true marriage, (5) that with the coming of Christ, greater moral values were given to man and the concept of marriage was elevated through grace, and (6) that the Apostle Paul preached the divine standard for marriage, by teaching

mutual respect for both parties, and marriage as the best thing for man and woman.

The monogamous nature of marriage was the theme of the fourth chapter. Here it was seen that (1) monogamy alone is God's standard for marriage, (2) that the Old Testament, Christ's teaching, and the Apostle Paul's teaching gave grounds for only one marriage standard, that being monogamy, (3) that polygamy was found to be unnatural, and a distortion of marriage, (4) that the word polygamy is a misnomer, for marriage with more than one person is not true marriage at all, (5) that the origin of polygamy came chiefly because of sin and disobedience, but was promoted largely by tribal wars, (6) that the Old Testament lesson of polygamy showed that many retributions followed those who practiced it. This included most of the great men whom God used.

Chapter five pointed out the following: (1) That marriage can only be dissolved by God. (2) That God gave the divine standard for marriage, i.e. the union of one man and one woman. Anything to the contrary was the mere concession due to the human corruption. (3) That Christ also taught that marriage cannot be dissolved by man. That a man putting away a wife and marrying another woman, except for fornication (*πορνεία*) (porneia), was committing adultery. (4) That Christ exposed the Pharisees for bending the law to hide their own sins, in the case of divorce. (5) That while only death can bring about a final severing of the marriage bond, sin can destroy the bond. And, (6) That the Apostle Paul taught the indissoluble

nature of marriage, but did allow for a separation until reconciliation was made, or the unbelieving party departed.

II. CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this biblical study of marriage and the related problems of polygamy, divorce, and separation, the writer has arrived at these conclusions: (1) That God, in his sovereign goodness, mercy, and wisdom, has provided a perfect and workable plan of marriage for mankind. This plan was given by God "in the beginning," and is that of monogamy. (2) That sin has greatly hindered the use of God's perfect plan of marriage. (3) That polygamy is a distortion of marriage, and while it has been practiced, and those practicing it have been used of God, it is still far from the original standard set by God "in the beginning." (4) That in light of the over-all teaching of God's Word, there is only one thing that can bring about a divorce, and that is death. There may be separation, but any severance of the marriage bond, other than death, is sinful, and adulterous. Sin may break a marriage, but in the light of his Word and in the sight of Almighty God, this is not a final severance, it is adultery, and will be severely judged accordingly.

The writer feels that there are certain weaknesses^{es} in this paper. Particularly is the chapter on monogamy as God's standard weak³, and ^{inconsistent} especially so in that portion dealing with polygamy. Also, there is weakness in the use of the selected bibliography.

Recommendations For Further Study. From this study has come these recommendations for further study: (1) That a biblical study

be made of marriage as it relates to the family. (2) That a special study be made showing the implications of marriage as a social institution. (3) That a study be made comparing the various customs and practices in marriage of the peoples of the Old Testament.

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