

"AS I MYSELF"

I CORINTHIANS 7:6-7

Accepted by the Faculty of the Grace Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Divinity

Grade B+

Examining Committee

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Divinity in
Grace Theological Seminary

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Charles Ashman

Robert F. Ramey

PREFACE

To undertake such a project has brought to the attention of the writer the greatness and depth of God's Word. It is amazing how the answers and keys to answers lie unnoticed until one is caused to search the Scriptures with an earnest desire for knowledge on a given subject. The writer is sincerely grateful to the dedicated faculty of Grace Theological Seminary, who have searched the Scriptures, and know how to rightly divide the truth. This faculty has been the writer's inspiration to do the same.

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The writer wishes to dedicate this paper to his wife, Gretchen Irene, whose love, sacrifice and devotion have made it possible for him to attend Grace Theological Seminary.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
GREEK TEXT	5
ENGLISH VERSIONS	7
ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND	10
STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS	15
VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS	17
<p>Major Problem: What does Paul mean by "But I wish that all men were even as I myself"?</p>	
WRITER'S INTERPRETATION	26
VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS	34
<p>Minor Problems: (I) What does Paul mean by "I speak this by permission"?</p> <p>(II) What is the meaning of "every man hath his proper gift"?</p>	
WRITER'S INTERPRETATIONS	46
CONCLUSION	52
ENGLISH PARAPHRASE	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY	56

INTRODUCTION

Paul never let me in that a need for a "help meet" in Genesis 2:18, and through the human nature has had a similar desire to be "one flesh" with his counter-part, which God made from the "bone" and "flesh" of Adam. The very fact that man has the desire to unite and cohabit with the opposite sex is proof enough that God has a wife for him. If this be true, then we must suppose the opposite is true also: that is that a man who does not have a desire for a wife, which by all means is legitimate, proves that God does not love a life with him.

INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:1 is speaking to the Corinthians concerning the matter of marriage, and whether they should marry or refrain from marriage and gives his personal view on the subject. In understanding the real significance of verses 1 and 2 of chapter 7 will be the true purpose of this critical paragraph. After we have determined Paul's reasoning in these two verses we will then establish the answer to the major problem of this critical paragraph. What does Paul mean by "But I wish that all of you were as I am?" Does this mean that Paul prefers celibacy, or is Paul a widower and thus free to travel about preaching the word of Christ? However this fact is established then we can understand better Paul's mind behind the two minor problems of this paragraph. What does Paul mean by "I speak this by permission"

INTRODUCTION

Ever since God saw in Adam a need for a "help meet" in Genesis 2:20, man through his human nature has had a similar desire to be "one flesh" with his counter-part, which God made from the "bone" and "flesh" of Adam. The very fact that man has the desire to unite and co-habit with the opposite sex is proof enough that God has a mate for him. If this be true, then we must suppose the opposite is true also: that is that a man who does not have a desire for a mate, which by all means is legitimate, proves that God does not have a life mate for him.

The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 7:7 is speaking to the Corinthians concerning the matter of marriage, and whether they should marry or refrain from marriage and gives his personal viewpoints on the subject. To understand the real significance of verses 6 and 7 of chapter 7 will be the true purpose of this critical monograph. Before we can determine Paul's reasoning in these two verses we must first establish the answer to the major problem of this critical monograph, What does Paul mean by "But I wish that all men were even as I myself"? Does this mean that Paul prefers celibacy, or is Paul a widower and thus free to travel about preaching the Gospel of Christ? Whenever this fact is established then we can understand better Paul's ideas behind the two minor problems of this passage: (1) What does Paul mean by "I speak this by permis-

sion"?, and (2) What is the meaning of "every man hath his proper gift"?

It should be noted that the present state of Paul is clearly revealed in verse eight of chapter seven of First Corinthians. Here he exhorts the "unmarried" and "widows" to "abide" as he himself is at present. "And this proves that he had no wife when he wrote."¹

For the readers of Paul's epistles it is advantageous to know that Paul writes on the subject of marriage from the standpoint of one who has experienced marriage and understands the intimacies involved. For the Bible student, Paul's experience in marriage gives ample explanation why he could be a member of the Sanhedrin,² how he was true to Jewish views concerning marriage,³ and with what experience and authority he could write passages such as those found in I Corinthians 7, 9:5, Ephesians 5, and I Timothy 3:1-7, verses 2, 4 and 5 in particular. If Paul was never married, then we must assume that Paul's position with the Sanhedrin was other than being one of the seventy-one, he went against Jewish tradition, and spoke at times from personal observation and study, on the subjects of marriage and family life.

To answer a question which immediately comes to the reader's mind concerning Paul's silence in not giving a definite statement

¹Joseph Agar Beet, A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians (London: Hadder and Stoughton, 1892), p. 115.

²F. W. Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1880), p. 95.

³Alfred Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1908), p. 147.

of his marriage has been handled adequately by F. W. Farrar, who says:

St. Paul, who had been very freely charged with egotism, had not particle of that egotism which consists in attaching any importance to his personal surroundings. The circumstances of his individual life he would have looked on as having no interest for any one but himself. When he speaks of himself he does so always from one of two reasons--from the necessity of maintaining against distraction his apostolic authority, or from the desire to utilize for others his remarkable experience.⁴

With these factors in mind the writer of this critical monograph shall pursue a course that will show why this present writer contends that the Apostle Paul was married and is at the time of the writing of I Corinthians 7:6-7 a widower.

To display how this conclusion was arrived at, the present writer shall discuss such subjects as: (1) the essential background of the passage involved, (2) the various interpretations of the major and minor problems of the passage, (3) and the present writer's interpretation of the passage involving research which is both historical and Biblical.

This work is therefore dedicated to help the layman and the student of the Word of God have more light on the life of Paul in relationship to his place and teachings in the epistles accredited him, especially on the subject of marriage and family life.

⁴Farrar, op. cit., p. 44.

GREEK TEXT
OF 1 CORINTHIANS 7:6-7

According to the New Testament in the Original Greek, by
Westcott and Hort:

ΤΟΥΤΟ ΔΕ ΛΕΓΩ ΚΑΤ' ΕΥΧΩΜΗΝ
Οὐ ΚΑΤ' ΕΠΙΤΑΓΗΝ. ΘΕΛΩ ΔΕ ΠΑΝΤΕΣ
ΕΝ ΘΕΩ ΠΟΙΕΙΝ ΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΜΑΥΤΟΝ·
ὅτι ἕκαστος ἰδίον ἔχει χάρισμα
ΑΠΟ ΘΕΟΥ, ὃ ΜΕΝ Οὕτως, ὁ Δὲ Οὕτως.

GREEK TEXT

Codex Vaticanus and the Syrian uncials insert γὰρ be-
tween ΘΕΛΩ and ΠΑΝΤΕΣ. This has no significant affect on
the interpretation of the text. This is the only textual varia-
tion listed.

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ΤΟῦΤΟ Δὲ Λέγω κατὰ συνγνώμην
οὐ κατ' ἐπιταγὴν. θέλω δὲ πάντας
ἄνθρώπους εἶναι ὡς καὶ ἑμαυτὸν.
ἀλλ' ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα
ἐκ Θεοῦ, ὃ μὲν οὕτως, ὃ δὲ οὕτως.

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tween θέλω and πάντας. This has no significant affect on
the interpretation of the text. This is the only textual vari-
ation listed.

ENGLISH VERSIONS

The James Version, 1611

But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that,

Weymouth's New Testament, 1914

Thus much in the way of concession, not of command. Yet I would that everybody lived as I do; but each of us has his own special gift from God—one in one direction and one in another.

Montgomery's English Versions, 1924

But what I have just said is by way of concession, not command. I would that every one lived as I do; but each man has his own special gift from God, one this, another that.

Godsided's Translation, 1934

But I mean this as a concession, not a command. I should like to have everyone be just as I am myself; but each one has his own special gift from God, one of one kind, and one of another.

Williams Translation, 1936

But I say this by way of concession, not by way of command. However, I should like for everyone to be just as I myself, yet each of us has his own special gift from God, one for one way, another for another.

ENGLISH VERSIONS

King James Version, 1611

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Weymouth's New Testament, 1914

Thus much in the way of concession, not of command. Yet I would that everybody lived as I do; but each of us has his own special gift from God--one in one direction and one in another.

Montgomery's Centenary Translation, 1924

But what I have just said is by way of concession, not command. I would that every one lived as I do; but each man has his own special gift from God, one this, another that.

Goodspeed's Translation, 1934

But I mean this as a concession, not a command. I should like to have everyone be just as I am myself; but each one has his own special gift from God, one of one kind, and one of another.

Williams Translation, 1950

But I say this by way of concession, not by way of command. However, I should like for everyone to be just as I myself, yet each of us has his own special gift from God, one for one way, another for another.

Phillips Translation, 1958

I give the advice above more as a concession than as a command.
I wish that all men were like myself, but I realize that everyone has his own particular gift from God, some one thing and some another.

The Berkley Version, 1959

I say this by way of concession; not as a regulation. I wish all men had my own attitude; but each person has his own gift from God, the one in this direction, the other in that.

The New English Bible, 1961

All this I say by way of concession, not command. I should like you all to be as I myself; but everyone has the gift God has granted him, one this gift and another that.

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

Corinth, located in an isthmus between Hellas and Peloponnesus, had the reputation of being the "commercial crossroads" of traffic from all corners of the globe. She had a strategic location for a dispatching of her wares both by land and sea, having two harbors. To her east was the Aegean Sea, and to her west was the Adriatic Sea.

Due to her location it is not uncommon that she should see a mixture of races and nationalities pass through her daily, with a few of each making Corinth their home. Along with them came their ethnic backgrounds and customs which no doubt left a hodge-podge of different religions, rites and ideas for Paul to encounter on his stay there.

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Concerning the history of Corinth, we find a Roman general, Mummius, in 146 B. C. completely destroyed the city because of Greek efforts toward independence. Caesar then gave Corinth a Roman colony in 46 B. C., completely rebuilding the city.¹

For a concise summary on the situation on Corinth up to the time Paul first came there, the present writer wishes to quote the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia:

In the year 46 B. C. Caesar had caused Corinth to be rebuilt and colonized in Roman manner, and during

¹James L. Boyer, "An Exposition of I Corinthians" (Unpublished class lectures, Grace Theological Seminary, d. d. 7, p. 3).

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the century that elapsed, it had prospered and grown enormously. Its population at this time had been estimated at between 600,000 and 700,000, by far the largest portion of whom were slaves. Its magnificent harbors, Cenchreae and Lechaeum, opening to the commerce of the east and the west were covered with ships, and its streets with travelers and merchants from almost every country under heaven. Even in that old pagan world the reputation of the city was bad; it has been compared to the amalgam new market in Chicago and Paris, and probably it contained the worst features of each. At night it was made hideous by the brawls and leud songs of drunken revelry. In the day time its markets and squares swarmed with Jewish peddlers, foreign traders, sailors, soldiers, athletes in training, boxers, wrestlers, charioteers, racing men, betting men, slaves, idlers, and parasites of every description. The corrupting worship of Aphrodite with its hordes was dominant, and all over the Greek-Roman world "to behave as a Corinthian" was a proverbial synonym for leading a low shameless and immoral life.²

We learn from Acts chapter 18 that Paul came to Corinth from Athens and there made the acquaintances of Aquila and Priscilla, fellow tentmakers. This was in the year 52 A. D.³ According to Paul's personal testimony in I Corinthians 3:6, 10 he was the founder of the church at Corinth.

In First Corinthians Paul attempts to supply answers to various problems which have been brought to his attention by "the house of Chloe" (1:11), common report (5:1), and by letter (7:1). These reports came to him during his three years stay at Ephesus

²James Orr (general ed.), The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957, II, pp. 712, 713.

³Ibid., p. 713.

from which he writes this letter in the year 55 or possibly 56.⁴ The official letter and the problems it concerned are of importance for background to this critical monograph. The first of these problems deals with the subject at hand, marriage. Paul breaks the subject down into four different categories with which to deal. First, in verses 1 through 9 he gives advice to the unmarried. Second, in verses 10 through 25 he gives advice to the married. Third, in verses 25 through 38 he gives advice concerning virgins. Finally, in verses 39 through 40 he gives advice concerning widows.

The passage to be studied will come from the section in which Paul is advising the unmarried, and in which he gives them some very practical advice concerning whether or not to marry, along with his personal preference.

Coupled with the temple prostitution, we learn in chapter 5 that fornication was a problem in the Corinthian Church, along with others such as adultery, the effeminate, abusers of self and brethren; and possibly other sexual abnormalities were taking place in Corinth. It does not then come as a surprise that the Corinthian Christians would seek help from Paul, concerning problems dealing with the subject of marriage.

Paul's answer to the question of whether to marry or remain in celibacy is given in verses 6 through 9, "I wish that all men

⁴ Everett F. Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), p. 276.

were even as I myself." Why Paul answered in the manner he did, and what his state was, will be the major undertaking of the present writer in the proceeding pages.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

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Major Problem

What does Paul mean by "But I wish that all men were even as I myself"?

Minor Problems

I. What does Paul mean by "I speak this by permission"?

II. What is the meaning of "every man hath his proper gift"?

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

(MAJOR PROBLEM)

Major Problem: What does Paul mean by, "But I wish that all men were even as I myself?"

Celibacy View

Of all the views expressing opinion as to whether Paul was married or not, this view seems to be most widely accepted. The reader needs to take precaution, however, to probe and understand what the various authors mean by celibacy. Godet is strongly against Paul ever

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

(MAJOR PROBLEM)

"From the words, as I have inferred with certainty that Paul was not married, and quite as certainly that Paul was not a widower."¹ But even after firmly taking his position known, he is careful not to say that Paul is advocating celibacy for all men, but if you for Paul.

The question of celibacy might very well have been due to misconceptions on the part of the Corinthians who held to views such as (1) Christ was not married, and we must follow his example; (2) Paul's present state is our example; (3) misconceptions due to the licentious way in which the Corinthians lived.

¹ J. Godet, Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing House, 1941), p. 27.

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Celibacy View

Of all the views expressing opinion as to whether Paul was married or not, this view seems to be most widely accepted. The reader needs to take precaution, however, to probe and understand what the various authors mean by celibacy. Godet is strongly against Paul ever being married, and with deep conviction says, "From the words, as I myself, it may be inferred with certainty that Paul was not married, and quite as certainly that Paul was not a widower."¹ But even after firmly making his position known, he is careful not to say that Paul is advocating celibacy for all men, but it was for Paul.

The question of celibacy might very well have been due to misconceptions on the part of the Corinthians who held to views such as (1) Christ was not married, and we must follow his example; (2) Paul's present state is our example; (3) misconceptions due to the licentious way in which the Corinthians lived.

¹F. Godet, Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), p. 327.

Grotius thought that the opponents of marriage at Corinth were men for culture, who, influenced by certain sayings of the Greek philosophers, regarded marriage as a vulgar state and one contrary to man's independence.²

Lorraine Boettner in his masterful book on Roman Catholicism, spends several pages showing from Scripture that the Roman Catholic Church has no Scriptural basis upon which to demand celibacy among the laity. He uses the example of Paul, Peter, and other apostles to prove his point.³

Others who take their stand with Godet in claiming Paul preferred celibacy are Jerome,⁴ Tertullian,⁵ Pierius,⁶ Edwards,⁷ Lenski,⁸ Lange,⁹ and Ironside.¹⁰

²Ibid., op. cit., p. 317.

³Lorraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962), pp. 309-313.

⁴Godet, op. cit., p. 319.

⁵F. W. Farrar, The Pulpit Commentary. I Corinthians (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company), p. 225.

⁶Thomas Charles Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (London: Hadder and Stoughton, 1897), p. 162.

⁷Ibid.

⁸R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935), p. 281.

⁹John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scripture: Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, n. d.), p. 142.

¹⁰H. A. Ironside, Addresses on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Publishers, 1941), p. 207.

Married But Separated View

The present writer could find only one source, William Barclay, who held to this view. According to Barclay:

We may be fairly certain that at the same time Paul had been married. We may be certain of that on general grounds. Paul was a Rabbi and it was his own claim that he had failed in none of the duties which Jewish law and tradition laid down. Now orthodox Jewish belief laid down the obligation of marriage. If a man did not marry and have children, he was said to have "stained his posterity," "to have lessened the image of God in the world." Seven were said to be excommunicated from heaven, and the list began, "A Jew who has no wife; or who has a wife but no children." God had said, "Be fruitful and multiply," and, therefore, not to marry and not to have children was to be guilty of breaking a positive commandment of God. The age for marriage was considered to be eighteen; and therefore it is in the highest degree unlikely that so devout and orthodox a Jew as Paul once was would have remained unmarried.

On particular grounds there also is evidence that Paul was married. He must have been a member of the Sanhedrin for he says that he gave his vote against the Christians. (Acts 26:10). It was a regulation that members of the Sanhedrin must be married men, because it was held that married men were more merciful. It may be that Paul's wife died; it is even more likely that she left him and broke up his home when he became a Christian, so that he indeed literally gave up all things for the sake of Christ. At all events he banished that side of life once and for all and he never remarried. A married man could never have lived a life of journeying which Paul lived.¹¹

¹¹William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), pp. 67-69.

Barclay gives a good resume of why Paul should be married, and draws some support from 7:15 on his bold assumption Paul could be separated due to an unbelieving wife, but this cannot be fitted into verse eight in which Paul mentioned only the widowed and the unmarried, unless you conclude that separation places one in an unmarried condition, or Paul places himself in a separated condition alongside of the widows and unmarried. Paul certainly cannot place himself into the action of verse nine as he admonishes the widows and unmarried to do "if they cannot contain."

From a logical standpoint, it would seem that Paul could not preach on the subject of marriage and home life if he were a separated husband. There would always loom in the minds of his hearers questions as to why Paul could not retain his own wife. If Paul's wife was responsible for the separation, then it would seem that Paul would mention this relationship in verses ten through sixteen where Paul deals with those who are married and face the possibility of separation. Instead he places himself, and his status within verses one through nine where he deals with the unmarried and widows.

Married But Widower View

This view may be approached from at least three different directions in support of Paul being widowed before he began to write First Corinthians. First, Paul admits the fact that he had an official relationship with the Jewish Sanhedrin in passages such as Acts 26:10, Acts 8:1, and Acts 9:1,2. If Paul means that he gave his "vote" against the Jewish Christians as Acts 26:10 says, then we must submit to the realization that Paul was more than an associate with the Sanhedrin, and was a member. This then may also explain Luke's referral to Paul's consenting to the death of Stephen in Acts 8:1. According to M'Clintock and Strong, the qualifications for the Sanhedrin among other things included the following:

...nor could such candidates be elected as had no children, because they could not sympathize with domestic affairs (Mishna, Horgjoth, i, 4; Sanhedrin, 36b).¹²

One of the strongest advocates of this view is F. W. Farrar, who gives the following footnote on the qualifications for candidates to the Sanhedrin:

In the Mishna the only qualifications mentioned for membership of the Sanhedrin are that a man must not be a dicer, userer, pigeon-flyer, or dealer in the produce of the Sabbatical year (San-

¹²John M'Clintock, and James Strong, Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. IX (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1880), p. 342.

hedr. iii. 3), but in the Gemara, and later Jewish writers, we find that, besides the qualifications mentioned in Exod. xviii. 21, and Deut. i. 13-16, a candidate must be free from every physical blemish, stainless in character, learned in science, acquainted with more than one language, and with a family of his own, because such were supposed to sympathize with domestic affections.¹³

When the proper research is done on the life of Paul and his relationship to Gamaliel, then one can readily see that Paul would have no problems to become a member of such a group as the Sanhedrin.

Second, the great importance placed on marriage by the Jews, and Paul's fervor for adhering to Judaism before his conversion would lead us to believe he once had a wife. Edersheim, one of the all time masters of Jewish times and literature during the times of Christ and the apostles, writes:

We can understand how, before the coming of the Messiah, marriage should have been looked upon as of religious obligation. Many passages of Scripture were at least quoted in support of this idea. Ordinarily, a young man was expected to enter the wedded state (according to Maimonides) at the age of sixteen or seventeen, while the age of twenty may be regarded as the utmost limit conceded, unless study so absorbed the time and attention as to leave no leisure for the duties of married life. Still it was thought better even to neglect study than to remain single.¹⁴

Perhaps this was encouraged by the command of the Scripture in Genesis 1:28 "be fruitful and multiply." The false conception of women being saved by child-bearing might have its place here

¹³F. W. Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1880), p. 95.

¹⁴Edersheim, loc. cit.

also. Anyway, to remain single was regarded unwholesome by the majority of the Jews, and Paul makes claim in Philippians 3:5, to be "an Hebrew of the Hebrews." What he has to say about marriage in his own writings certainly discourages the reader from believing Paul held to tendencies of the Essenes, who denounce and discount marriage. With his Jewish background, it seems improbable that he escaped marriage for "the Rabbis in all ages have laid it down as a stringent duty that the parents should marry their children young."¹⁵

Finally, the student of the Scriptures finds truths and logic in Paul's writings which deal with marriage and home life that lead the writer to believe Paul was married, and widowed. This would include not only chapter seven of First Corinthians, but other passages such as I Corinthians 9:5, Ephesians 5:21-33, Philippians 4:3, I Timothy 3:1-7, and Hebrews 13:4.

The deep and fine insight of Luther had drawn the conclusion that Paul knew by experience what marriage was, from the wisdom and tenderness which characterizes his remarks respecting it. One who had never been married could hardly have written on the subject as he has done, nor could he have shown the same profound sympathy with the needs of all, and received from all the same ready confidence.¹⁶

Others who hold the view that Paul was a widower, or admit to its high possibility besides Farrar are Clement of Alexandria,¹⁷

¹⁵Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, op. cit., p. 46.

¹⁶Ibid., op. cit., p. 47.

¹⁷Archibald Robertson, and Alfred Plummer, The International Critical Commentary: First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), p. 138.

Origen,¹⁸ Eusebius,¹⁹ Erasmus,²⁰ Luther,²¹ Grotius,²² Calovius,²³
 Conybeare and Howsen,²⁴ Stanley,²⁵ and Smith.²⁶

¹⁸Henry Eyster Jacobs, The Lutheran Commentary, (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1897), p. 7.

¹⁹Godet, op. cit., p. 330.

²⁰Ibid., op. cit., p. 329.

²¹Ibid., op. cit., p. 330.

²²Ibid.

²³Jacobs, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁴W. J. Conybeare, and J. S. Howsen, The Life and Epistles of Saint Paul (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton and Co., 1896), pp. 63-65.

²⁵Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1876), pp. 117-121.

²⁶David Smith, The Life and Letters of St. Paul (New York: Harper and Brothers), pp. 30-31.

WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

Paul writes: "But how Paul means by 'that I wish that all men were even as I myself'"

After considering the merits of the three views, and giving the considerations in each, the writer joins forces with Farrer and those men of like persuasion accepting the view that Paul was at one time, previous to the writing of 1st Corinthians, married and widowed. This view not only casts light on other passages of Scripture, but does not rest Paul in any doctrinal or general position he takes in his letters. It enables the reader in understanding Paul's views, especially concerning marriage and family life.

WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

When we get clear that Paul was married and widowed, we also can make a change that Paul was indeed a member of the Synagogue, as is indicated in Acts 13:43-44. In view of the fact that all biographers of the life of Paul agree that Paul was too young for the Synagogue, and in the Acts that a young man's feet in Acts 13:43-44. The word "young man" just as well mean a young man in

James G. Thompson, The Life of St. Paul, New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1901, p. 10.

James G. Thompson, The Apostle Paul, Christ's Supreme
Life, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1901, p. 14.

James G. Thompson.

WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

Major Problem: What does Paul mean by "But I wish that all men were even as I myself"?

After examining the merits of the three views, and giving due considerations to each, the writer joins forces with Farrar and those men of like persuasion accepting the view that Paul was at one time, previous to the writing of First Corinthians, married and widowed. This view not only sheds light on other passages of Scripture, but does not rob Paul in any doctrinal or general position he takes in his letters. If anything it aids the reader in understanding Paul's views, especially concerning marriage and family life.

When we can claim Paul was married and widowed, we also can make a claim that Paul was indeed a member of the Sanhedrin, as do such men as Stalker,¹ Leavell,² and Smith,³ all biographers of the life of Paul. It cannot be argued that Paul was too young for the Sanhedrin, based on the words "at a young man's feet" in Acts 7:58. The word νεογνίου may just as well mean a young man in

¹James Stalker, The Life of St. Paul (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company), p. 20.

²Roland Q. Leavell, The Apostle Paul, Christ's Supreme Trophy (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1963), p. 14.

³Smith, loc. cit.

the prime and vigor of his life. Thayer in his lexicon says it may refer to a young man "between twenty-four and forty years of age."²⁴ We cannot ascertain what Paul's age was before his conversion, but we are sure that he could have been old enough to join the Sanhedrin at age thirty. Since we have no record of what happened to Paul during the three years following his conversion, (Galatians 1:18), it may be assumed Paul needed some time to make sure his former ties with Judaism and the Sanhedrin were severed. Paul's own part in the death of Stephen proves he was old enough to be accounted as one with authority. Stephen, himself, addresses those who later take hold of him as "men, brethren, and fathers" (Acts 7:2). These weren't just a group of young radicals out for blood, with a young hoodlum as their leader.

It is also interesting to note that Paul does not join into the physical aspect of stoning Stephen, but appears to give only consent to his death. The question that comes to the mind of the present writer is, If Paul did not have some designated authority, then why did these men, brethren, and fathers bother to ask him to consent to Stephen's death? Since it was the duty of the Sanhedrin to decide in such cases, the writer conjectures that Paul gave the official "go ahead" and was joined in his decision by the other members of the Sanhedrin.

²⁴Thayer, op. cit., p. 423.

As Bruce states it:

Stephen, at any rate, received the funeral tribute due to him from devout men who disapproved of the Sanhedrin's condemnation of him.⁵

These devout men were no doubt Jewish Christians who ordinarily would not give such a burial to a man condemned by the Sanhedrin. Apparently then, the Sanhedrin gave Paul a vote of confidence by siding with him against these devout Jewish Christians.

When we can claim Paul was married and widowed, we also can make claim that Paul was in harmony with the Jewish convictions concerning marriage. He not only was required to be married to join the Sanhedrin, but had pressure on him, as did all Jewish young men and girls, from parents and religious teachers as well. Marriage was the first of the 613 precepts laid down by the Jews.⁶ Tertullian said, "It is not true, as has been said, that early tradition was unanimous in saying he had never married." (De Monagam 3)⁷

Paul claims for himself to be a devout Jew in passages such as Philippians 3:5, 6, II Corinthians 11:22, and others. an interesting insight comes when Paul continues to say in verse 7 of Philippians chapter 3, "But what things were gain to me,

⁵F. F. Bruce, The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of Acts (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), p. 174.

⁶Farrar, The Life and Work of Paul, op. cit., 46.

⁷Ibid., op. cit., p. 45.

those I counted loss for Christ." This fits in perfectly with what Paul is saying in I Corinthians 7:7, which shows he had a change of values and life after his conversion. Marriage would have meant "gain" unto him before his conversion, but now that Christ has called him to travel as the greatest of all missionaries, marriage would not have allowed him the freedoms and opportunities recorded in Acts. The reasons are obvious.

When we claim Paul was married and widowed, we also can make claim that Paul was in a favorable position to write Scriptures concerning the matters of marriage and family life. It is logical to assume that when you have marital problems your greatest source of help would come from a man with marital experience. When we are sick, we go to the doctor, not the college student who someday hopes to be a doctor. Paul's use of "concession" in chapter seven of I Corinthians should not be taken to mean he is apologizing for a lack of knowledge on the subject of marriage.

Paul also does not hesitate to lay down the regulation in I Timothy 3:2 that the bishop should be "the husband of one wife." If we conclude that Paul was accounted the position of bishop, as we cannot, in some of the churches he founded, then he could not have complied with this regulation, unless his former marriage made this possible. One of the reasons for the regulations is seen in verses 4 and 5, to show that the bishop is capable of instruction concerning home life because of the example of his own family.

Paul also understood the intimacies of marriage. In Ephesians 5:28 he could say, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." Such an experience means little or nothing to a man until he experiences the reality of this truth with the woman he loves. One of the richest and perhaps hardest truths to learn in marriage is how to treat one's mate continuously with the same concern and attention we give ourselves and desire to have given to us by our mate.

Finally, Paul's knowledge of marriage was so keen that in the discussion preceding the verses under observation in this critical monograph, he understood the complications involved in prolonged abstinence whenever one mate is not in agreement with the policy of abstinence. Notice that his advice is stated as if it were a command. "Do not deprive one another." Lenski goes on to give the reason for this advice by giving a clever summary of Paul's statement "that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."

Paul would permit and advise only temporary abstinence with a religious background and is very frank in stating the reason, "on account of your incontinence." This may not flatter our human nature, but it certainly fortifies by honesty naming the weak point.⁸

Paul does not have to reveal any secrets of his relationship with his wife in order to know this truth, but as a man who had once known the intimacies of marriage, he could give such advice, being in sympathy with those who were being subjected to

⁸Lenski, op. cit., p. 279.

prolonged abstinence unwillingly. An unmarried man who was chaste would find no cause to include such advice, unless he desired to speculate from his observations.

With these three reasons that Paul was a widower, we may better understand the full implication of what Paul means when he says, "I wish that all men were even as I myself." He ends verse five with the words "that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." He has been speaking with the unmarried on the subject of whether they should marry or not. He definitely states that men have the right to marriage, then he goes on to tell of what men can expect in marriage in verses 3-5. In verse 6 he lets the reader know he is about to give personal preference. Then in verse 7 he returns again to the subject on continency and lets us know that he has this gift of self-control from God, but all men do not have it, and to them his advice would be the same as in verse 2, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Then again in verse 8 he refers to his present state and tells the unmarried and widows to abide in his condition, free from the entanglements of marriage. "But if they cannot contain, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn" (I Corinthians 7:9).

After studying these verses, it is reasonable to conclude as Lenski, that the subject at hand is self-control, which shall be discussed later at length. If one has it, then his service to God in this age can be used greatly because he is not tied down

at home or subjected to wishes etc. of his mate. If one cannot exercise complete self-control of his desires for marriage, then by all means he should marry, for it is likely God has a mate somewhere for him. Paul claims for himself the power of self-control which he received from God; therefore, he could wish that all men had this same gift; but he realizes they do not, and in verse 9 advises them to marry.

Paul's gift of self-control does not mean that he had never had a desire for a wife. It could very well mean that now that his wife has passed away, he has the capability of remaining in his present state and be content.

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

(MINOR PROBLEMS)

Minor Problem: (1) What does Paul mean by "I speak this by permission?"

Inspirational View

The present writer could not find any specific claims by authors promoting this view, but was alluded to the fact that such men exist. Ironside gives an interesting discussion to the problem:

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

(MINOR PROBLEMS)

Some people... as and said, "Now, see, the... does not claim to be inspired. He declares that he is speaking only by permission and not commandment, and therefore he was not inspired of God." Oh, no; he is just as truly inspired to give this permission as he is a little farther on to give a direct command.

To discount the validity of what Paul says in this occasion would throw a dim light on all of chapter seven since he makes similar statements in verses 10, 12, 25, and 40. Verse 40 perhaps has the key to the whole problem which shall be discussed under the "Inspirational View" which precedes.

¹Ironside, op. cit., p. 205.

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

(MINOR PROBLEMS)

Minor Problem: (I) What does Paul mean by "I speak this by permission"?

Non-Inspirational View

The present writer could not find any specific claims by authors promoting this view, but some alluded to the fact that such men exist. Ironside gives an interesting discussion to the problem:

Some people have pointed to this verse and said, "You see, the apostle himself does not claim to be inspired. In this portion he declares that he is speaking only by permission and not commandment, and therefore he was not inspired of God." Oh, no; he is just as truly inspired to give this permission as he is a little farther on to give a direct command.¹

To discount the validity of what Paul says in this occasion would throw a dim light on all of chapter seven since he makes similar statements in verses 10, 12, 25, and 40. Verse 40 perhaps has the key to the whole problem which shall be discussed under the "Inspirational View" which proceeds.

¹Ironside, op. cit., p. 205.

Inspirational View

To avoid conflicts with II Timothy 3:16 and the doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, to which Paul was the strongest adherent, one must without reservation admit Paul's advice to the Corinthians on marriage is "God breathed." It has already been established that Paul makes five statements in chapter seven of First Corinthians that permit the reader to know that what Paul has said or is going to say is different in source from what he has said on the subject. G. Campbell Morgan makes the following interesting observation on these verses:

That is a very interesting gathering together of sentences from this chapter in Paul's letter. There is nothing like that anywhere else in his writings, a clear distinction in his mind which he maintains all through, and draws attention to the fact. He is careful to draw this distinction between the specific instructions of the Lord, and those instructions which had no specific command on record. That does not invalidate the apostolic teaching, but it is careful to show the difference between the things directly spoken of the Lord, and the things which may be deduced, and which he deduces as having been granted to him, as he says, believing as he does, that he has the mind of the Spirit. It is an interesting case of the exercise on the part of the apostle of the sacred office of the scribe.²

The key to this problem seems to be located in verse 40 of this chapter where Paul claims, "I think also that I have the

²G. Campbell Morgan, The Corinthian Letters of Paul (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1946), p. 96.

spirit of God." Paul lays down a principle from logic that sometimes the Christian believer must be bold enough to rely upon his own convictions whenever the Scriptures give no exact answers to a given problem or situation. Lenski makes a clear statement of explanation of this phrase saying:

All that Paul writes in answer to the questions relating to marriage which the Corinthians had addressed to him emanates from "God's Spirit" and the principles of the gospel. Legalists will desire a different type of answer, one that is composed of laws and legal regulations. Paul's is the gospel way; above all things hold fast to the Lord; prefer everything that will aid you in this and discard whatever will not.³

Paul does not lay claim to any special rights that other writers of Scriptures did not have, but makes it clear that his principles are based on Scriptural principles, under the direction of the "God's Spirit."

³Lenski, op. cit., p. 332.

Placement With Verse Five View

The problem that gives the commentator the most troubles in verse six is not the problem of inspiration but the problem of placement. To arrive at an answer to the problem different authors refer to the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο as pointing back to verse 5. According to Thayer, the neuter τὸῦτο "(a) refers to what precedes," or "(b) it prepares the reader or hearer and renders him attentive to what follows, which thus gets special weight."⁴ So it is possible to make what Paul is saying by permission or concession refer to verse 5.

One of these authors is H. A. W. Meyer who goes into great detail to promote his view. He says,

τοῦτο does not refer to what follows (J. Cappellus, Rosenmuller), which it does not suit; nor to ver. 2 (Beza, Grotius, de Wette, Gratama, Baur, Hofmann); nor to all that has been said from ver. 2 onwards (Bengel, Pott, Flatt, Billrath, Ruckert, Osiander), for vv. 2-4 contain precepts actually obligatory; nor to κ. πάλιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἦτε (Origen, Tertullian, Jerome, Cornelius a Lapide, al.), which is but a subordinate portion of the preceding utterance. It is this utterance: μὴ ἀποστερεῖτε ... ἀκρ. ὑμῶν which directly precedes the τοῦτο, that it can alone be made to refer without arbitrariness,--an utterance which might have the appearance of an ἐπιταγή, but is not intended to be such.⁵

⁴Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book Company, 1889), p. 467.

⁵Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Epistles to the Corinthians (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1890), pp. 153, 154.

Whenever one takes this view, he comes up with a translation similar to this one given by Charles Hodge:

Your separating yourselves only by consent and for a limited time for the purpose of devotion, is a matter of permission, not of command; you may separate for other purposes and for an unlimited time.⁶

Others supporting the verse five placement view besides Meyer are Jacobs,⁷ Lange,⁸ Ironside,⁹ and Lenski.¹⁰

⁶Charles Hodge, An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), p. 111.

⁷Jacobs, loc. cit.

⁸Lange, loc. cit.

⁹Ironside, loc. cit.

¹⁰Lenski, op. cit., p. 280.

Placement With First Five Verses View

This view is held strongly by Edwards who gives the following reasoning:

τοῦτο refers to all the Apostle has said on the subject of marriage. So Chrys. (De Virg. 34), Bengel, de Wette. The general advice to the incontinent to marry (ver. 3), and the advice to abstain for a time (ver. 5)--all this variety of exhortation is given by way of allowance for the weakness of human nature. Hence the necessity for a declaration of the distinction between casuistical decisions and moral principles.¹¹

Others holding to this view along with Edwards, Chrysostom, Bengel, and de Wette are Robertson and Plummer,¹² and Lightfoot.¹³

¹¹Edwards, op. cit., p. 162.

¹²Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p. 135.

¹³J. B. Lightfoot, Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957), p. 223.

Placement With Verse Seven View

Because of the double usage of τοῦτο to refer to that which precedes, and that which proceeds, Godet has a lengthy discussion to show why he holds to the view that verse six goes with verse seven. His reasoning follows:

The remark which the apostle makes in ver. 6 might be applied to the foregoing prohibition: "Defraud not...;" or, as is done by Tertullian, Origen, Jerome, Calvin, to the precept: "that ye come together again." But this precept had been given only accidentally, and the ground for it had been too strongly stated to admit of its being afterwards presented as a simple counsel, and not as a positive rule. Meyer and Beet make this remark bear on the restriction: "Except it be for a time." Meyer paraphrases thus: "If I recommend you to keep apart only for a time, it is not an absolute command I give you on the subject, it is a simple counsel. But you may, if you think good, remain in this state of separation, provided it be with common consent." But, in the first place, this meaning is overturned by the same reasons as the preceding, from which it is essentially different. Then what right have we to separate one of the three conditions (common consent) from the other two? Are they not put on exactly the same footing in verse 5? For from wishing by ver. 6 to attenuate the importance of the limits traced in ver. 5, the apostle aims, on the contrary, throughout the whole passage to combat a too pronounced ascetic tendency which threatened to prevent marriage, or to turn it aside from the end for which the apostle claims it as a general rule. If it is so, the remarks of ver. 6 can only refer, as has been clearly seen by Beza, Grotius, de Wette, Hofmann, to the essential idea of the passage, as stated in ver. 2, and as it is to be restated in a new form in ver. 7: the general duty of marriage. Vers. 3-5 have only been a digression intended to maintain in the normal state the practice of marriage.¹⁴

¹⁴Godet, op. cit., p. 327.

When consideration is given to what is said before and after verse 6, it adds more emphasis to the passage to say that Paul is not commanding marriage and self-control as in verse 7, than to say that Paul is not commanding to maintain a normal state of marriage in the preceding verses.

Others who support this view other than Godet are Findlay,¹⁵ Farrar,¹⁶ and Hodge.¹⁷

¹⁵G. G. Findlay, The Expositor's Greek Testament: St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), p. 824.

¹⁶Farrar, op. cit., p. 225.

¹⁷Hodge, loc. cit.

Minor Problem: (II) What is the meaning of "every man hath his proper gift"?

Special Gifts View

The purpose of giving this view is not to reveal the meaning of charismatic gifts as the world has taken hold of so strongly in recent years. The referral to this as special gifts is not, however, wrong when they refer to prophesying and speaking in tongues as special gifts.

The purpose shall be, however, to show how these words χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ are used by Paul in verse seven.

Many authors have taken this to mean something other than the gift of continence or self-control. Therefore it shall be pointed out in this view what a few of them are.

Stanley says, "This word, which is usually employed for preternatural gifts, is here used for moral and natural gifts."¹⁸

Jacobs states:

Gifts and callings correspond. The gift fitted Paul for his calling. Without this gift, the prosecution of his peculiar calling would have been impossible.¹⁹

Meyer agrees that continence is included in this gift, but believes Paul is referring to other gifts as well.²⁰

¹⁸Stanley, op. cit., p. 102.

¹⁹Jacobs, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁰Meyer, loc. cit.

Self-Control View

Lenski has centered his entire discussion of verse seven around the charismatic gift of the verse. His discussion follows a very logical pattern for doing this, but draws a different conclusion as to Paul's former state from that of the present writer. His foundation for this verse follows:

This idea is, therefore, not at all the cessation of marriage, or the abolition of the sexual side of marriage, or the celibate state for all. For none of these is a "charismatic gift due to God," and all of these contradict God's institution of marriage and its divinely ordered sexual relation. Paul's idea is the ἐγκράτεια, entire self-mastery as to the sexual life and freedom from temptation in this regard. This explains why he favors the concession of temporary abstinence as explained above. (vs. 5) This self-control and self-mastery is the charismatic gift which Paul had from God.²¹

This view then is in harmony with verse five where Paul makes the Corinthians aware of the fact that incontinency results from prolonged undesired abstinence on the part of one mate. In verse seven Paul then shows that "from God" he has been given the gift of self-mastery over the natural desires of the flesh, but does not demand that all men should have this gift. Rather he readily admits that some do and some do not possess self-control.

Therefore, when Paul wishes "that all men were even as I myself," he alludes to self-mastery and not to being a widower, for Paul would not wish widowhood upon mankind.

²¹Lenski, op. cit., p. 280-281.

Others who support the same view as Lenski are Farrar,²² Findlay,²³ Godet,²⁴ Beet,²⁵ Robertson and Plummer,²⁶ Lightfoot,²⁷ and Edwards.²⁸

²²Farrar, loc. cit.

²³Findlay, loc. cit.

²⁴Godet, op. cit., p. 328.

²⁵Beet, loc. cit.

²⁶Robertson and Plummer, op. cit., p. 136.

²⁷Lightfoot, op. cit., p. 224.

²⁸Edwards, op. cit., p. 163.

WRITER'S INTERPRETATIONS

Minor Problem: (1) What does Paul mean by "I speak this by permission"?

When Paul says "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), he is discredit the material of 1 Corinthians. It is emphasized would be more folly. G. Campbell Morgan's explanation of "concession" or "concession" seems to make more sense. What he concluded that what Paul is about to say is not the "specific instructions of the Lord." One of the wonderful characteristics of Paul is the fact that God allows the personality of the apostle to show in their writings. Paul sums this up well in verse 30 when he says, "I think also I have the Spirit of God." Best has this comment:

He speaks, not necessarily of some special apostolic gift, but of the spirit given (Rom. viii. 9) to all believers, that he may be in them (Eph. i. 17) "the Spirit of wisdom." The opinion of men actuated by the Spirit of God, and in the proportion, claims our respect. And that Paul had the Spirit in a rich measure, no one could deny.

What Paul is saying by way of "concession" is undoubtedly what follows in verse 7, where Paul continues his theme of continuity. Having realized that whether or not a man or woman should

¹Morgan, loc. cit.

²Best, op. cit., p. 134.

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Minor Problem: (I) What does Paul mean by "I speak this by permission"?

When Paul himself writes "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (II Timothy 3:16), then to discredit the material of I Corinthians 7 as uninspired would be mere folly. G. Campbell Morgan's explanation of "permission" or "concession" seems to make more sense when he concludes that what Paul is about to say is not the "specific instructions of the Lord."¹ One of the wonderful characteristics of Scripture is the fact that God allows the personality of His scribes to show in their writings. Paul sums this up well in verse 40 when he says, "I think also I have the Spirit of God." Beet has this comment:

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What Paul is saying by way of "concession" is undoubtedly what follows in verse 7, where Paul continues his theme of continency. Having realized that whether or not a man or woman should

¹Morgan, loc. cit.

²Beet, op. cit., p. 134.

marry or not rests upon the amount of self-control or mastery they maintain, he then of necessity would observe some sort of caution in presenting his personal preference on the subject. If anyone were to be blamed for this idea of practicing self-control and refraining from marriage, then he wanted to be the one. Otherwise, there may be those who would think this idea was promoted by Christ while he was on the earth. After experiencing what married life was all about, Paul could with authority, though he chose to by permission, advise men to refrain from marrying if they had the same gift from God of self-mastery. He definitely does not lay this down as a definite rule of life that all who preach the Gospel should follow. Otherwise verses 2, 7, and 9 are wrong in suggesting marriage for those who "cannot contain."

Therefore Godet, when he concludes that Paul is referring again to verse 2 which is repeated in a somewhat different fashion in verse 7,³ is correct.

³Godet, loc. cit.

Minor Problem: (II) What is the meaning of "every man hath his proper gift"?

Notice may be given to the fact that this problem lies in a verse (7) which comes between two verses which contain the same idea of continency, those being verses 5 and 9. In verse 5 the idea is "that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." In verse 9 the idea is "if they have not continency." Therefore, when Paul speaks of "his proper gift from God" we must conclude that this gift has something to do with the subject of continency which idea flows throughout verses 1 through 9.

Paul's life after his conversion had a complete reversal from promoting Judaism with all its legalism involved to promoting Christ and the doctrine of grace. His social life took just as great a reversal, no doubt; for our Lord called him to do more traveling than any other apostle, as far as we know. To maintain such a rigid schedule and meet the deadlines or goals he set for himself must have called for a man of great discipline, and one who could not be tied down to family life and the time it takes to be the loving husband of whom Paul speaks in Ephesians 5:28. A man who did not know self-mastery would find such a life also very cumbersome and uncomfortable. Paul never alludes to having a desire to remarry, but he did comfort himself with calling Timothy his "own son in the faith" (I Timothy 1:2). One only plays

with fantasy when he supposes Timothy to be any more than Paul's "son in the faith."

One of the wonderful truths about Paul's gift of self-mastery is the source of his gift, God. When we look at the godless men around us, the problem of self-control is all but lacking. Instead we read such reports of these men as found in I Corinthians 6:9-10, the very opposite of Paul, because they have not the mastery over themselves that only God can give. God in his omniscience gives this gift to those to whom He wills. Paul had the need for such a gift; God recognized Paul's need, and apparently gave him sufficient supply to carry out the great and wonderful work he accomplished. No wonder Paul could say with such zeal "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Lenski has the following comment to make concerning this gift:

Each one has his own charismatic gift, "one thus, another thus," one in one manner, another in a different manner. Yet this does not mean that a strong inclination toward marriage is one of God's charismatic gifts for the simple reason that no grace and no special gift of grace is needed for that, the constitution of our nature suffices entirely. What Paul means is that one Christian has a special gift from God in one direction, another in an entirely different direction. Grace works in all manner of directions as Paul shows in extense in I Cor. 12:8, etc.⁴

For Paul, it was his special gift of self-control that he could wish that all men could have, but since this expresses an

⁴Lenski, op. cit., p. 282.

unfulfilled wish which Paul knew was hypothetical, he encourages those who do not have this gift to marry.

CONCLUSION

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The exciting part of doing research for a paper such as this is to work on the various problems from differing viewpoints and angles and yet come to a place of harmony at the end. The present writer set out to prove that Paul had possibilities of being a widower. The writer hereby concludes that Paul not only was a widower, due to his position with the Sanhedrin, and his obligations as a Jew and an authority on marriage and family life, but Paul also had the gift of self-mastery from God to carry out the work for which God had called him. It is amazing that God not only picked men of various occupations and degrees of education, but he also chose men with the proper qualifications to write on the subjects found in their writings.

David Smith in speaking of why Paul did not mention his deceased wife, gives this appropriate tribute, with which the present writer closes:

It is significant that one so affectionate should have maintained an almost unbroken silence regarding this mournful chapter of his lifestory: and in view of the sternness of his attitude toward women, it would seem as though there were hidden tragedy and bitter memory.¹

¹Smith, loc. cit.

ENGLISH PARAPHRASE

But this that I am about to speak is by concession and not by any commandment given by Christ, or revealed in the Scriptures. For I wish that all men were as I myself, free from the entanglements I knew when my wife was alive, in order that I may do the work God has called me to do, which would be impossible if I now had a wife. For every man hath a proper gift from God to deal with this matter, one has self-control over his body and thoughts, as I have, not to be bothered by them, and the other has need of a wife because of a natural desire, and this is of God too.

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